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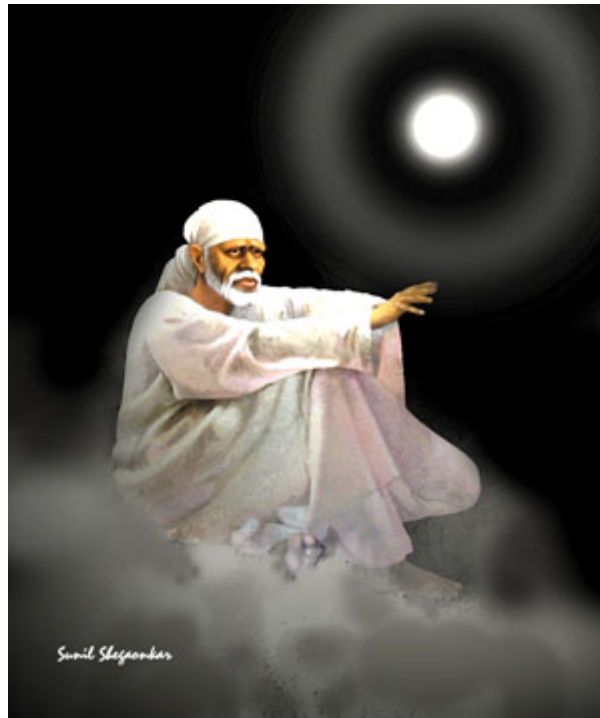
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Main

Lust, if not submitted to Sai,
is man's worst enemy



Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad was an ardent devotee of Sai Baba. Baba once demanded 6 as *Dakshina* from her. She felt pained, as she had nothing to give. Then her husband, in a bid to console her, explained that Sai Baba wanted six inner enemies [**lust, (sexual urge), anger, greed, temptation, ego and jealousy**] to be surrendered to Him. Sai Baba fully agreed with this explanation. (**Shri Sai Satcharitra, Chapter: 14**)

Yes, and in fact, it's very important to control these six enemies that attack and overpower every human being at some point of time. They act as an obstacle to man's spiritual progress. Man acts like a wild animal, nay like a demon, if he succumbs to any of these negative qualities. The one who has control over these six inner enemies should occupy the throne. [*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*, p 1039.]

Of these six enemies, flesh (sexual urge)- if not submitted to God- is man's worst enemy because flesh only knows what feels good; and since sin appears to feel good, flesh will always cater toward it. As believers, we have to aggressively combat our flesh. This can be done by renewing our mind. Renewing of our mind with the **Word of God** is vital to our spiritual growth. A renewed mind armed with the **Word of God** and the rebirth can bring flesh under submission to do **Will of God**.

O Baba! Like any normal human being, I also often experience occasional hot flashes of sexual urge, which hinder and retard my march towards spiritual ambition; and I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

O omnipotent Sai! I incessantly feel the potency of Thine indomitable power and strength, and pray You to kill this '**impulse**' in me, and protect me against this worst enemy.

Protect me, protect me. I am Thine, my Lord!

O Sai Baba! Verily Thou art the Lord of Strength, Thou art potent to ordain whatsoever Thou wilt, and within Thy grasp Thou holdest the reins of all created things.

No God is there but Thee, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. In all the places Thou art my Protector.

Then why should I feel fear and anxiety?

O Sai!

The entire Universe's a stage,

And all the *Rishis* and *Munis* merely performers,

They have their exits and entrances...

But O Baba!

Thy acts being four *Yugs*, viz., the *Satyug*, the *Treta*, the *Dwapar* and the *Kalyug*,

Thou art known to have guarded many from the *boiler of sexual* desire or lust in the same manner as You saved the child of the blacksmith from the furnace. (Shri Sai Satcharitra, Chapter: 7)

Hindu scriptures are full of the incidents that highlight the ills of lust.

Rishi Gemini once boasted to Vyas Muni that he had conquered carnal cravings and lust.

A few days later, it just so happened that Gemini was alone in his hut in *jungle* (tropical forest). It was raining. One beautiful young tantalizing girl came to his door and asked for shelter. Gemini allowed her in. At night the jingling musical sound from the sets of expensive bangles made of gold and silver on her hands made the Rishi's sexual urge irresistible. The girl agreed but put condition to him that he should take her on his back and make three rounds around the hut. He did so but after completing the first round he felt beard touching his neck and found that Vyas Muni was on his back. Vyas told him he would not get down unless he says, '*Balwanindriyagramo vidwansamapakarshati.*' He admitted. It means that strong body organs attract even the learned and wisest man. It was sage Vyas who took the form of that young girl.

O Baba! Did you, with the **semblance of** Vyas Muni, not stop Rishi Gemini from going astray? After all,

Thy acts being four *Yugs*!

Further, Once Narada's meditation could not be disturbed even by Kamadeva (the God of Lust) who was instructed by the King of Gods Indra to break Narada's penance. At this victory, Narada got overwhelmed by a feeling of immense pride, unbecoming to a seer. He went to Lord Shiva and told him, "I have defeated the God of Love; I am beyond lust." Shiva said, "Narada, that's very interesting, but if you have an experience like that; don't ever tell it to Vishnu."

Narada left Mount Kailash and thought, "Shiva must surely be jealous of me. Why should I not tell Vishnu, he who loves me so dearly! He will surely be proud of me". So the seer went straight to *Vaikunth* and talked about how he conquered Kamadeva.

