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Main

Karmanyē Vaadikaarastye Maa Phaleshu Kadaachana

Ma Karma Phalaheturbu Maa te sainghostva Karmani

(Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter 2, Shloka 47)

“You have a right to perform the prescribed work; but you are not entitled to the fruits of your action. Never consider yourself the cause for the results of your activities, and never be attached to inaction.”

This *shloka* is regarded as Shrimad Bhagvad Gita’s one of the most important verses as it summarizes the entire philosophy of ‘Karma’. This is a very popular *shloka* oft repeated and quoted by people in various contexts. It demands that the seeker develops the knowledge of ‘right action’. *Dnyan* and *Karma* have to mingle, and together they take the seeker to higher planes of spiritual enlightenment.

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna gave an inspiring message to Arjun, which became known as Shrimad Bhagvad Gita - the song celestial. The 700 verses rendered by Lord Krishna are considered as quintessence of Hinduism and reflects the wisdom of Upanishads. Srimad Bhagvad Gita is part of epic Mahabharat and is contained in Bhishma *Parva*, Chapters 23-40.

When Arjun saw revered teachers, beloved friends and close relatives on his enemy side, he was overtaken by grief and despair. As a result, he chose to lay down his arms. In fact, Arjun wanted to escape from the war, go to the forest, and become a *sannyasi*. He did not want to face the terrible consequences of war.

Lord Krishna categorically warned him not to do so, knowing well, that for a short while Arjun might find peace in the forest, but would soon get involved in the life of forest and his *kshatriya* tendencies will manifest again. Lord Krishna taught Arjun :

Karmanyē Vaadikaarastye

Maa Phaleshu Kadaachana

Ma Karma Phalaheturbu

Maa te sainghostva Karmani

(Srimad Bhagvad Gita,

Chapter 2, Shloka 47)

“You have a right to perform the prescribed work; but you are not entitled to the fruits of your action. Never consider yourself the cause for the results of your activities, and never be attached to inaction.”

Thus, nearly six thousand years ago, a dazzling flash of brilliant light lit up the firmament of human civilization. That flash, that marvelous spiritual effulgence, was the message of the Srimad Bhagvad Gita, given by the Lord Himself on the holy field of Kurukshetra. Unlike ordinary flashes of light which die away after a split-second, this brilliant flash of that memorable day has continued to shine through the centuries, and even now illumines the path of humanity on its onward march to perfection.

The above *shloka* has to be divided into four quarters to understand it fully :

- a) ***Karmanye Vaadikarastye*** : You have a right to perform the prescribed work.
- b) ***Maa Phaleshu Kadaachana*** : You are not entitled to the fruits of your action.
- c) ***Maa Karma Phalaheturbu*** : Never consider yourself the cause for the results of your activities.
- d) ***Maa te sainghostva Karmani*** : Never be attached to inaction.

Sai Baba was impressed by the philosophy of Shrimad Bhagvad Gita and wanted people to follow the essence of the above *shloka*.

The author Hemadpant soliloquized while writing ‘the story of grinding wheat’ in Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 1, “What business Baba had with the grinding of wheat, when He possessed nothing and stored nothing, and as He lived on alms !”

Immediately, this news of Baba’s grinding wheat spread into the village, and at once, men and women ran to the Dwarkamai - *Masjid* and flocked there to see Baba’s act. Four bold women, from the crowd, forced their way up and pushing Baba aside, took forcibly the peg or handle into their hands, and, singing Baba’s *leelas*, started grinding.

At first, Baba was enraged; but on seeing the women’s love and devotion, He was much pleased and began to smile. He was smiling, because He knew the past, present and the future, and since He knew very shortly, how the drama was going to unfold.

While they were grinding, they began to think that Baba had no house, no property, no children, none to look after, and He lived on alms, He did not require any wheat-flour for making *roti* (bread), what will He do with this big quantity of flour ? Perhaps as Baba is very kind, He will distribute the flour amongst us. Thinking in this way while singing, they finished the grinding and after putting the hand-mill aside, they divided the flour into four portions and began to remove them one per head.

Baba, Who was calm and quiet up till now, got wild and started abusing them saying -“Ladies, are you gone mad ? Whose father’s property are you *looting* away ? Have I borrowed any wheat from you, so that you can safely take the flour ? Now, please do one thing ! Take the flour and throw it on the village border limits.”

On hearing this, the women felt abashed and whispering amongst them, went away to the outskirts of the village and spread the flour as directed by Baba.

Looked at from the ordinary human point of view, this episode brings home the truth, that even while doing good *Karma* (action), we get attached to the fruits or the result of the *Karma*. Sai has rightly rebuked them and us and advised us to work without any expectation of the results for the work which we do. This is perfectly in accordance with Lord Krishna’s teaching to Arjun in Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, that one should do ones’ duty, but without attachment to the result :

Karmanye Vaadikaarastye Maa Phaleshu Kadaachana (You have a right to perform the prescribed work; but you are not entitled to the fruits of your action.)

“Ladies, are you gone mad ? Have I borrowed any wheat from you, so that you can safely take the flour ?”

