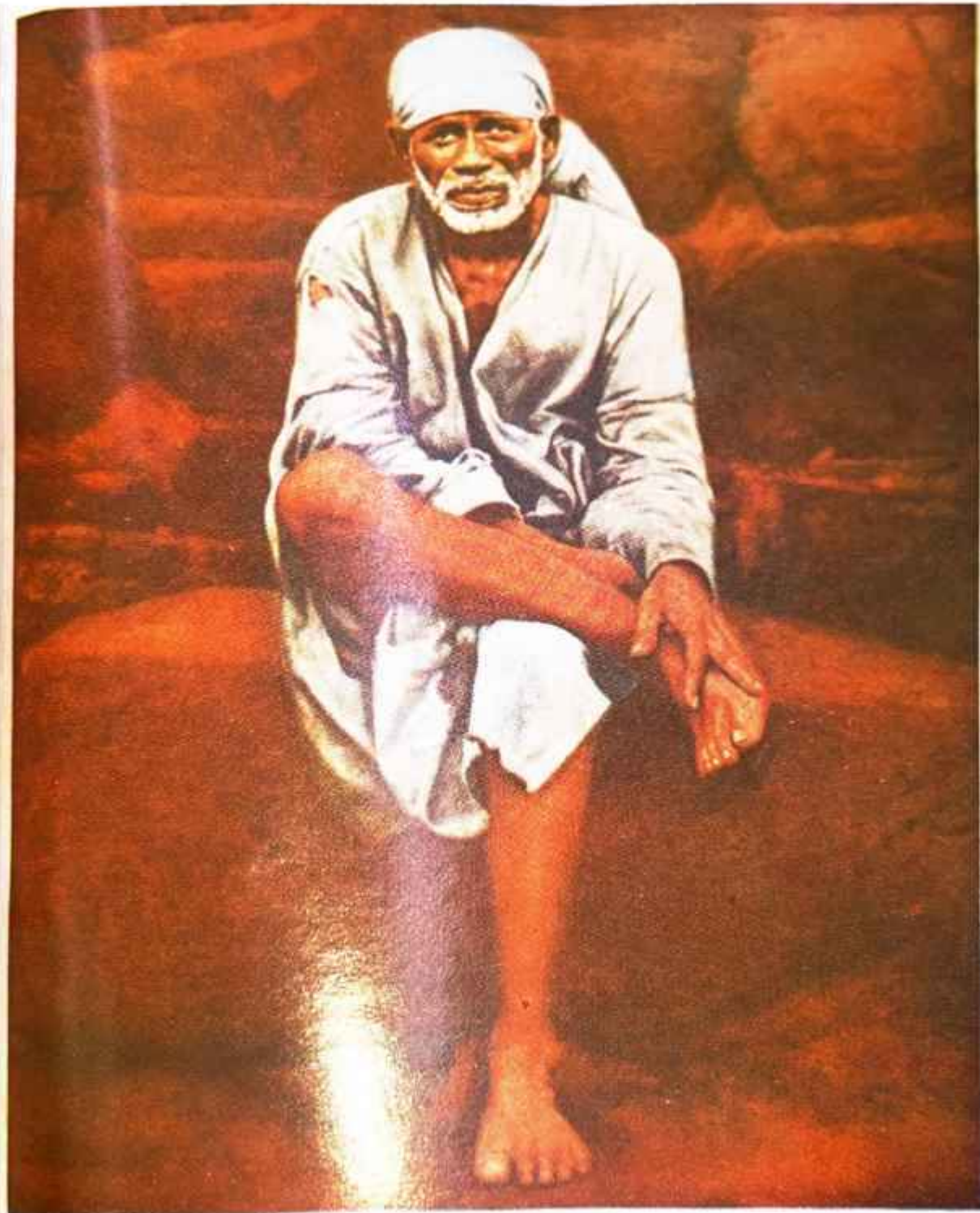


SHRI SAI ILI EILA



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TO GUIDE THE WORLD ON THE RIGHT PATH
IS THE PRINCIPAL AIM OF SHRI SAI LEELA.

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No. 8

Always Be Humble

Cultivate humility and purity. Never hurt anybody's feelings by your arrogance and conceit. Always be humble; feel humble. Humility is the Crown of Saints. All good and great men are humble and modest. They are never arrogant, showy or boastful. Truly great are really humble and gentle and are near to the throne of God. Vanity is a vice to be shunned. It is offending to God and man. ★

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EDITORIAL

Deepawali

Out of all the festivities, that the Hindus celebrate, Deepawali is the most important one. This festival is celebrated not only all over India, but all the Hindus, who have gone out of India, also celebrate this festival there with all the pomp and show. The peculiarity of this festival is this that all the rank and file of the society celebrates it irrespective of caste, creed, social status or financial condition. Due to floods in Gujrat, Maharashtra and other Indian states, and due to uncertain and untimely rain, the farmer is not quite sure of his crop this year and hence some sections of the society may not have that light-heartedness and mood, which is required for celebrating this yearly function; but this festival has such charm and magic that all the people will join in its celebrations and will enjoy in their own way.