Vishnu smiled, and said he was pleased with Narada; but also decided in his mind to teach him a lesson by humbling his pride. He asked his consort Lakshmi to re-incarnate herself as the beautiful daughter of King Shilanidhi (the then ruler of Ayodhya), by the name of Vishwamohini - a most beautiful and desirable woman, and an embodiment of all good qualities.

Narada had left *Vaikunth* and was back on the Earth. While traveling, he reached the kingdom of Ayodhya; and on seeing the beautiful princess Vishwamohini, fell in love with her, being attracted by her beauty. He longed to marry her. He secretly disclosed it to King Shilanidhi, who was now in a fix. How could he disobey the great sage Narada-Muni? So he said to him:

“O revered sage! you desire the hand of my daughter. How am I to decide? Well, I shall arrange a *Swayamvara* (selection of bridegroom). Whomsoever Vishwamohini selects, shall be her husband.”

So Narada went to Vaikunth to consult Vishnu. He narrated to him all that had happened and implored to him: “O Lord, let my face resemble Hari’s at the time of the *Swayamvara*”. The Lord smilingly assented, but gave the face of a monkey to Narada - since the word ‘*Hari*’ also means a monkey in Sanskrit.

Not knowing what had happened to his face, Narada reached the Palace where the marriage ceremony was to take place. King Shilanidhi led his beautiful daughter to the dais of the *Swayamvara*.

Vishwamohini blushing stood before all the prospective suitors with garland in her hand. But she was taken aback when she saw in Narada’s place a monkey. Her hand trembled, and she passed by.

Narada could not resist. He stood up and said with great pride, “You must be looking for me, beautiful one”. The crowd burst into laughter!

Vishwamohini said to King Shilanidhi: “Father, you said a Rishi wants to marry me. I can see no Rishi here. Instead I find a man, with a monkey’s face ... But, who is that? ... Just beside him, I find an attractive, handsome man with a lovely smile. He has stretched his right hand as if to beckon me.” She garlanded the handsome man standing beside Narada and all at once, they both - Vishnu and Lakshmi - vanished. The handsome man was none other than Lord Vishnu.

Narada was astonished and dismayed. He discovered his monkey-face in the reflection of a pool of water and became enraged. In a fit of rage, he cursed Vishnu then and there, proclaiming that Vishnu, in one of his earthly re-incarnations would have to bear the pangs of his wife’s imposed separation from him and only a monkey would be able to relieve him of his sufferings. Thus, when Vishnu was born as Rama, Hanuman helped him to free Sita from the clutches of Ravana.

But wisdom also dawned on Narada and he realized that Lord Vishnu had taught him a lesson for his conceit and pride. He felt ashamed that he should have even thought of marriage.

O Baba! Did you, with the **semblance of** Lord Vishnu, not teach Narad a lesson for his conceit and pride, and saved this great seer from destruction? After all,

Thy acts being four *Yugs!*

Likewise, Namdev had an excessive sexual appetite and he could not control this urge. He felt that this was hindering his spiritual progress, perhaps it was the reason his Guru had never ever given him any spiritual instructions. He was not bold enough to broach the topic directly with his Guru. Unfortunately, he met a yogi who was adopting austere, in fact cruel methods to achieve control over the senses. On his advice, Namdev pierced a metal ring in his penis. Within a few hours he had septic infection and was running high fever. He was suffering such intensive pain and agony that he could not move from his bed. He felt so ashamed that he could not tell his relatives nor call the doctor. Three days passed thus. On the fourth day, his Guru himself came to Namdev’s house. He detached the metal ring from his body and fired Namdev severely. After Namdev recovered, his Guru told him, “Namdev, these methods are useless. They will only cause you ill health. How will you stop your desire invading your mind? Surrender completely to God. Let your urge for him exceed everything else. Then self-control will come on its own.”

O Baba! Did you, with the **semblance of** Namdev’s Guru, not pull Namdev out from the kiln of passion? After all,

Thy acts being four *Yugs!*

And above all, Brahma is considered to be the Creator of the Universe. Before the cosmos existed, Brahma was all alone, self contained and self-content. Eventually, he felt inadequate and longed for company. Brahma split himself and created the goddess Shatarupa. Her many forms captivated Brahma, and he desired to possess her.

But that was not to be. Like all material things, Shatarupa would turn into something else every time Brahma got to her. She turned into a cow, a mare, a goose and a doe. Lord Brahma kept pursuing her, taking the form of the corresponding male - a bull, a horse, a gander, a buck. Thus all creatures of the cosmos, from the smallest insect to the largest mammal, came into being.

The Hindu God Brahma sprouted five heads, so that he could watch Shatarupa at all times. To restrain Brahma's lust, Shiva wrenched off one of Brahma's five heads. This helped Brahma come to his senses, and he took Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, as his consort. With her help, he regained control of his mind.

Even the greatest sages became victims of the trait of passion and lust. Example of distinguished sage Vishwamitra can be quoted. He was the most accomplished one. While he was undergoing penance to attain distinction among the sages, Devraj Indra sent a divine nymph Menaka to lure him away. She appeared in front of him and seduced the sage by dance and song. Vishwamitra could not control himself and became a victim of lust. He left penance, and out of the union of the sage and the nymph Menaka, Shakuntala was born.

The person bit by lust becomes a victim of evil, and other bad traits too take over him soon and cause complete downfall. Therefore, it is essential that men have self control and lead balanced lives.