Yes, those ladies and all of us, who hanker after reward for action, are ‘mad’ with *adnyan* (ignorance). Greed is the root cause of madness. If we try to take, what is not rightly ours, we get into *karmic* debt, which we have to repay with interest in the present or future life. Thus Sai, our Lord Krishna is teaching us His Gita.

Again, the following story from Shri Sai Sat Charita in illustration of the aforesaid *shloka* is in absolute conformity with Lord Krishna’s teaching to Arjun in Srimad Bhagvad Gita, that one

should never consider oneself the cause for the results of one's activities.

***Maa Karma Phalaheturbu* (Never consider yourself the cause for the results of your activities).**

Once, Vasudevanand Saraswati alias Tembye Swami Maharaj encamped at Rajamahendri on the banks of Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh. He was a *bhakta* (devotee) of Lord Dattatreya. One, Pundalikrao of Nanded (Nizam state) went to see him, with some of his friends. In the course of conversation, the name of Shirdi Sai Baba came up, and at the first mention of Sai Baba, Tembye Swami Maharaj folded his hands strictly on his chest expressing his profound regard to Sai Baba; and gave a coconut to Pundalikrao with the request - "Offer this gift to my brother Sai, with my *pranam* and request Him, not to forget me, but ever love me." Pundalikrao consented to take the responsibility.

After one month, Pundalikrao, taking his party and the coconut with him, left for Shirdi; and reached Manmad. Here, after feeling thirsty, they went to a nearby rivulet for drinking water. As water should not be drunk on an empty stomach, they took out some refreshments, i.e., *chivda* (flattened rice mixed with spice). The *chivda* tasted bitter; and in order to soften it, the coconut was broken and its scrapings were mixed with the *chivda*. Thus they made the *chivda* tasty and palatable. Unfortunately, the fruit broken, turned out to be the same, which was entrusted to Pundalikrao. As they neared Shirdi, Pundalikrao realized his mistake. He reached Shirdi, and trembling with fear, entered the Dwarkamai - *Masjid* to have Baba's *darshan*.

The Omnipresent and Omniscient Sai Baba knew all the developments. He Himself asked Pundalikrao first to give the 'things' sent by His brother. Pundalikrao held fast to Baba's Feet, confessed his guilt and negligence, repented, and asked for Baba's pardon. He offered to give another fruit as a substitute; but Baba refused to accept it, saying that, the worth of that coconut was by far, many times more, than an ordinary one and that, it could not be replaced by another one. Baba also added, "Now you need not worry yourself any more about the matter. It was on account of my wish, that the coconut was entrusted to you, and ultimately broken on the way; why should you take the responsibility of the actions on you? Do not entertain the sense of doer in doing good, as well as for bad deeds; be entirely free from pride and ego in all things, and thus your spiritual progress will be rapid." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 51)

Sai Baba was highly struck by the values of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and wanted people to follow the real meaning of ***Maa te sainghostva Karmani* (let not you be attached to inaction)** in their life to make life more meaningful and beautiful, as prescribed in Shri Sai Sat Charita thus :

"There is a proverb, which says - 'If there be my Hari (Lord), He will feed me on my cot.' This proverb is only true in respect of food and clothing; but if anyone trusting in this sits quiet and does nothing in spiritual matters, he will be ruined. One has to exert oneself to one's utmost for attaining self-realization. The more he endeavours, the better for him." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 18 & 19)

The quintessence of ***Maa te sainghostva Karmani* (let not you be attached to inaction)** is beautifully exemplified in the following instance :

There lived in Bandra (a suburb of Mumbai) a Tendulkar family, all the members of which were ardently devoted to Sai Baba. Babu, the son of Mr. & Mrs. Tendulkar, was preparing hard day and night to appear for the medical examination. He consulted some astrologers, and also got his horoscope examined. They told him, that his stars were not favourable that year, but added that he would certainly be successful the next year. This cast a shadow of gloom over him and made him restless. A few days afterwards his mother Mrs. Savitribai went to Shirdi to have Baba's *darshan*. Amongst other things she mentioned the gloomy and depressed condition of her son, who was to appear for the examination in a few days. Hearing this, Baba said to her, "Tell your son to believe in me, to throw aside horoscopes and predictions of astrologers and palmists and go on with his studies. Let him appear for the examination with a calm mind; and he is sure to pass this year. Ask him to trust in me and not to get disappointed." The mother returned home and communicated Baba's message to her son. Then Babu studied hard and in due course appeared for

the examination. In the written papers he did well; but being overwhelmed by doubts, he thought that, he would not secure sufficient marks for passing. So, he did not care to appear for the oral examination. But, the examiner was after him. He sent word through a fellow-student, stating that, he had passed in the written examination and that, he should appear for the oral. The son being thus encouraged, appeared for the oral examination and was successful in both. Thus he got through the examination that year successfully by Baba's grace, though the stars were against him. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 29)

The examples, cited above from Shri Sai Sat Charita, should be adequate to realize that the teaching which Lord Krishna gave Arjun on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is applicable to all of us. There is a certain amount of struggle involved at every step of our lives. Very often, instead of concentrating on our work, we worry about, how the work will turn out. This worry turns out to be a distraction and affects the outcome. Sometimes we also feel that in spite of the work we put in, we may not achieve the required result. So, instead of taking that risk, we prefer to skip the work itself to avoid disappointment. Many of us have reviled this principle as a fatalistic one, which preaches that one should have an attitude of resignation and passivity and let whatever happens, happen. This sort of attitude can be demoralizing and lead to demotivation. This *shloka* exhorts us to work to the best of our ability, irrespective of the outcome. It lays stress on the work itself; the fruit of the work is just a by-product. It asks us not to worry, whether the action will succeed or fail. It also tells us never to indulge in inaction.