In ancient Indian society, the common tie which bound the society together was the religion and even today we find that inspite of several castes and creeds, the people come together and associate themselves with each other on the common ground of religion. The common people of ancient India had also great faith in religion. The reason for that may be absence of education among the masses; but the fact remains that religion dominated on the minds of the common people. Hence taking advantage of this blind faith of the masses, our seers of ancient India tried to give a religious base to everything. Fasting on Ekadashi days for the whole day and fasting for half a day on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, which is really a very good rule for maintaing good health, from the medical point of view, was given a religious background and coupled with some religious observances. Similarly fasting for some days in the Chaturmas (Four months of Monsoon) is also good from the health point

of view and it has also been included as a religious practice. Eating of the leaves of the neem tree on the Gudhi Padwa day, distributing gold (leaves of the Apta tree) on Dasara and giving 'Tilgul' to all on the Sankrant day are other examples, where health has been given due consideration together with social intermixing under the garb of religion. Taking a bath every day in the morning before worshipping God, is also a good practice from the point of view of hygiene and this has also been included in our religious practice. Thus because of this all-pervading nature of religion in the Indian life, all our festivals also have been given some religious base. Mythological stories are being told almost for every one of our festivals and some festivals have a number of stories behind them.

Deepawali or Diwali festival, as it is very commonly known, is usually celebrated for four days. Sometimes it extends for five days and sometimes it is cut short to three days. Every day of the festival is celebrated because of some mythological story connected with it. The first day of the festival is known as Narak Chaturdashi and it is connected with killing of the demon Narakasur. The joy of the people was publicly expressed by the celebration of the festival and by lighting lamps. The second day is dedicated to the worship of Goddess Laxmi. The new moon day (Amavasya) is not usually considered as auspicious. If a child is born on that day, then some religious ceremonies are required to be done, in order to appease the evil stars dominating that day; but this day coming in the month of Ashwin is considered auspicious and is celebrated by the worship of Goddess Laxmi. The businessmen celebrate this day, on a mass scale, by inviting their friends to their place of business and by entertaining them. The third day is known as Balipratipada. Bali, who was pressed in the underworld by Vishnu in the Wamanavatar, requested Shri Vishnu to nominate a day, on which he would be remembered. This request was granted by Shri Vishnu and the first day of the month of Kartik was

assigned for that purpose. This is usually the third day of the festival. The last day i. e. the fourth day is the day of the brothers and sisters. Yama, the God of death, is supposed to go to his sister on this day and hence the sisters staying on the earth, call their brothers to their house on this day and feed them sumptuously. Thus though the people eat delicious food on all these days, meet their friends and relatives and entertain them, still all the days of this festival also have a religious background and orthodox and religious minded people take interest in the celebrations of this festival because of that.

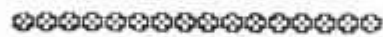
Apart from the religious base of this festival, it appears that the time, for celebration of this festival, was also selected after taking into consideration the economic condition of the people. From times immemorial, India was basically an agricultural country. The entire economy of this country was based on the agricultural produce. Even today, though industries have been started in this country, still about seventy percent people of this country are engaged in agricultural work or work connected with it. The prosperity of the people of India, therefore, even now depends on the agricultural produce. In older days, the agriculture of this county entirely depended on the rainfall in the monsoon season. Though a few dams have now come up in this country and they supply some water to the fields through canals, still the major part of our agriculture still depends on the monsoon. A rough estimate of the produce of the fields could therefore be drawn at the end of monsoon. The question of leisure is also considered in fixing up the Diwali festival at this time of the year. Thus with the expectation of the new crop, the mind of the farmer is at rest and as at this time he is free from the work of the monsoon crop, he has enough leisure and mental peace to take part in the celebration of this festival. It is because of this that one and all enthusiastically celebrate this function with great joy.

The very name of this function viz. Deepawali indicates the lighting of a row of lamps. It is said that in the beginning the people, who got rid of the fright from the demon Narakasur, expressed their joy by lighting a number of lamps by night and placing them in rows and hence this practice of lighting lamps, during the Deepawali festival, came into being; but apart from the thinking of the common man, we must see the inner meaning of light. What is light and what does it do? Light drives the darkness and illuminates a place. Even in the ordinary course, darkness causes depression and light creates enthusiasm and alertness! In philosophical discussion the term darkness is used as a synonym of ignorance or sin. A guru is said to enlighten his student. He is therefore supposed to light the lamp of knowledge in the mind of his disciple and thus drive away the darkness of ignorance from him. Our sages from the Vedic times were praying for light in this fashion तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । (lead me from darkness to light). They wanted that the God should lead them from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge. They were all the time eager to acquire knowledge and get rid of their ignorance. This is therefore the inner meaning of lighting the lamps and-celebrating this festival! Get rid of ignorance in various forms and become enlightened. We may say that this is the inner message of this festival.