O Baba! Even the king of Heaven is not exempt from sexual urge. As related in the *Padma Purana* (1.54), Lord Indra- the king of Heaven- was once so overcome by lust that he had lecherous dreams about Ahilya, the beautiful wife of the powerful ascetic Gautama Rishi. And once while Gautama was away for morning ablutions, Indra approached Ahilya, disguising as Gautama. But Ahilya realized that the man who approached her was not Gautama but Indra. Nevertheless, for a moment she yielded to bodily desire. Indra perceived her state of mind and said, "Lovely woman, I am attracted to you. Give me your love." Ahilya had lost self-control. She yielded to him, and joined him in the bed. She experienced the sexual enjoyment with the fake spouse she had never had before; and Ahilya continued to stay on in the bed not realizing her real spouse was coming soon. Finally, Gautama, on return, caught them and cursed. He poured some holy water from his water pot on his hand and threw it at Indra putting a curse on him saying, "Let your body covers with female sex organs." Gautama Rishi also put a curse on her, too, saying, "You become a stone."

Ahilya could regain her form only when Lord Rama (Incarnation of Lord Vishnu) accidentally touched the stone with his foot while wandering in the forest accompanied by Sage Vishwamitra *enroute* to Mithilapura.

Indra could not return to his kingdom with all the marks of female sex organs on all over his body; so he remained on earth. Finding no return of Indra to the cosmic world his spouse- called Sachi or Indrayani- sought the help of the heavenly guru called Brihaspati to find out her spouse. Brihaspati used his telepathic vision and found Indra hiding in a jungle on earth.

Guru Brihaspati advised Indrayani to go and help Indra in getting rid of the unnatural marks from the body of Indra, forgiving him for adultery. The Guru said, "Indrayani, go to the mundane world and meet Indra and take him to the most holy place at the confluence of Padmavati River and Lilavati River in Panauti and let him meditate on Lord Shiva, and you meditate on his spouse Parvati for their favor."

Indra meditated on Lord Shiva and his spouse Indrayani on Parvati for twelve years at the confluence of the two rivers in Panauti before pleasing them for their favor. After twelve years, both Lord Shiva and his spouse Parvati appeared before Indra and his spouse Indrayani. Lord

Shiva said, “We are very pleased with your devotion to us and let me know what you have on your minds; I will meet your wishes.”

Indrayani clasping hands at her chest and bowing to Lord Shiva and his spouse Parvati said, “My spouse Indra has his body full of the marks of female sex organs; please do us a favor by removing all those marks from his body.

Lord Shiva said, “Those marks will go only after taking a dip in the holy waters of the confluence of three rivers. Here, you are at the confluence of two rivers. I will ask Parvati to transform herself to a river called Rudravati and flow here to make this place a confluence of three rivers. However, one mark on his forehead remains and I will cover it with ashes.” After taking the form of Rudravati River, Parvati joined in Padmavati River and Lilavati River to make the confluence of three rivers in Panauti. Indra took a dip in the holy water of the confluence of these three rivers and washed away all other marks of woman’s sex organs on his body except for the one on his forehead. Lord Shiva put his ashes called ‘*vibhuti*’ by his right hand thumb on the forehead of Indra covering the inerascable female organ. Then, Indra set up a lingam and called it *Indreshwar Mahadev* that stands even today in the inner sanctum of a three-tiered temple in Panauti.

O Baba! The peculiarity of Thy name is such that by simply reciting Thy name as ‘Sai, ‘Sai’ devotee’s thoughts are changed and the force of lust is abated.

Nana Saheb Chandorkar was one of the most ardent devotees of Baba. “Nana was a very respectable, married gentleman, having children and having family traditions and a position to maintain. Further, his training had given him excellent qualities of self-restraint and propriety of behavior. So, he was not ordinarily what one would call a lustful, lewd, or lecherous person. He was on the other hand a very properly behaved and excellent head of a family. Yet, the saying goes ‘Even an elephant may slip’. (Narasimhaswami, H H; *Life of Sai Baba, Volume: II, 1983*)

Baba, who was watching Nana wherever he was, and at every moment, noticed that he needed to be taught and trained in the matter of lust also. So Baba inculcated truths about lust, and made Nana Chandorkar absorb them.

On one occasion when Nana was sitting next to Baba at the Dwarakamai, two Muslim ladies were standing for a time at a distance, evidently waiting to see when Nana would go away. They had to remove their veils at the time of taking *darsan*, which meant- putting their bare foreheads on Baba’s feet; and they did not wish anybody to see their faces. When Nana got up to go away, Baba pulled him down and said, ‘Let these people come if they care’. So, the ladies had to approach Baba and take *darsan* with Nana by His side. Nothing happened when the elderly lady removed her veil and took Baba’s *darsan*. But when the younger did the same, her face struck Nana as remarkably beautiful. The sheen of the eyes, the brilliance of the countenance, the perfect proportion of the features, and the indescribable charm of the whole person, were such that Nana was at once smitten with her beauty. After the lady resumed her veil, the thought struck Nana, “Shall I have another opportunity of seeing this angelic face?” Baba at once slapped him on the thigh. Then the ladies departed. Baba asked him, “Do you know why I slapped you?” Nana admitted that his thoughts were low and unfit for one in Baba’s company. He asked, “How is it that even when I am next to you, such low thoughts sway my mind?” Baba replied, “You are a man after all, and the body being full of desires, these spring up as sense objects approach.”

Then Baba asked, “Are there not lovely temples with well colored exterior? When we go there, do we admire the exterior beauty or the God within? When you are seeing God within, do you ever care for the outside beauty of the building? Similarly, remember God is not only in temples. He is found in every creature.