Unless a man discharges satisfactorily and disinterestedly the duties of his station in life, his mind will not be purified and, unless his mind is purified, he cannot get self-realization. It is only in the purified mind that *viveka* (discrimination between the unreal and the real), and *vairagya* (non-attachment to the unreal) crop up and lead on the self-realization. Unless egoism is dropped, avarice got rid of, and the mind made desireless (pure), self-realization is not possible. The idea that 'I am the body' is a great delusion, and attachment to this idea is the cause of bondage. Leave off this idea and attachment therefore, if you want to get to the self-realization. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 16 & 17)

The message of Srimad Bhagvad Gita was not delivered on banks of the Ganges, nor inside caves, monasteries or at the outset of any hermit's dwelling place, but was conferred on the battlefield filled with belligerent armies, awaiting fierce encounter.

There are many saints, who leaving their houses, stay in forest, caves or hermitages and remaining in solitude, try to get liberation or salvation for themselves. They do not care for other people, and are always self-absorbed. Sai Baba was not of such a type. He had no home, no wife, no progeny, nor any relations, near or distant. Still, He lived in the world (society). He begged His bread from four or five houses, always lived at the foot of the (Neem) tree, carried on worldly dealings, and taught all the people, how to act, and behave in this world. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 16 & 17)

Actions alone are all that living entities are entitled to. The results however are only within the power of the Supreme Lord Krishna to give. So, it is apparent that one who is governed by the desire for fruitive results is not properly situated and has subconsciously desired the impossible delusion of usurping the Supreme Lords infallible position. One should understand that it is fallacious to believe that one is the ultimate controller of one's own destiny, because all results are ultimately ordained by the Supreme Lord.

Swami Vivekanand (1863 –1902) was the chief disciple of the 19th century mystic Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the founder of Ramakrishna Mission. He is considered a key figure in the introduction of Hindu philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga in Western World mainly in America and Europe, and is also credited with raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the end of the 19th century. According to him -

“Leave the fruits alone. Why care for results ? If you wish to help someone, never think, what that person's attitude should be towards you. If you want to do a great or a good work, do not

trouble to think, what the result will be.” (Karma Yoga, ‘Complete Works’, New York, 1895, 1: 33-34)

Swami Shridhar Maharaj has clearly made the same point in simpler language in his purport to the aforesaid *shloka* of the Shrimad Bhagvad Gita :

“The Supreme Lord (Lord Krishna) states that all living entities have the right to perform actions; but none have the right to claim the results. An aspirant of the highest knowledge must know that to hanker or yearn for reward for one’s actions is the cause of bondage in the material existence.”

It would be an enchanting and delightful experience for the devotee-readers to get themselves acquainted with the thumb-nail sketch of Swami Shridhar Maharaj.

Swami Shridhar Maharaj (1908-1973) was dedicated in the service of the Divine. He inspired the masses and reinforced the principles of ‘*Sanatan Dharma*’. In 1948, Swami Shridhar Maharaj came to Rishikesh in Uttarkhand after eight months of ‘*tapas*’ at Uttarkashi. Swami Shivanand, founder of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh immediately recognized him by his divine radiance and welcomed him and offered *pranams* to the great saint. Swami Shivanand told his disciples, “I walked a lot, but I have never seen any ‘*Tejasvi*’ or ‘*Tapasvi*’ of the order of Shridhar Swami Maharaj.

Karpatriji Maharaj was quoted as saying -“In the present age, Samarth Ramdas has himself come in the form of Shridhar Swami. *Dharma’s* establishment and social transformation has all been made possible by Shridhar Swami’s ‘*Akhand Tapas*’, ‘*Akhand Brahmanishtha*’ and ‘*Purna Dnyani*’ - such is the nature of Shridhar Swami.”

Likewise, Madhvacharya (1238–1317) was the most fascinating of the Hindu sage-philosophers and one of the greatest theistic thinkers of all time. He was the chief proponent of *Tattvavada* (Philosophy of Reality), popularly known as *Dvaita* or Dualistic school of Hindu philosophy. It is one of the three most influential *Vedanta* philosophies. Madhvacharya was one of the important philosophers during the *Bhakti* movement. He was a pioneer in many ways, going against standard conventions and norms. According to tradition, Madhvacharya is believed to be the third incarnation of *Vayu* (*Mukhyaprana*), after Hanuman and Bhima.