We come to know from the Sai Satcharita that Shri Sai Baba was fond of lighting lamps. The anecdote of how He was originally lighting the lamps from the oil, which He used to collect from the local grocers and after their refusal to give it, how He lighted the lamps by using water and how he kept them burning for the whole night, is always told, when the greatness of Shri Sai Baba is eulogised. The common people only look at this incident as a miracle in the life of Shri Sai Baba and they keep a lamp burning before his statue or photo. In all the temples of Shri Sai Baba also, lamps are kept burning constantly as it was a practice liked by Shri Sai Baba; but we always say

that Shri Sai Baba did not write volumes for communicating His message or advice or He did not give sermons for that purpose. He only indicated everything by His actions and by His straightforward speech, which often had a deep underlying meaning. Thus His fondness for light must be nothing else than His intention to remove the darkness or ignorance from the minds of His devotees and to enlighten them and put them on the right path of righteousness and thus lead them to Moksha, which is supposed to be the greatest spiritual achievement of human life.

We therefore pray to Shri Sai Baba on the occasion of the Deepawali festival and hope that all the Sai devotees will join us in this prayer, that with the lighting of the lamps during this unique festival of the year, He may remove the ignorance, if any, from the minds of His devotees and enlighten them. We also take this opportunity to wish a happy Diwali and a prosperous new year to all our readers, contributors, subscribers, advertisers, well-wishers and to all the Sai devotees, spread all over the world!



Follow the path of the wise

Experience teaches wisdom while knowledge supplies information. An illiterate man may be a wise man but a highly educated person may not be wise. A batch of students set out for a village for rural service, on foot. While proceeding, they arrived at a junction of four roads. They did not know which road to take and their prestige did not allow them to wait and ask some passer-by. All but one took different routes and proceeded. One student stayed at the junction for some time. An old village rustic passed that way and on enquiry he pointed out the right road for the village, including the further bends and curves. The particular student who took the advice of the wise man reached the village earlier than the rest. How profitable it is to follow the path of the wise!



Shri Saipadanand Radhakrishna Swamiji,
President, Sai Spiritual Centre, BANGALORE

Shri Sai Baba's Timely Help

I made a trip to Tirupathi on 31st March, 79 by bus. I reached Tirupathi Hills at about 4-00 p. m. and tried for accommodation in Choultry No. 2, as the single rooms are quite comfortable. I was told that none of the rooms were vacant and so I was allotted another room in a different row in the same block. Since, I had taken my grandchild with me, I was worried about the accommodation. Somehow, I took things easy and spotted the room allotted to me. To my surprise the accommodation allotted to me was quite comfortable—two rooms with bath and a latrine. I went through all traditional rituals—head shaving etc., and had the darshan of Lord Sri Venkateswara after a period of seven hours waiting and moving in the queue.

Next day was 1st April '79, Sunday. As usual we finished all poojas etc., and came down the Hills. Here also we visited all the temples and had our lunch. Since the child had to be fed, it became late to arrive at the bus stand, to get the seating accommodation, as I refused standing accommodation. We were rather worried about our return journey to Bangalore. We got into a bus to Bangalore via Kolar from where the further connection was assured. We reached Kolar at 7 p. m. and waited for the connecting bus to arrive. The bus arrived, all the passengers rushed to enter and occupy the available seats. I was carrying my suitcase and got into the bus. While getting into the first step of the bus, I was pushed by a Sikh from behind and I landed on the step, with more weight falling on me. Somehow, I managed to get into the bus with my suitcase, while my Mrs and the child were left behind. In the meanwhile the Sikh started abusive language and tried to assault me for asking him why he pushed me down from behind in such a hurry to get into the bus. There was commotion, some siding with me and others supporting the Sikh. Along with some passengers, the conductor

also joined the Sikh. I thought that something worst was going to happen to us as majority of the passengers appeared to be regular bus travellers on that route and they all were siding with the conductor. I prayed to SAI SHANKAR as generally I chant His name throughout Sundays. I told the Sikh, "You have committed a mistake and instead of feeling sorry for your rude misbehaviour, you are blaming me for no fault of mine."

Suddenly there was a transformation and the rude Sikh turned towards me and said, "I am sorry for what has happened. Please forget it" Saying so he shook hands with me, while all others started looking at us quite amazed. I told him, "Your insult is not for me but to one above and HE will surely forgive you for your repentance". Then we exchanged some casual talks and the Sikh said that I looked like his father, since I have a grown up white beard.

I do not have more words to express than to say that my bones would have been counted, had not my CARETAKER 'SAI SHANKAR' come to my rescue and cooled down the hot situation in a moment when I thought of HIM. This is how Sai Shankar has kept his promise to run to the help of His children in times of trouble. We since intensified the silent prayers for HIS timely help till we reached Bangalore.