“Therefore when you see a beautiful face, remember that it is a temple and the image of the God within is the Jiva, a pre-eminent part of the Universal Soul. So, think at once of God—or the Universal Soul in every object, whether beauteous or ugly. These forms reveal the God within. There is nothing wrong in admiring beauty (Shri Sai Satcharitra, Chapter: 49), but the thought must follow at once, ‘If this object is so beautiful, how much more beautiful and powerful must be

the God who made this object and inhabits it!’ Thinking thus, you will not get smitten by a beautiful face hereafter”. This was the upadesa(teaching) given to Nana. Baba had not to go further and stop him from any sinful acts due to lust.

O Baba! Did you, with the semblance of none other than Thy own, not pull Nana Saheb Chandorkar out from the furnace of passion? After all,

Thy acts being four Yugs !

- Dr. Subodh Agarwal

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Main



Experiences of Sai Maharaj

Experiences recorded by late hon. Hari Sitaram Dixit :-

(43)

“YOU WILL GET WELL”

Once, Bapusaheb Jog was stung by a scorpion. It was around 8 pm. He immediately went to Maharaj. As he was climbing the steps, Baba asked, “What is it Bapusaheb?” To which he replied, “Baba, I have been stung by a scorpion!” Baba said, “You will get well. Go!” Bapusaheb turned and by the time he had left the premises, the pain had stopped completely.

Sai Leela year I,

Paush, Shaka 1845, Vol. XI

(44)

**AN EXCERPT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY HON. VASUDEV SITARAM RATANJANKAR,
HYDERABAD RESIDENCY.**

“I first came to know of Sai and his *Leelas* from Kushabhau (Vedshastra Sampanna Krishnanathbuva Mirajgaonkar Joshi) in 1908. Many people invited him for *Puja* and honoured him. This routine went on for many days in the village. Once there was a *Puja* at Vedshastra Sampanna Sitarambhatji Ghate. Since he was my maternal uncle, I happened to be present at the *Puja*. Listening to the stories of Sai, it occurred to me that Sai (i.e. his devotee) should visit my house to perform a *Puja*. Just then Maharaj said, “I am coming to your house tomorrow”. Thinking about the *Puja* arrangements, I went home happily and informed everyone about it.

At dawn, my mother Gangabai dreamt of a sage garbed in saffron clothing coming straight into our house. My mother offered him a place to sit, but he stood in that place and as my mother touched his feet with her head, she woke up. She told everyone about her dream, but no one paid much attention to it.

That very day I went for the *Puja* again at my uncle’s house. While giving *Tirtha -Prasad*, Maharaj gave me Sai’s photo which was kept in the *Puja* and told me to worship it every day. When I came home with the photo, my family members realised the significance of my mother’s dream. Later I invited Maharaj (Shri Krishnanath Maharaj) for lunch and requested him to perform the *Puja*. This is how I came to know of Sai.

After listening to people’s experiences of Sai time and again, I felt a desire to take Sai’s *darshan* and be blessed. However this could happen only 2-3 years later, in 1912. I was to go to Mumbai to see the arrival of the King of the British Empire, but one fine morning Shri Shivdas Dhate gave me a ticket to Shirdi. I took it as an

invitation from Baba, cancelled my Mumbai visit and left for Shirdi the very same evening. There I experienced a lot of miracles and signs. Since I felt like writing some poems on Sai I also wrote a 'Padyamala'.

An example of the many miracles is that of Late Smt. Malanbai, daughter of Late Shri Damodar Ranganath Joshi Degaonkar and also my maternal cousin. She was suffering from fever for a long time which ultimately turned to be TB. Many doctors and medicines were tried but to no avail. In the end we started giving her Baba's *Udi* along with the medicines. Fed up of her illness, Malanbai kept saying, "Take me for Baba's *darshan*. Only then will I be cured." But she was so weak that she could barely sit. Travelling would have been dangerous. In the end the doctors relented and gave her permission to go, thinking there could be some psychological benefit. She was taken to Shirdi accompanied by 2-3 other people.

As soon as Baba saw her he started hurling abuses and said, "Let her lie on a blanket. Give her only water from the *matka* (clay pot) to drink." She lay there for 7-8 days surviving only on water, but kept repeating that only Baba would cure her.

7-8 days later, even though it was past Baba's time to get up, he did not. People who had gone for *Kakad Aarti* waited patiently, but kept wondering why Baba was not getting up.

On the other hand Malanbai passed away and some of her relatives started making the funeral arrangements. Her mother and mine sat next to Malanbai in grief. Sathekaka (a devotee) tried to comfort them. Suddenly Malanbai moved, yawned and opened her eyes. She looked quite terrified and looked all around. A wave of happiness spread among the people around her and they listened as she narrated her story. "A black man was taking me with him when I cried for Baba's help. Baba came and beat up the man with his baton ('*Sota*'), saved me from his clutches and took me inside the *Chavdi*." She described the *Chavdi* without ever having been there.

While here in the *Chavdi*, people were discussing why Baba was yet asleep when suddenly Baba woke up pounding his baton ('*Sota*') and ran to the place where the girl was staying (Dixit's Wada). People followed him and met those who were coming to report the girl's miraculous coming to life. Thus Baba proved how he saved his devotees even from death. There are many more miracles but lack of space constrains me."