In his commentary on the aforementioned *shloka* of the Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, Madhvacharya has beautifully said,

“Actions performed without desire (for rewards) as a matter of duty are full of wisdom. Therefore, the wise are not bound by desire for rewards. That is why the Supreme Lord Krishna states the words *maa te* (i.e., never). Never be attached to the fruits of actions. Any desires which appear are ordained according to the ‘Will’ of the Supreme Lord. Those that receive the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord Krishna are the devotees of the Supreme Lord and by His grace they are benedicted by the desire only to exclusively serve Him. They have no desire for even liberation from material existence if it is to be separated from Him. When they are requested to ask for any desire to be granted, their only desire is to remain in service to Him birth after birth, lifetime after lifetime.”

And Last but not least, according to Kesava Kashmiri - the great, renowned scholar of Kashmir -

“Lord Krishna instructs that everyone has the right to perform actions in order to purify ones existence and advance in spiritual knowledge. But, one should not cultivate ones mind to think that by the right to perform actions one receives rewards. This mentality is destructive to spiritual advancement.”

The above commentaries illustrate the fact that all saints are one and show how they work in unison.

- Dr. Subodh Agarwal

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“...Always keep in mind that I come to know ever - everything, what you do...”

- Shri Sai Baba
Shri Sai Sat Charita,
Chapter 3, Verse 143

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DASGANU MAHARAJ

(Contd. from Nov.-Dec. 2010 issue)

“Simply carry on the tradition !”

The knowledge and advice that Dasganu imparted to Shri Anantrao (son of Shri Damuanna) was very valuable. He said :

“Ananta, listen carefully to what I say ! Intelligence alone cannot give solace to a man. The real bliss comes only through faith.

You have studied the literature composed by various saints. Out of these, now, Ananta, you must read everyday at least some portion out of either Dasbodh or Gatha or Dnyaneshwari. Decide, what you think is appropriate for you and everyday follow that for 10-15 minutes ! On one particular day you might feel bored or tired. But, even on such occasion, let there be no break in this rule that you set for yourself.

Don't be in a hurry to see 'the result' of your this steadfast routine. “Don't even ask question like “How long it will take?” Just follow the rule set by you !”

Anantrao writes -

“I followed this advice steadfastly for many years without a break or without being lethargic. It helped me in getting rid of my atheistic or irreligious nature. My faith grew and I began appreciating various facets of our Indian and Hindu culture in a new light. Whatever good feelings that people have about me are due to my adherence to Dada's teachings.”

While bestowing honors on Shri Dasganu's poetic contributions, Anantrao also admires his various other facets. This is seen in various articles written by Anantrao. He says -

“Shri Dasganu is the only heir of the rich traditions of various saints (at least as of today). The title 'Saint Poet' is apt for him. I am of the opinion that this name ably describes the various sides and strengths of his poetic contributions. His way of life and the literature he penned also conform to the title of 'Saint Poet'.

His writings are not lopsided. He had a strong dislike for the pompous and artificial practices followed by the society. He was pained to see the fighting between various castes and creeds. His heart used to bleed for the people who were being treated as 'untouchables'. He hated the existence of middle-men at places of pilgrimage. He has condemned the various 'buvas' and 'babas' who have 'appeared' and prospered in the society.”

Anantrao was a devoted disciple and hence, he continued Dasganu's tradition till he breathed his last. In the latter part of his life, he took Sannyas and adopted the name 'Varadanand Bharati'.

The method of Baba's teachings

From the very beginning, to set Dasganu on the path of religion, Baba imparted various lessons to him. Some of these are worth studying. They contributed a rare, extraordinary and pious quality to his way of life.

* Like Nanasaheb Chandorkar, Dasganu followed several orthodox practices. These forbid him from drinking the holy water touched Baba's Feet. He was pained by this as the water was considered to be from holy river of Ganga. Therefore, instead of drinking it, he sprinkled it over his head. Bapusaheb Jog complained to Baba about Dasganu's this behavior. Baba replied, “Let Ganu follow the path of his sect ! You people should not try and force him to do anything against his wishes.”

At most of the times, Baba allowed people to follow the practices of their own sects and religions. There were also times when Baba insisted on a particular matter, but he did this without hurting the feelings of others.

* Baba liked onions very much. On the other hand, Dasganu – being very orthodox – hated onions. Once, Baba asked Dasganu to bring a dish made with onions. He brought it. Baba asked him, “Did you eat it ?” Dasganu faltered, but said “Yes” in a very low tone. In reality, he had just taken a little of the dish and smeared it from his lower lip to his chin.

Of course, Baba knew the truth. He imitated Dasganu and said, “This Ganu is just pretending. Those who cannot digest onions should not eat them. But, there are people who falsely believe that eating onions leads to increases one’s cravings. This is wrong. Just by abstaining from eating onion one cannot be sure that he will not get bad desires. There are several other things which can lead to the same thing.

After this incident, Dasganu began having onions as long as Baba continued living in His mortal body. The only exception was the *ekadashi* days.

* Shri Walambi was working as a station master at Kopargaon. He did not have any faith in Baba. He believed that Baba was a myth created by people who surrounded Him. One day, Dasganu persuaded Walambi and brought him before Baba in the *Masjid*. At that time, Baba was washing His various utensils and putting them for drying - with their upside down. Walambi asked Him, what He was doing. Baba replied, Every pot and pan which comes here with upside down - meaning everyone comes empty when they come to Baba and He fills them with the name of God !