This is one of my many experiences. I always feel the presence of His Almighty in times of my need, though at times HE fans the situation and brings it to an abrupt end in a flick of a moment. ★

A. Ramachandran

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Shri Baba's Indirect Message

I am now giving you only one example of my great experiences with BABA. This incident happend in Shirdi during my recent visit to the holy place in the month of April 1979.

One day we were all returning from HOMIBABA's house and as we were having last talks with HOMIBABA there came a man and entered the Pooja room where I was packing my camera and tape-recorder. He prostrated and ORDERED me to give him a PEDDA, which I had bought to be distrubuted as PRASAD. I gave him one full PEDDA inspite of HOMIBABA's pre-advice of giving equally distributed pieces. He considers every one equal. Then "He" asked me to give "Uddi" (Vibuti) which I obliged and he asked a little more of "Uddi". It was unusal. I did so. Then retaining both "PEDDA" and Uddi in his hand, he asked for a little "Teertha" which I gave and he had it all together. After that I did not bother about "Him" and said good-bye to HOMIBABA and started proceeding for evening "Arati". On the way "He" started talking to me. Not bothering much, I was murmuring "Ruso" prayer in my heart and all of a sudden "He" called me "Bandhu" and asked if I had gone to "DWARKAMAI". I said 'yes,' and asked what was surprising about it. "He" said that I (here I point out that of all the people "He" was talking to me only) must go there and keep a coconut and a Rose flower in front of Sri Baba's photograph and prostrate if I really wanted to pay Him respect and have love for Him. "And it must be done tomorrow morning itself as it is Monday and an auspicious day," He said. I promised "Him", "I will do it just as "He" asked, as I obey my elders and the very love for SATGURU SAI NATH PRABHO I have, I can do anything." "He" was convinced and felt happy which I could see in "His" face and said if I do that I will certainly get some "Bhiksha" from "Shri Sai Baba". I nodded my head meaning, I wish it happens. And there was a little silence and again "He"

asked me for one Bhojan and I gave 'Him' one rupee and fifty paise asked "Him" to spend it only on food and not on beedi or cigarettes. "He" laughed and said o. k. and again he continued talking. 'He" asked me if I had ever seen HOMIBABA eating and by this question I really got fed up of "Him" (unaware of the fact) and told him HOMIBABA would not allow anyone after 9-00 a. m. in his house and you want me to see him eating at one O' clock. He laughed looking at me and said "Bandhu" you go tomorrow and see him with your "Satsang". I just nodded o. k. and by the time we had come near "Bhakt Nivas" building he said goodbye and started walking fast. I reminded him again to eat with the money I gave him and not to do anything else. "He" said goodbye and went away, that was the last I saw of "Him". All these happenings just went aside and we all started talking our own gossips etc.,

The next day morning as we were preparing ourselves to start for HOMIBABA's place at 8-00 a. m. I suddenly remembered the promise I gave "Him" to place a cocount and a Rose flower in Dwarakamai. I did so and started for HOMIBABA's Ashram. As we reached, HOMIBABA welcomed us all and said that we have a little work to do that day and when we asked anxiously as what was the job he laughed and said that we have got to eat lunch with him there. And just then I was all tears in my eyes. I remembered how Sai Baba had come the previous day and told me all indirectly to have lunch in HOMIBABA's place. I just did a "Pranam" to Sai Baba's statue and went out as I wanted to see the same way, we were walking with such great BHAGAVAN unknowingly. I just had a look of the long road we walked yesterday and wiped my tears off.

See how SATGURU SAI NATH comes and goes, how "He" gives you the message indirectly and how he comes still you are unaware.

★

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SAINT GADGEMAHARAJ

(Continued from October 1979 issue)

By Dr. S. D. Parchure M. A., Ph. D.

Shri Gadgemaharaj continued his keertan further in the same light mood, "I have to tell the ladies in this audience that their husband might go to a holy place. Let him go. His God may be far from the house, in the jungle or on a mountain; but remember that your God is not far away. Your God is in the house. Serve your husband. Bow down to him. Garland him. Even place the agarbatti before him. In this connection one saint has said,

ऐसा पतिवस्तेचा भाव । तिचा नवरा तिचा देव ॥

("A chaste lady is so much faithful to her husband that she considers her husband as her God!")

On listening to my above advice to the ladies, the Marathas, Barbars, Dhobies, Kumbhars etc. will be very glad. They will say, "It is very good. The wife will bow down to me every day. Gadgemaharaj has told this to all ladies"; but remember when I advise a lady to bow down to her husband as God, he must have the qualities of a God in him. That husband, who comes to the house, fully drunk, should never be welcomed or honoured by his wife. In that case, the face of that husband should be burnt by the wife with the live agarbatti. The wife should never wave the agarbatti round the face of such husband. Will I advise the wife to worship her husband in such a case? The wife should bring hot ash from the sigri and put it in the mouth of her husband! That is the proper form of the worship of such a husband.