Shri Vasudev Sitaram Ratanjankar

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Sri Sai Leela Year I Paush Shaké 1845 Vol II

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YOUR FLUTE

I was made eternally for Your lips eternally;
You know it. Nothing is new.
It is not sheer injustice to put me off
Out of use! Keeping me mute and dull.
You made me grow from a sapling -
Of bamboo in a jungle secluded wild.
You made me ripe there and... and...
And finally cut to size to the shape of a pipe,
For Your colossal play. I was heated on flames
Perhaps to strengthen me, to temper me.
But that was not all.

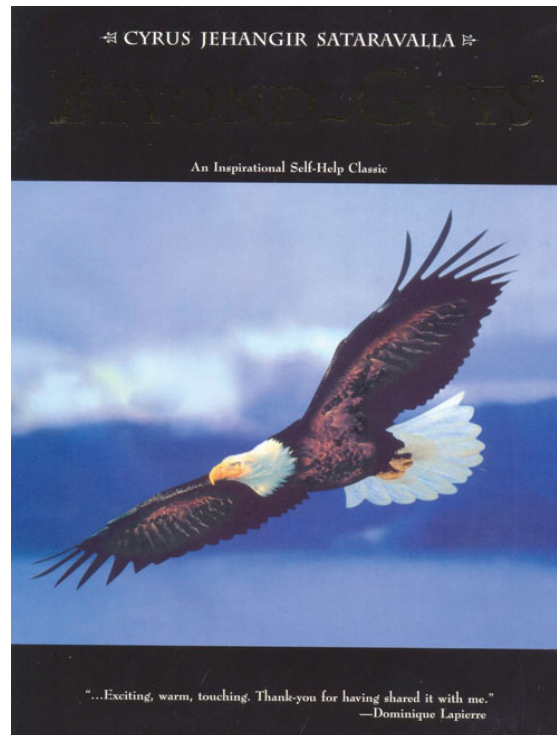
A hot drill made five holes to create the notes.
Was it just to allow the air pass through?
Nay, No my dear! I wasn't just for that
My mouth touched You lips, You breathed in me.
Your finger - tips on the holes.
And lo! The harmony divine produced.
It's now since a long long horrifying time,
I am away from you.
I endured the process of my coming into being,
I did. But now how much long longed time's elapsed.
Cracks have started coming on my contour.
Keep me no more away.
I won't lament the final crack,
Oh! the finale. But before that -
Play Your music. Put me on Your lips.
That is my place. Move Your fingers.
I am Your flute darling! Don't forget.
I am Your music enchanting. Keep it on.
I crave and pine for Your symphony.
After all I am Your flute. Don't forget.

- Dr. J. L. Sharma

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Sai Experiences



Cyrus Jehangir Sataravalla, a Pune-based author and 'New Thought Wizard'

'Beyond Guts' in his 928 pages of inspirational Self Help classic takes you on a guided tour of his journey called 'life'.

The book chronicles how every time life handed him a lemon, he turned it into the delicious lemonade. The lemonade has been served in these pages for all to partake.

The book is an interesting read; the language is ornate and stylishly metaphoric at times, but reveals poignantly facets of life leaving us asking for more.

The book has a 'pick me up' appeal as it has eye catchy layout with interesting fonts, beautiful sketches, photographs, pictures, anything and everything to hold you spell bound.

Cyrus is a devotee of Shirdi Sai, a few excerpts from the book will enrich our understanding about Guru / guide and his journey to Shirdi-

Excerpt:

Chapter 10 The Boat Guide (page 94)

The guide will appear. As you walk along life's river, a guide shall appear. Once inwardly prepared. Such a guide is with you now. Each moment. To steer your every thought. Conscious choice & not, merely chance is the key-word.

There is a strange phenomenon - as we push forward: As we demonstrate the quality of success, to our amazement, when we appear to be confronted with a dilemma - just at that moment, quite like a man appearing out of the mist on a river, we find we have reached a 'Way-Shower.' Someone, as it were - to show us the path (tariqat) ahead. How many realize, as they set off up the dark mountain of success, the number of sign-posts they will come upon. The number of 'Way-Showers' who will be waiting to help them on into the next stage. How obvious then that it is we who must set out. We, who must go on in faith. We, who must reach the cross-roads. We,

who must climb to the level of the 'Way-Shower'. Our Yearning-to-be - and Willingness-to-do goes a long way on the quest.

Chapter 49 A Detour to Destiny

I had just conducted a "Motivation the Fire-Factor," seminar at the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce and Industries, in Pune. The workshop was a most wonderful one. I felt the accompanying fulfillment within. Each one felt deeply touched. Energized, and re-connected with their inborn dynamic powers. While pulsing my thought that morning. I was in great discomfort. I gave it scant regard. Concentrating, instead on the mission at hand. All went perfectly.

By the time I reached home, the pain was intense. An annoying simple enough hiccup started all of a sudden. The hiccups stayed with me by night and day. For an hour, then another hour then on and on. They hounded me round the clock. Racking and wrenching me from deep inside. Tormenting me unabated a seven-day bout. In spite of the best medical attention, they relentlessly prevented me from sleeping or eating and exhausted me physically.

My Mother called my aunt Shirin in Mumbai, to fix an appointment with the illustrious surgeon Dr. Tehemton E. Udawadia, much to my reluctance. Thoughts of a second surgery were the furthest from my mind. By morning, we set off to meet him. I lay flat on the rear seat of the red van. At regular intervals the hiccups continued. I felt as one sapped of all energy. The very breath flowing out of me. Cookie, encouraged me, but those hiccups continued unabated.