* Almost everyone knows that it was Baba Who asked Dasganu to do away with the clothes traditionally worn by *Kirtankars* and thus follow the pioneer of *Kirtans* – Shri Narad Muni. After that incident, Dasganu stayed in Shirdi for about a month. Then - with the onset of the holy month of Ashwin - he began to strongly feel the urge to go to the pilgrim town of Pandharpur and perform a *Kirtan* there. Baba refused to give him permission to leave Shirdi and Dasganu felt that his desire may not get fulfilled. He also rued that “What is this queer nature of my *Guru* ? It comes in the way of my desire to avail the *Darshan* of Lord Vitthal !” The moment these thoughts came to Dasganu’s mind, Baba said, “Ganu, you go to Pandharpur !” He even told Nanasahab Chandorkar not to stop Dasganu from leaving Shirdi.

* In the initial period, Dasganu used to feel that the *bhakti* should enable to meet the God that he worships. He repeatedly sought Baba’s help in this matter. Every time, Baba used to tell him to wait a little. One day, Dasganu’s patience wore thin and exasperatedly he asked, “Baba, every time you just give promises. When will I be able to have ‘*Sakshatkar*’ ?” Baba replied, “Ganu, you are seeing me. Is it not a ‘*Sakshatkar*’ ? I am the Lord Almighty.” Dasganu retorted - “I knew that you are going to give some such reply.” At least on that occasion, Dasganu was not satisfied.

* This incident took place while Dasganu Maharaj was in Shirdi. A person - who was a habitual thief - had been apprehended for stealing precious stones. When he was questioned about the gems, he said that, the same were given to him by Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi. The court summoned Baba, but Baba did not respond. Therefore, the court issued an arrest warrant.

Nanasahab Chandorkar took the initiative and motivated the residents of Shirdi. They presented a written plea to the court stating that ‘Baba is a man of God. All His devotees consider Him to be the Almighty. If such a person is arrested, there would be serious repercussions.’ They all signed and sent the application to Dhule.

The Dhule court formed a commission and set up a small court in the *Masjid* at Shirdi. The following verbal exchange took place there :-

Court : What is your name ?

Baba : They call me Sai Baba.

Court : Name of your father ?

Baba : Sai Baba.

Court : Name of your *Guru* ?

Baba : Venkusha.

Court : Religion or sect ?

Baba : The sect of Kabir.

Court : Caste ?

Baba : *Parvardigar*.

Court : Do you know such and such accused ?

Baba : I know everyone.

Court : Did you give these gems to him ?

Baba : Yes – I gave them to him. Who gives and what and to whom ! Everything is mine !

Court : Did the accused stay with you ?

Baba : Yes – I stay with everyone and each person is mine.

Baba had answered all the questions in the affirmative. Ultimately, the court referred to the diary maintained at Shirdi and found that the accused had not come to Shirdi. He was sent to rigorous imprisonment.

* Once, a devotee prepared *shira* for Baba. Baba later on asked, "Ganu, did you get the *Shira* ?" He replied, "No. The relations between that man and me are not so good." Baba retorted, "Who gives and who takes and what ? What kind of a thing is this *shira* ? Who eats it ? Why say that such and such person is my enemy ? Why have negative thoughts about any person ? Who is the enemy and of whom ? In the end, all are one – isn't it ?"

* Towards the end of 1898, Baba used to sleep on a very narrow plank tied at a very great height in the *Chavadi*. No one could see or guess, how He used to get up or down. To solve the mystery himself, Dasganu went there. Baba immediately drove him away from there.

* The *Chavadi* had two rooms. There was an idol of Lord Hanuman in the upper level and Baba used to sleep in the lower level. During the rainy season, water started dripping on Baba. Someone suggested, "Baba, why don't you sleep in the upper portion ?" Baba replied, "I am not in the same level as the God !"

**The stories that Dasganu heard directly from Baba himself and the lessons therein.
For example :**

* Two groups of residents of the town of Puntamba had some ongoing clashes amongst them. To add to the fuel to the fire they found an earthen pot filled with gold coins. I (Baba) stole it. The people rued their loss. Then, I asked myself : 'Who am I ? Does the pot hold more value ? And, what intense fights about it ? Who is the real owner of the pot ? The pot belongs to me and I belong to the pot !'

* Once, Baba said, "After I was born, my mother was overjoyed. But, I was amazed at her happiness. When did she give me birth ? Was I really born ? I was in existence long before. And, why she should have the joy ?"

* Baba left His mortal body on the auspicious day of Dassera. At that time, Dasganu was in Pandharpur. On the next day break, Baba appeared in his dream and said, 'The *Masjid* is collapsing. The grocers - who supply oil and foodgrains – have harassed me to no end. Therefore, cover me with a lot of flowers ! To fulfil my this desire, come as soon as possible to Shirdi ! I came all the way to Pandharpur to tell you this.'

Dasganu recognized 'the flowers' that Baba was actually referring to. He brought along with him the flowers of *Harinam* and arrived in Shirdi with his disciples. He incessantly chanted Baba's name and recited *bhajan* and *kirtan*. And he decorated Baba's *Samadhi* with this garland.