Bhajan is very important in life. That moment in the life of Saint Mirabai was very precious, when she left the palace,

stopped using costly clothes and started wearing coarse clothes, threw away the ornaments and put on beads of Tulsi plant and got completely engrossed in the bhajan and devotion to God Krishna. That lady, who sings bhajan, who serves her husband is really very lucky. There is nothing more important in life than bhajan. Let us all sing the bhajan :-

गोपाला गोपाला । देवकीनंदन गोपाला ॥

After the Bhajan Shri Maharaj continued. This family life is all useless. This is what the saints realised. Kabir realised this very well and he became disinterested in the family life. He only took interest in meeting the sadhus and saints. Saint Jani also realised this truth and she left her family members and concentrated on God. She got out of the cycle of birth and death. I know you all are busy whole day in your work. You are all the time thinking about your wife, your children and your business; but after doing all that, you must spare a few moments for remembering Govinda (God). After finishing all your daily routine, find out at least ten minutes for bhajan. You need not have any accompaniment such as harmonium, tabla, tala etc. Let all your family perform the bhajan in whatever way possible. God guards that house, where His bhajan is sung. He stands at the door-way of that house like a watchman. On the other hand, Yama stands before the door-way of that house, where other people are censured, where people waste their time in gossiping and criticising others. Bhajan has great achievements.

In the houses of the rich, there are maid servants for doing all domestic work like cleaning utensils, washing clothes, sweeping the floor etc. The lady of that household will be using saris worth hundred rupees each; but what will be the plight of the servant? That servant will be found using old and tattered garments. The lady of the house, will extract full work from the maid-servant; but she will not be liberal and give her used sari to the domestic servant. How does the maid-servant then pull on? She has no clothes to spread on the ground and hence

she makes her children sleep on bare ground. I appeal to all the rich people, who may be having such domestic servants, to take pity on them. When they become pregnant, how difficult it must be for them to manage the confinement and the treatment thereafter? Be kind to such ladies. Give them a helping hand. If you are using wheat, do not give her wheat. Give her flour of jawar. Do not give her ghee, but you can at least give her oil. Do not give her a new sari, but at least you could give an old one, which you have used for a long time. Death is inevitable to every one. Every one has to die some day or the other; but do something good before you die. If you spend your life only in eating, drinking and making merry, then let me tell you, you will be wasting your life completely.

I shall now refer to one of our very bad social custom. This is a great stigma on our country. If possible, all of you should try to remove that stigma and improve our social image. What is that stigma? People are afraid of touching others. What? Touching others! Why do you ask for the caste? Those who are egoistic enquire about the caste of others. Tell me. Is not the person enquiring about the caste of others exactly like the person, whose caste he is enquiring about? This fellow has four hands and the other person has only one and a half! Is it so? No. The person who is enquiring has four eyes, while the other has only two! Is it so? The person, who is enquiring has four legs, while the other one has only one. Is it so? It is not so. Still the person, belonging to the so-called high caste, enquires about the caste of the other man in order to lower him in the eyes of others. If anybody asks you about your caste, then tell him that you are a human being. Who? A human being! You are all human beings. Is it not? Are you a bullock or a buffalo? No you are not! Then who you are? You are a human being.

I really wonder why a person, asking the other about his caste, does not feel ashamed. The person asking for the caste of other man is exactly like him, still he enquires about his caste.

Tell me what is the difference between we two. The land on which we both are standing is one and common to both of us. The sky is not different for us. The sun, railway train, taxi, court, eating, drinking etc. and even the diseases like plague, cholera etc. are common to all of us. Then what is the difference between the different people belonging to different castes. All are born in the same fashion. Is there anybody here, who was born to his mother, through her mouth? Has anybody come out of his mother's armpit? Then under such circumstances why should we make so much capital of the castes, which are decided by the birth? Yes there are castes, but how many? Only two. Which are they? Man and Woman! Remember there are only these two castes. There is no third caste existing for the human beings!

How many teeth are you having? Thirtytwo. How many does a harijan have? Any less? You are having thirtytwo teeth and is he having only ten? No! He is also having the same number of teeth as you are having. For how many days were you in your mother's womb? Nine months and nine days. Then for how many days does a harijan remain in the womb of his mother? Four months? Six months? No! He also takes the same number of days as you take to grow up in the womb. Then show at least some things, which are different between you and the harijans. When you are not able to do it, why should you tell somebody not to touch you? Is the river Ganga different for the higher castes and the harijans? Is the river of the Marathas flowing from one side and the river of the Mang community flowing from the other side? Then why this artificial barrier? Why observe this untouchability, created by the human beings?

This is a great stigma on India. Untouchability is a great blot on India. Does anyone speak of untouchability in England, Russia, Japan, China or America? Is there untouchability among the Parsees, Christians or Mohamedans? Did Hajrat say anytime that his water was polluted by others by touching? The water

of the Mohamedans does not get poluted by touching The water of the Christians does not get poluted by touching; but what sort of water you are having, which gets poluted when somebody touches it? These traditional customes are a blot on the Hindu religion Hence try to cast them away and improve yourself.