DETOUR TO A SHRINE

It must have been after two hours of continuous shaking, as I would brace myself, for those never-ending hiccups, that for no apparent rational reason, I felt an overwhelming impulse. A compelling & irresistible need to sit-up. In that moment I saw a beautiful picture of the self-luminous Saint I hold sacred, looking at me, with deeply compassionate eyes, from a board on the highway. I sensed an indescribable super-natural-force draw and beckon me-on. My pain was forgotten, in a flash.

Excited, I asked that the car be turned around. It happened so fast. We had overshot by a kilometre. My Mother asked me to wait until our return, from Mumbai when I could visit the shrine, under more relaxed circumstances. However, my mind was made up.

So we drove back. A right-hand turn brought us to a broken & pot-holed, extremely rough pathway, off the highway, leading us to a temple of Shirdi Sainath. One, of great beauty. A pervasive spiritual force permeated this silent, abode. I walked bent over & from my depths sought His blessings. I returned from Mumbai, a month later. After a second greatly successfully surgery, performed by Dr. Tehemton Udawadia. During our first meeting, we bonded instantly. The secure feeling of instinctively knowing, one is in the right hands.

My surgeon was an astoundingly positive man. Deeply humane. Infinitely kind. For me the worlds best surgeon. There some complications during my surgery, but everything turned out wonderfully. Powerful and immensely positive.

Tehemton - bless you always. For a million reasons. Not least, for the new lease on life. Most of all for not fitting me with a Colostomy bag. Which you could have done. As I slept, deep under anaesthesia. So well, I recall you telling me later, that the thought had crossed your mind during the procedure. I remember you saying: "Knowing, your fiery Nature, Cyrus, I decided against it in spite of all the odds."

Do you recall a dream (khwaab), I mentioned in your clinic years ago? It will come true. I have kept it alive, large as life in my mind. You are the first I will share it with as it does. Presently other challenges & greater work call. How fortunate & blessed are those who come to you Tehemton.

Each of my experiences reveals that the universal presence of grace & caring are all around. Especially, during the darkest hours. I have found during such times the soul speaks a language,

which must be “followed.” By “staying resolute,” during those bleakest moments, invincible forces are worked through you. Ones that course through you being like a surging sea.

Many of the people, in the adjoining rooms (I have never liked the usual term used for those admitted in hospital) and some nurses, and ward-attendants often spent time in my room. Some of my most powerful experiences, occurred during the simple moments, we shared together. Much, of what we shared is not included here.

Govind was in the next room. My Mother would spend time with his kind sister, Bindiya. A photograph of the Qutb–Shirdi Sainath from the Panvel Shrine, adorned my heart & my room as well. With all the tubing & associated paraphernalia surgery brings, I felt within myself, a rise & upsurge of hidden spiritual strength & courage, to transcend the situation. To draw added succour & wisdom from. To reside in spirit.

Beyond, the taint of temporary trauma. Only the physical body feels limitation. This helped me tap ‘that’ invisible source. ‘Beyond’ all body limitations. To a point far beyond my physical outer body, on the bed. Awake, to the transcendent realm of spirit.

My Mother, through all my trials, has been a ‘Source of Grace.’ And granite strength. Her still power and steady prayers radiated a spiritual strength, to make me soar. On the huge inner wings-of-thought. Through which I was granted my life back. To write you this story.

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“It is Sai’s grace, that I got the unique opportunity to give my voice to the Sai Mantra”

In Kalyug Namasmarna is given utter importance. The Namasmarna has the power to ferry safely the devotee across the worldly ocean. The Namasmarna of the principle deity, family deity, or guru results in contentment in our life.

‘Om Shri Sainathaya Namah’ and ‘Om Shri Sai, Jai Jai Sai’ these two Sai Mahamantra give us immense joy, which all devotees of Baba I am sure have experienced. Just imagine what would be the divine experience of the person who sang this Mantra!

These two Mahamantras are sung by Shri Mahendra Kapoor and Smt. Anoopama Deshpande. I got an opportunity with Sai’s Grace to speak to Anoopama Deshpande. She was blissfully overjoyed while reminiscing about her experiences during the recording of the sound track of the Mahamantra. She recalled, “This incident took place in 1996 when I was singing for Venus Cassette Company. It was during this time that the Company decided to release the Sai Mahamantra cassette. They asked me whether I will lend my voice to the cassette and I tell you that I was simply overwhelmed; because, right from my childhood I was devoted to Baba, so I always thought, ‘everything happening in my life is Baba’s wish’. Hence, I presumed to myself that the Mantra should be in my voice is also Baba’s wish. So I immediately agreed.”

She added, “The recording took place at Radio Gyms studio in Worli. I never thought I am singing for the cassette. It was as if I am doing Mantra japa for Baba! This resonated with me even more vibrantly when I saw Baba’s picture in the studio. It was as if I was sitting right in front of Sai Baba and reciting the Mantra! Hence, I sang it with my eyes closed with heartfelt devotion. My destiny is so divine that the thought that I want to sing before Baba manifested, when I got this opportunity.”

She informs, “Shree Sai Sansthan at Shirdi plays this Mahamantra in the Samadhi Mandir morning till evening. Till date I feel it is a dream. The Mahamantra playing in the Samadhi Mandir is possible only with Baba’s wish, because, not even a leaf will shake without His wish. While singing this Mantra the joy I got, the satisfaction I got is indescribable. Even today when I do Baba’s Namasmarna, I relive the whole experience.