Dasganu's wife

Dasganu's wife's name was Saraswati. She was also known by the name 'Baya', while Baba used to call her 'Tai'. Her mental condition was not stable and hence, she was brought and kept at Shirdi to be near Baba.

The story of how Baba asked Babasaheb Sahasrabuddhe to look after Dasganu's wife is worth listening.

Babasaheb was not inclined to pay a visit to Shirdi. However, in 1910, bowing to the persistence of Nanasaheb Chandorkar, Annasaheb Dabholkar and Kakasaheb Dixit, Babasaheb Sahasrabuddhe visited Shirdi for the first time. And, then onwards, he became a staunch devotee of Shri Sai Baba.

Once, while he was sitting in the *Masjid*, Shri Baba suddenly pointed a finger at him and said, "This Tai is his daughter-in-law !" Hearing this, Kakasaheb Dixit and others jovially asked, "Then, should we handover the lady to him ?" Baba replied, "Yes ! Hand her over to this old man. He will take every care of her and nurse her – like he did in the case of Tatyaba (Tatyasaheb Nulkar)."

Tatyasaheb was the college-mate of Sahasrabuddhe. After a long gap, they met in Shirdi. During Tatyasaheb's last days, he had severe. On the directions of Shri Baba, Tatyasaheb's friend Sahasrabuddhe looked after him round the clock – like a trained nurse. Hence, the reference.

Taking care of Saraswatibai, was a herculean and delicate task. The lady had gone completely insane and, therefore, on many occasions she was not even aware of the state of her body. She used to incessantly murmur something or the other. She would roam about anywhere. Her hair and clothes were always unkept. She would answer nature's call anywhere – even in her bed. She would enter anyone's house and try to occupy the bed there. Her both hands were full of skin disease. Once, she even jumped into a well in Shirdi.

However, Baba had directed Sahasrabuddhe to take care of her. And, His word was sacrosanct. He had even selected him for the second time – the first time being in case of Nulkar.

Babasaheb Sahasrabuddhe has himself noted down his experiences in this regard. He says -

"The moment I heard Baba's words, I immediately fetched Cuticura soap and Pulvis Glicerazyko and began the task of taking care of her. Every night at about 11 p.m., I arranged to send her with another lady to answer nature's call. Because of this, she stopped soiling her bed. I used to myself wash her hands at least twice a day with the soap. Because of this, her body became clean in a very short time. I used to give her a bath everyday. After that, I used to make her take 108 rounds of the deity in Sath *wada*. After completing every round, I made her do *namaskar*."

In this manner Babasaheb's affectionate but strict nature was useful in her recovery. This routine was followed everyday for a month. Amazingly, she began showing signs of great improvement. Once, she approached Babasaheb and said, "Babasaheb, I am feeling better now. I want to prepare meals with my own hands and serve it to all these people." Everyone around was taken aback with what this lady (who was till recently believed to be utterly mad and beyond cure) had said ! They immediately went to Baba and conveyed the development to Him. Everyone was very happy and amazed at what Babasaheb had achieved.

But, Baba retorted, "Has he done any favour to anyone ? He has helped his own daughter-in-law. So, what is so great about it ?"

Babasaheb says -

"My friends were very eager to solve this riddle of daughter-in-law. They asked me the meaning of it. I began searching for the answer. I realized that Dasganu's surname was the same as mine – Sahasrabuddhe ! He was much younger than me in age. Therefore, his wife became my daughter-in-law !"

Dasganu never had any family life worth mentioning. In fact, he never wanted it. Due to the resultant psychological pressures, his wife had lost mental balance. During these times, even the inner turmoils being faced by Dasganu must have been tremendous. It must have been difficult for him to either accept or reject his duties towards his lawfully wedded wife. His mind was engrossed in

matters relating to spiritual bliss. He was totally absorbed in his writings, *kirtans*, *jap-japya*. To render *kirtans*, he had to travel to various places and thus, was away for days together from his 'home'. On top of all this, Baba ordered him to reside at Nanded. Therefore, he entrusted his duties of looking after his wife to Baba. As 'Tai' was being looked after by Baba, Dasganu had complete peace of mind in that regard. In Babasaheb Sahasrabuddhe, Baba chose the proper person for caring for the lady and released Dasganu from his family responsibilities.

In the year 1919, Dasganu's wife passed away.

Dasganu's literary wealth

Persons of the stature of *Mahamahopadhyay* Shri Datto Vaman Potdar and *Param Guruvarya* Shri Sonopant Dandekar have sung praises about the literary wealth of Dasganu.

Shri Datto Vaman Potdar

He was an eminent Indian historian, writer, and orator. He was the vice-chancellor of university of Pune during 1961 - 1964.

The government of India had honoured Potdar with the title *Mahamahopadhyay* in 1946, and *Padmabhushan* in 1967. Because of his vast knowledge, he was sometimes called as a living encyclopedia of Maharashtra.

Potdar was a disciple of *Itihasacharya_Rajwade* and a trustee of *Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal* in Pune. His disciples included Swami Swaroopanand, Setu Madhavrao Pagadi, and R. C. Dhare.

He writes in April-June 1956 issue of Shri Sai Leela :

Apoorva Yog / A unique Event

“Consider the sheer volume and scope of the poetic literature created by him. I do not think that anyone else deserves the title of ‘*Sant Kavi*’ in the period after *Mahipati*. (Please see note below.)