Do you allow any Harijan to sit with you in a bullock-cart? But where does your dignity go when you go to the motor-stand? Does the dog eat it? When a bus comes to the stand, if Narayan Patel comes, he is allowed to sit in it. Ganappa comes and also occupies his seat in the bus. Then comes Keshavbhatji. Where does he sit? Wherever a seat is available. Thereafter comes Shivrya Mang. What is his position? He also gets a seat in the bus. Then why do you not say that the bus is poluted, because a Mang has sat in it? We will not therefore travel by such a bus! These are all vain excuses. A rat only tries to dig a hole in soft ground. Let there be rock. Then what happens? The rat runs away. He is not able to penetrate into the rock. Similarly the so-called higher castes are digging the soft ground. Cast away this untouchability. At least be wise hereafter. Be humane. Because of this demon of untouchability, lacs of people have embraced Christianity. Lacs of people have become muslims. This untouchability has proved to be a drain on the Hindu religion. I have spokan for a long time. Let us now raise our hands and sing bhajan rhythmically.

गोपाला गोपाला । देवकीनंदन गोपाला ॥

(To be continued)



The Holy River Narmada

(Narmada the quiet one, which is considered by some holier even than the Ganga, was in the news sometime before. Very recently the Narmada water dispute Tribunal has announced its award. The decision of the Tribunal would pave the way for finalisation of the project, which was delayed for two decades. The project envisages integrated harnessing of Narmada waters for the benefit of the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. What kind of river is this Narmada?)

The river Narmada is hoary and considered holy next to Ganga; but some devotees say that simply by looking at her, one gets the merit of bathing a thousand times in the Ganga. The smaller and bigger stones of this river are worshipped as being the image of Lord Shiva. She has supplied innumerable 'Lingams' to many a temple in India since the dawn of life on our planet.

The Narmada like Ganga is a daughter of Lord Shiva. She is also called Rewa. It is derived from the Sanskrit word "rava" which means to jump. The word has a sound echoing the sense, for the river cuts through with a tremendous force the mountain ranges on her banks. She has the habit of chiselling her pebbles, large and small, which no expert chiseller can do. This is the work she has been doing with unflinching regularity. There is a saying current in Hindi "Narmada ke kankar sub hain Shiva Shankar."

The Narmada is one of the largest river of India, and she is the largest west flowing river in the peninsula. She has the honour of flowing between the two mountain ranges of the Vindhya and Satpuras for about 400 miles, as though they were her bodyguards. The remarkable thing is that, all the major rivers of the peninsula flow from west to east. Only Narmada (with the exception of Tapi) has changed her mind and flows from east to west.

The Narmada rises near Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh. The 1,312 km. long river has a total drainage area of 98,796 sq km. It carries on an average about 40 m. a. ft. (million acre feet) more water than any other north-flowing river in India.

As a maker of history, the Narmada has played a pivotal role. She is traditionally regarded as the boundry between the north and the south. No wonder the famous consort of Baz Bahadur, and Rupmati viewed the river daily at the crack of dawn from the tower on the fort of Mandu.

Her birth place is Mekal range or Mahadev range of the Satpuras. Therefore she is called "Mekal-suta" (daughter of Mekal). Mekal is also known as the Amarkantak hill in the Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh. This spot is 4350 ft. high from the sea-level. There is a 'kund' signifying the exact spot of her rising. Poet Kalidas described the place as "Amarkut" meaning a grove of mango trees, in his classic poem of "meghdoot" or cloud messenger. From here a few miles off, the Narmada jumps down 100 feet forming a rainbow coloured fall known as "Shashtradhara" or "Kapildhara".

During her course in Madhya Pradesh there are several waterfalls which form a series of glittering cascades and rapids. Near Mandla, she flows in a semi-circle like the first phase of the moon surrounding the town on three sides. For the first 200 miles of her course, she winds among the Mandla hills wantonly. Hundreds of feet down and down she flows rapidly with an enormous speed. She presents a most strikingly graphic scene, pinpointing the "Marble-Rocks", a few kms from Jabalpur.

Here she has given us many picnic spots like "Dhuvadhara" and "Bandarkundi". Most pleasing scenes are these to one's eye, caressed by the full moon. Then she flows through a plain about 1000 feet high from the sea-level and from here she descends gradually 50 feet down near Mandleshwar and then she glides like a glider on the slope up to Broach without forming a delta at her mouth.

The Narmada valley, with its adjoining areas, has fertile soil and it is in great need of irrigation facilities. The river has excellent dam site all along its length, where storage reservoirs could be built for harnessing the water for irrigation, hydro power generation, flood control etc. This is the most unpolluted river, for there are no industrial cities on her either banks. She is used for irrigation and navigation only at its estuary where boats of considerable size sail up to 60 km from Broach city.