“I have to travel for doing programmes because of which I have to stay sometimes outside the house at night, but in spite of it I have never felt alone. This is because Baba’s Namasmarna is on. There are many incidents which I could deal capably with because of the Namasmarna. Baba’s miracles are unlimited. When Sansthan released the Aarti cassette- CD did I experience Baba fame. The sound track was recorded at Napoleon studio in Juhu, Mumbai. Even at that time there was a picture of Baba in front of me, and again I felt as if Baba is sitting in front of me when I was singing. This experience was divinely mystical. The recording of the sound track was to take a day or two longer as the musical score of some Aarti’s were being redone; but to everyone astonishment they all were recorded in a day!”

She avers, “By Baba’s Grace I have sang about 3,000 songs and they are in Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Odissi, Kannad, Nepali, etc. I have sung filmy numbers, Bhavgeet, Balgeet, Bhaktigeet, etc. With Baba’s blessing my programmes of film songs and Bhaktigeet are becoming very popular. In India I have sang in Delhi, West Bengal, Goa, Lucknow, Raipur, Jharkhand, Bhopal, etc. and abroad in United States of America, Nairobi, Holland, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Muscat, Dubai, etc. My programme at Toronto’s world famous Waderland Stadium was very well received. Today, whatever I have accomplished in the field of playback singing is because of Baba.

“I feel I should do Sai Seva while doing cine Seva, because my voice is Baba’s boon. For the past few years I am involved in propagating Sai Bhakti through music. I am reaching out Baba’s teaching through my programmes. At the end of it I feel it His Boon, which I am trying to sublimate at His Feet, rest is Allah Malik.”

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Main

In Sai's Proximity



DASGANU MAHARAJ

(Contd. from last issue)

(Translated from an article in Marathi, first published in SAILEELA May – June and July – August (part) 2008 Issues)

Darshan and Sahavas of Yogi

This is an incident of 1919, the year in which, Das Ganoo's wife passed away. To perform the religious rites after her death, Das Ganoo went to the banks of Holy River Godavari at Nanded. There, he happened to meet a great Yogi – in whose company Das Ganoo found solace. He began meeting the Yogi every day and as time progressed, he even began pestering the Yogi to teach him Yogic Kriyas.

The Yogi gave an apt and perfect advice to Das Ganoo. He said, "To become a Yogi, it is necessary to do Sadhana from an early age. For you, it is not possible to do so at this advanced age. As a person grows in age, he / she is prone to become a victim (in varying degrees) of the six demons – Shat-Ripu – Kaam, Krodh, Lobh, Mad, Moh and Matsar. These are the obstacles in the path towards Paramarth."

The Sadhu dealt a bigger blow when he asked, "Ganoo, you call yourself a Kirtan-kar. But you have not given up your Ahankaar (ego) which is a hindrance in the way of Bhakti Marg. Have you? A Sanyaasi must have no ego in any form. Do you recall that you had



refused to drink the water of Holy Ganga which sprung at the feet of Shree Saibaba? You believed that by drinking it you will get converted to Muslim Faith! Do you realize how big is your ego? At least now careful about these matters! However, let me also say that you are correct in choosing the path of Bhakti Marg.”

The Sadhu narrated several incidents about Saibaba which had taken place in Das Ganoo's life and thereafter he disappeared.

Das Ganoo had spent about 15-20 days in the company of the Sadhu. These left a deep impression on his mind. He had gathered some information about Yog Sadhana from the Yogi and began performing the acts. He could easily swallow a strip of cloth – say 4-5 fingers in width and 40 hands in length. He continued performing these feats till about 1940.

The MahanYogi had openly ridiculed Das Ganoo's desire to become a Yogi. Das Ganoo not only learnt the lesson but also spread the message amongst his audience. This showed how large was his heart.

The incident mentioned above has been recorded by Das Ganoo in his writings.

Daily chores

Das Ganoo's daily routine was very simple. Everyday he would get up at around 3-4 a.m. and began Prat-Smaran (morning JAP). He would spend about 1 hour in Pathan, Dhyana and Chintan. He had composed “Ashtak” (a poem containing 8 Stanzas) on various saints. He would sing the “Ashtak” every day. In the afternoon, he would recite 12 Paaths of Vishnu-Sahastra-Naam.

After bath and pooja, he would devote his time for his writings. This would continue till late in the night.

Ram Navami Utsav

Das Ganoo and Tatyia Kote Patil looked after all the preparations and management of this Holy Day. Even today, the Festival is being celebrated in Shirdi as per the practices laid down by Das Ganoo.

Das Ganoo personally attended all Ram Navami Utsav till 1953. Thereafter, because of his health he could not attend the festivals any more.

Till 1937, after the Festival, Das Ganoo stayed in Shirdi for about 2 to 2 ½ months and thereafter proceeded to Pune for the Paalkhee of Shree Dnyaneshwar Maharaj.

In the first three years of the Ram Navami Festival, the Kirtans were performed by Shree Bhishma (first year), by Shree Baala-bua Sutar (second year) and Shree Baala-bua Satarkar (third year).

In the fourth year, Baba asked Das Ganoo to deliver the Kirtan. From that year till 1944, Das Ganoo performed Ram Navmi Kirtan without a break. After 1944, due to reasons of advanced age etc, he passed on the responsibility to Damu-anna's son Shree Anantrao Athavale. He performed the Kirtans upto 1985.