What a unique occurrence ! Because of it, I was reminded of an event which took place 48 years ago. I was fortunate to get Dasganu Maharaj's *darshan* for the first time then. And, how did it happen ? The tale is worth narrating.

At that time, we were residing in Pune. There was a small eatery near our house. The proprietor asked me, whether we will grant permission to one of his customers to sleep under the staircase. I consulted my father and the needful was done. This was around 1908, when I was studying in Inter.

One night, I saw the man writing something in candlelight. I took some liberties and realized that he was composing *ovya*. Thus, in the very first meeting, I gathered a favourable impression about our guest. I took permission from my father and asked the gentleman to sleep on our floor rather than under the staircase.

My father was a student and disciple of Late Shri *Maharshi* Annasaheb. Therefore, he got along very well with our new guest. Later on, two of my friends became Dasganu's writers. At that time, he was mostly composing 'Santkathamrut'. His major time was devoted to recitation of Vishnu-sahasra-naam and other routine chores. He discussed various matters with my father. He even participated in debates with me and some of my friends.”

An amazing scene

I was a student of Govt. Law College in Mumbai. I read in the Mumbai newspapers an announcement about Dasganu's *kirtan*. Earlier, on several occasions, I had opportunities of discussing lot of literary matters with him. But, this was the first time I attended his *kirtan*. I found it to be absolutely divine. All the persons who attended it were very much moved by the experience. Later on, whenever I had the opportunity, I attended his *kirtans* and got similar feeling. Hundreds of people whom I met concurred with my opinion. I have rarely seen a *kirtankar* like Dasganu in my entire life.

Anantrao has stated that Dasganu Maharaj never 'wrote down' his poetic creations. They used to flow easily from his lips. Once, he got into the mood, the poems used to follow one another. Only because this unique inborn attribute, he was able to compose almost 75,000 to 1,00,000 poems.

Dasganu is not only a poet who composed his literary works on the lives of various saints. But, he is also author of biographies of various saints. In the 18th century, Mahipati wrote biographies of the prominent Hindu saints who had lived between the 13th and the 17th centuries in Mahârâshtra. After him, it is only Dasganu who penned such biographies. Rather, it was his passion. For that, he travelled all over the places, visited the various locations, collected information from the devotees and verified it and then, put his poetic talent to use and composed the biographies. This is a unique feat. It is the only source of reliable data available to understand and appreciate the good work of the saints of past several centuries. Any historian who attempts to write the history of Maharashtra will find Dasganu's work to be extremely helpful.

Shri Sonopant Dandekar

Shankar Vaman Dandekar (1896-1969) was a philosopher and educationist from Maharashtra, India. He was commonly known as Sonopant Dandekar.

He was an important interpreter of *Warkari Bhakti Sampraday* in Maharashtra.

He served as a professor of philosophy and the principal of Sir Parshurambhau College in Pune for many years.

He edited and published several Hindu religious texts in Sanskrit and Marathi languages.

He writes in July-September 1956 issue of Shri Sai Leela :

Dasganu Maharaj – Person and his literature

My relations with Dasganu are more than 40 years old and we are growing closer and closer over the period.

To write the biography of someone is easier on one hand and very difficult on the other. Because - one must be first capable to understand the life of the person. Otherwise how can he appreciate his good qualities ?

Dasganu wrote biographies in such a way that they appealed to both - the learned as well as the illiterate. Even well-known biographers like Shri Pangarkar and Shri Ajgaonkar could not achieve this difficult feat. Because, other authors only wrote the biographies on paper, while Dasganu not only wrote but also sang them ! His singing appealed to the emotions of his listeners and, therefore, Dasganu was able to spread the knowledge about biographies of various saints far and wide.

His *kirtans* were attended by thousands of people from all walks of life – including *pandits*, *dnyanis*, farmers, learned, illiterates, unconventional, orthodox, adults, young ones, gents and ladies. Dasganu attacked whatever was phony and, therefore, he appealed to the unconventional. He respected the conventions and, therefore, he was dear to the traditionalists.

He was not a trained singer and, therefore, could not impress his listeners with the rendering of a variety of *ragas*. Nor did he pour out any Sanskrit *shlokas* or the sayings/ teachings from *Vedas* and great works like it. In spite of this, thousands of people were held spellbound with Dasganu's *kirtans*.

The main quality of his *kirtans* was 'simplicity'. The language used was very easy to understand.

Late Tatyasaheb Kelkar has applauded the fact that Dasganu took the pains to collect the information. Therefore, in Tatyasaheb's words, what was already gold acquired a sweet smell !

A note about Mahipati

Mahipati (b. 1715 in Taharabad, tahsil -Rahuri, dist. - Ahmednagar, Maharashtra state, India d. 1790) was an author who wrote in Marâthi biographies of the prominent Hindu saints who had lived between the 13th and the 17th centuries in Mahârâshtra, India.

He was a '*Brahmin*' by birth, and worked for some time as a scribe/record keeper for the local government of the village Taharabad in Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra.