Along her course, each and every spot has become a pilgrim centre. "Ham Narmadaji ke bandhan me hai" that is the way the pilgrims say, who undertake walking barefoot from the sea to the source.

It is difficult to fathom the feelings of the Narmada. She is a most moody river. In floods she presents a terrible scene like the dance of Doom. She goes roaring, rolling and carrying all before her in her fury. The cloudy sky reflects her whirling water in between thunder clapping and lightening flashes. Her velocity during floods is unimaginable. Would she like to be handcuffed by building higher dams?

Whatever the outcome of the agitation might be over the Tribunal's award, it is certain, that the people of this region are mostly adivasis. It is the duty of our leaders to nurse them and convince them about the benefits which they would get in the form of compensation for their lands which are going to be submerged on account of the proposed dam at Navagaon. ★

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SHRI SHIVALEELAMRIT

(Continued from October 1979 issue)

By :- Shri S. N. Huddar

CHAPTER 10

SHARADA AND HER HUSBAND GET SHIVA-LOK

A Brahmin, named Deorath, lived in Anarta. He had learnt Vedashastras. He had a fair daughter, named Sharada, who was well-behaved. When she was 12 years old, her father married her to one brahmin, named Padmanabha. He too was well-read and learned. After the wedding, he lived at the house his father-in-law. One day he went to the river for the evening ablutions. While he was returning, it was quite dark and he was bitten by a poisonous snake. Because of the acute poison, Padmanabha expired. Knowing this, Sharada, along with her parents, came to the spot. She lamented bitterly on the death of her husband. After the funeral was over, all returned home with Sharada.

Deorath with all his family, went out for some work, and Sharada remained at home, all alone. Naidhruva, an old muni, who was blind, came with his disciples to Sharada's house. Sharada offered him seat, worshipped him and humbly bowed to him. He said, "your Soubhagya will be everlasting and you will have a son, who will learn Vedashastras!"

Sharada was stunned to hear this blessing. She told the Muni how her husband had met with his death. Naidhruva said, "whatever I have said cannot be otherwise. Due to my penance, even the impossible will take place". When the parents and brothers of Sharada returned, they knew the incident. The word of a Rishi has great power. He can make a king a pauper and his curse can ruin a family in no time. Due to the curse of

Rishies, king Nahush became a serpent and the Yadava family was destroyed. Indra's wealth was drowned in the ocean. Vishnu had to take incarnation for Ambarish, who was cursed by Durvas. Parikshit died due to a Brahmin's curse. Narad cursed the sons of Kuber and they became trees. Due to a curse Yam had to be the son of the maid servant, but on the other hand, even dry trees got foliage due to their blessings.

Naidhruva said to Sharada, "you adore God Shiva and recite six-letter Shiva Mantra. Until you get the fruit, I shall stay here. Adoration should be started in the bright fortnight of Chaitra or Margshirsh on a Somavar coming on the 8th or 14th day of the fortnight. This vrant should be observed for one full year."

As advised by Guru Naidhruva, Sharada worshipped Uma-Maheshwar. She received the six-letter Shiva Mantra from Naidhruva. A small Shiva Mandir was erected with a pandal. On a platform a kalash was placed and gold idols of Uma and Maheshwar were placed on it. Worship with 16 Upchars was performed. Brahmin couples were worshipped and delicious food was offered to them. Sharada listened to Keertan and Purana. She meditated on the divine forms of Shiva and Uma.

The colour of God Shiva is like camphor or silver and he is as bright and shining as crores of suns. Ganges is held by him on his head and the snakes are his ornaments. Bhasma is applied by him all over his body. He has weapons as Khalwang, Trishool, Kamal, Damaru, Ankush, Pash, Ghanta and Pashupat. He wears bright tiger and elephant skins, his throne is embedded with jewels, diamonds, rubies and other precious stones. He lives on snow-white Kailas. White coloured great Nandi (bull) lies in His front. The snakes as Takshak and Shesh, adore His ears.

On his lap is seated Uma, the fairest, having four hands. bearing pash, Ankush, Gada and Padma in her hands. She has garlands of divine flowers. Her waist is like that of lioness, her

gait is like that of an elephant. She is as bright and shining as crores of madan (God of Love). The scent of her body, spreads far and wide. Her teeth resemble the geese. Her lips resemble a pomegranate. Her teats are like kamandalu. Kumar and Gajanan had the privilege to suck milk from them. Her neck, hands, arms, head, ears and feet are decorated with various bright and rich ornaments. She is known as Adimata, Dnyankala of Adi Purush. Janardan is her brother.