Every year, after Ram Navmi, he used to write a report in “Shree Saileela” on the celebration of the festival as it was celebrated in Shirdi. Once he wrote:

“Many have contributed to the successful celebration of the Festival this year – by attending, by extending helping hands, by contributing financially. May Shree Samarth bestow health, esteem safety and security upon them and their children! We all are the innocent children of Maharaj. Our protection is in the hands of Shree Samarth. We may commit sins or mistakes – knowingly or unknowingly or due to mortal attractions. May the

Maharaj condone our such wrongful acts. I pray on behalf of everyone. I request Him to allow us to serve Him year by year.”

New practice

From 1938, Das Ganoo started a practice of carrying water from Ganga (Godavari) for the Ram Navami Festival. The water is carried in a procession with great fanfare and poured at the feet of Shree Saibaba. Even today, the practice is followed with great enthusiasm.

Sai Punyatithi Utsav

While writing about Ram Navami Utsav, it would be appropriate to mention about Sai Punyatithi Utsav observed in Das Ganoo's room at Pandharpur.

On the night of His Nirvan (in the early morning of 16th October 1918) when Baba laid down His mortal body, Das Ganoo was in Pandharpur. Baba appeared in his dream and directed him, “My Masjid is in a dilapidated condition. Come here and fill it with flowers.”

It is well-known that Das Ganoo immediately rushed to Shirdi and began recitation of Baba's name.

The Saints may depart from this mortal world but they take a permanent place in the hearts of their devotees.

The Photograph was left behind

It was Das Ganoo's practice to go to Pandharpur on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashmi / Dassera and avail darshan on Shree Vithoba. However, he did not have a place of his own in Pandharpur where he could reside. He was, therefore, searching for a suitable small house.

He located one such house but some local people were not inclined to let him have it. Here Baba came to his rescue. The first thing Das Ganoo noticed upon entering the house was a photograph of Shree Saibaba. It seemed that the earlier occupant had forgotten to carry it!

On further investigation it turned out that the photo frame belonged to one Rao-saheb Mhaskar.

Shree Mhaskar had been a very senior Govt. Official in Thane District. After retirement, he decided to move to his native village Andhal-Gaon. He left for the place along with all his belongings including the large Photo Frame.

On the way, he decided to visit Pandharpur. A spare room was made available by his acquaintance Shree Anna-Saheb Gogate. Mhaskar stored his things in the room and went to avail darshan of Shree Vithoba. Later on, he moved to his native place with all his things except the large Photo Frame. His plan was to come for it at a later date and carry it safely in a special Tonga.

On two or three occasions, he made plans to visit Pandharpur for the sole purpose of bringing back the Frame. But every time, for some reason or the other, he had to drop the idea.

In due course, Rao-Saheb passed away. The spare room continued to remain locked and the Frame remained undisturbed in it.

Two years passed and Das Ganoo began searching for a room to stay. His search ended at the above place! This indicates that Baba had taken possession of the room specifically for Das Ganoo – more than two years in advance!

Later on, Das Ganoo began observing Baba's Punya-Tithe in this very room at Pandharpur.

On that day, Das Ganoo used to follow following practice:

In the morning, Pavmaan Rudra-Abhishek and Maha-Pooja were performed. Thereafter, a well-known Kirtan-kar used to perform Kirtan in front of Baba. Teerth-Prasad and Bramhan-Bhojan followed. From 2 pm to 6 pm, 60 Scholars from various branches of religious sciences chanted various Mantras. Besides this, Chakri Puran was performed wherein turn by turn each Puranik used to explain one Shlok. About 40 Puraniks used to take part in this from 6 pm to 10 pm. After this, the program used to conclude.

Besides observing Baba's Punya-Tithe in Pandharpur, Das Ganoo delivered Kirtans on all the days of Navaratra in the Rakhumai Temple.

Das Ganoo's above residence still exists in Khiste Galli of Pandharpur.

Outspoken nature – an invitation for misunderstandings

By nature, Das Ganoo was very much outspoken and always stood by truth.

He steadfastly believed that while pursuing the path of PARAMARTH one must be prepared to face trials and tribulations and must not compromise. However, it was observed that people are willing to face any amount of hardships in their day-to-day life. But when similar obstacles are faced on the path of PARAMARTH, almost everyone gives it up rather easily. They say "they did not get desired experience" or "they had practical difficulties in daily life."

This nature of human beings amazed Das Ganoo.

He cautioned people about falling prey to the magical tricks of phony God-men. He hated lies and hypocrisy. He said, "The human nature tends to get attracted by the show and spectacle of POOJA and also towards the outward show of some of the fake God-man. However, it is not advisable to get carried away like this. While sitting at the feet of God, a true BHAKTA is expected to give his full concentration and devotion." From time to time, he propounded this advice through his Kirtnas.

His speech was extremely forthright and outspoken. But his mind was very pure. He had no tolerance towards hypocrisy and pompous rituals in the name of religion. To him, inner purity was of supreme importance. Therefore, he deliberately avoided all invitations for felicitations etc. He always said, "Lord Pandurang is the mother of this universe. A person will be happier if he gets rid of false notions about fellow human-beings in the world."

The likelihood of his forthright and outspoken nature having hurt many people cannot be ruled out. Rather this possibility was almost a certainty. However, Das Ganoo never had any intention of hurting anyone nor did he do so with a view to extract vengeance.

Kaka-Saheb Dixit was a man with a very gentle heart. He had great regard for Das Ganoo and could not stand if anyone talked ill about him. Kaka-Saheb always said, "Why try to point out deficiencies and defects of others? Concentrate your attention on his good qualities and try to inculcate them in yourself."

(Contd.)

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Translated from original Marathi into English by [Sudhir](#)



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