It is believed that, Mahipati received one night in his dream both a *mantra* and a command from the departed spirit of *sant* Tukaram to write the life stories of past prominent religious figures in Maharashtra. Accordingly, Mahipati put together his noteworthy biographical book Bhaktavijay in Marathi. He also wrote another book titled *Bhaktaleelâmrut*. *Sant* Dnyâneswar, Nâmdev, Janâbai, Eknâth, and Tukaram are revered especially in the *wârkari* sect in Maharashtra. Whatever information about the lives of the above saints of Maharashtra comes mostly from the works Bhaktavijay and Bhaktaleelâmrut written by Mahipati.

It must be appreciated that there was a huge gap of decades/centuries between the times of Mahipati and the times of the saints whose biographies he wrote. Therefore, he had no other alternative, but to base his life sketches primarily on hearsays.

Mahipati's Bhaktavijay was even translated in English as desired in the will of the late Dr. Justin E. Abbott.

(Contd.)

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



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Experiences of Sai Maharaj

(Contd. from Nov.-Dec. 2010 issue)

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HOW BABA'S UDI CURED

KHIMJI'S DAUGHTER

Khimji Lalji Joshi lived in Punjabi *chawl* at Vile Parle. His daughter had been sick since a few days.

One day, when she became quite serious, her mother came to our house for Sai Baba's *Udi*. There was immediate improvement after using the *Udi*.

Later Khimji took his wife and daughter to Shirdi. The girl was so weak that she could barely walk.

She was so skinny, her hands and legs were like sticks. Someone carried her and seated her next to Baba. Baba applied *Udi* to her and blessed her. In a couple of days she could walk on her own. But, she had great difficulty while sitting or getting up. So, she pleaded with Baba and her problem was solved ever since.

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EXPERIENCES OF SHANTARAM BALWANT NACHANE OF DAHANU

1. How I came to know of Sai Baba...

In 1909, my brother (*Dada*) was to be operated on the neck. Since the spot was very close to the gullet, we were all extremely worried.

I was in Dahanu, concerned about *Dada's* operation. Just then, Shri Haribhau Moreshwar Phanse visited me and said, "With Sai's blessings, everything is smooth sailing. My conscience tells me, your *Dada's* operation has been successful." This was how I was first introduced to Sai Baba.

Eventually, when I came to know of the successful operation of my brother, I was truly impressed and revered Baba.

2. My first visit to Shirdi...

Later in 1911, in connection with my job, I visited Shri Annasaheb Dabholkar. I saw Baba's portrait for the first time in his house and I was captivated. When I inquired about it with the person who accompanied me, he said, it was Shri Sai Baba. I then procured a picture of Shri Sai Baba and started worshipping Him with incense sticks.

A year later, I unexpectedly got Sai's *Darshan*. In 1912, after a departmental examination in Thane, Shri Shankar Balkrishna Vaidya, Shri Achyut Date and I went to Shirdi. When we got down at Kopargaon and inquired about a *tonga* to Shirdi, the station master started criticising Baba instead of answering our question.

We did not pay any heed and proceed to Shirdi right away. But, even though I was a devotee of Sai, the seed of doubt had been planted in my mind. Could the station master be telling the truth? Had we come all the way under some notion of faith?

While such thoughts passed my mind, Baba was returning from Lendi Baug. We were standing behind Balabhau's house. As Baba looked towards us we too prostrated before Baba like the others. Baba looked at me and said, "So you have come without the *Mamaledar's* permission?" When I said, "yes", He said, "You should not do that." When He gave me this hint, I once again respected Baba and my faith in Him was restored.

Those days, Shri B. V. Dev was the *Mamaledar*. He reprimanded me for taking leave without permission and said that, if it happened again, I would have to pay for it. I did not tell him, I had gone to Shirdi.

(Contd.)

Sai Leela, Year I,

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Automated chapati making machines at Sai Prasadalaya

Three automated *chapati* making machines have been installed at Sai Prasadalaya of Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust in Shirdi. This has made easy to provide *chapatis* in Prasad means even during rush seasons.

Earlier, making of *chapatis* was done contractually, but due to lack of man power, it was difficult to cater to the large number of devotees during peak seasons. With the automated machines 2,000 chapatis can be prepared every hour per machine. The machine has been designed in such a way that at no point human touch is required, reducing the chances of contagious infections. The machine has reduced the stress on the staff working at the Sai Prasadalaya.

Everyone is curious and excited by the purchase of these automated machines. The staff, Shirdi residents and the devotees are visiting to look at the machine.

Each machine is costing Rs. 21 lakhs and can be easily manned by two people. It can be run on both electricity and cooking gas.

Shri Sai Prasadalaya is only one of its kind spiritual places in India to have been given the ISO certification for its technological and modern equipments and well organized service.

On an average 30,000 people have *Prasad* at Sai Prasadalaya every day.

The annual expense of the Prasadalaya is Rs. 50 crore and no stone is left unturned by trustee of the Sansthan and state agriculture and marketing minister Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, chairman of the Sansthan Shri Jayant Sasane, vice-chairman Shri Shankarrao Kolhe, executive officer Shri Kishore More and deputy executive officer Dr. Yashwantrao Mane to give the best services to Sai devotees who partake of the *Prasad* at the Prasadalaya.