After one year, Naidhruva asked Sharada to do Udyapan (completion of her vow). Sharada was sitting near Naidhruva, reciting and meditating. At midnight, Goddess Bhavani appeared before them. Due to excessive brightness Naidhruva regained his eyesight. He and Sharada at once fell at the feet of Goddess Bhavani with devotion and began to pray her. None else could see the Goddess. They said, "O Mother of the universe, you are the originator of Pranava, creator of Brahmand, you are the lightening. You like to fulfil the desires of the devotees. You are praised by the Vedas and Puranas. By your blessings, a blind will be able to see, a lame can run, a dumb can speak, fools become learned, and a pebble turns into a Chintamani. You are Tripursundari, Tribhuvanjanani and destroyer of 'tritap'. You are the swan of Shiva's Manas lake and the giver of all glory. You pervade all."

Being pleased by this praise, Goddess Bhavani told Sharada to ask for a boon. Naidhruva narrated all the account of Sharada to the Goddess and said "I blessed her to have Soubhagya and to get a learned son. My blessings should bear fruit."

Goddess Bhavani said, "Sharada was a Brahmin's daughter and she was called Bhamini, who was living in Dravid. Her husband had two wives. Bhamini was the second and was loved more by him. She beguiled the elder wife. One lover of Bhamini lived in the neighbourhood. Seeing Bhamini all alone, he caught her hand. Bhamini disregarded him. He returned home, remembered her, meditated on her and died in a few days. Bhamini's

step-sister cursed her to be a widow and she also died. After some days, Bhamini expired and is now born as Sharada. Her lover became Padmanabh, who married with her and died, when she became a widow. Her husband, of previous birth, is yet alive in Dravid, 360 yojan apart. He still remembers her. He will come in her dream and shall enjoy with her, giving her great pleasure. After some days she will get a son, Sharadanandan; who will be well-known". Saying this, Goddess, Bhavani disappeared,

Sharada became pregnant, in course of time. All her relatives began to blame her. People said, "when did she see Amba? Cut her ears and nose and drive her out of the house." When the people were speaking like this, a voice was heard from the sky "Sharada's pregnancy is real." But impious persons said, "those words were deceitful". However one pious old man said, "God's deeds are astonishing. Impossible also takes place if He wills. The sky stands without a pillar. The earth floates on water. Whose support do the stars, the sun and the moon have? The five great elements are contradictory; but what a wonder, that they live united by His favour. Yupket's semen fell in water. It was drunk by a concubine and she delivered a good son. Vibhandak's semen fell in water and was drunk by a she-deer, who delivered Rishyashring Muni. Satyawati was born of a fish, Mahishasur was born of a she-buffalo. Samba delivered a pestle (Moolal). Pandavas were born of Kunti and Madri from 5 Gods."

Again there was a divine voice, "If anyone blames Sharada, his tongue will be full of worms." After this, the people did not harass her. Still some evil persons suspected her and their tongues were filled with worms. Then only nobody harmed her.

In course of time, Sharada delivered a bright looking son. At the age of 8, he started learning Vedas, Shastras and Puranas.

Sharada went to Gokarna on Shivaratri day, with her son. Her husband had also come there from Dravid. They looked at

each other and were dejected. Goddess Bhavani had told Sharada to give her husband half the merit of the Uma-Maheshwar worship and also to hand over the son to him. She should also live with him for four months; but should not have sex-act. Then she would get Shiva lok.

Sharada bowed to her husband and handed over the son to him. She also gave half the merit of her Shiva worship to him. She accompanied him to Dravid. Sharada lived with him, with control over her senses. Their son became well-known in the world. He served his parents and observed penance. Sharada's husband was a yogi. After his death, he went to Shiva lok. Sharada also burnt herself with him and observed Satidharma and went to Shiva lok.

(to be continued)



Nai Sarak, Moradabad

To

The Editor,

Dear Sir,

I am very much obliged to you for very kindly publishing my article in the April issue,

I am sending another article "Saint Damodar" (published in the issue for September 1979). I am happy to read your editorial of May 1979, that you are giving some place for biographies of saints from all over India. I think that this move shall fetch many other contributors.

With Sai regards,

Yours faithfully,
N. S. Phatnagar, Advocate

Shri Sai Baba Appears In Dream

In the month of June 1975, I got a telegram from Bombay, at Hubli, informing me that my mother expired on 10th June 1975. Being the eldest son and due to my close association with her, she loved me most of all the children. No doubt she was ailing for about three years and I used to come to Bombay from Hubli to meet her and to enquire about her health, every now and then.

I felt so bad on getting the telegram that at the last minute of her death, I was not with her near her bed. Due to this shock, I got a paralytic attack on the right side. When I got the telegram I, along with my daughter and her three children, had just arrived from Malwan and we were having our lunch. I was trying to get up with tears in my eyes; but I was unable to get up. As my wife was nearby and as she was a medical practitioner, she could immediately judge what it was. For nearly half an hour, they were coaxing me to tell them what I felt, so that I would be free from the mental pressure; but it was all in vain. Then after half an hour or so they washed my hands and with the help of our patients, who were in our clinic, they arranged to take me to my bedroom and made me lie down.

Having so many doctor friends, my wife phoned to them and they immediately rushed to our house and diagnosed it as severe paralytic stroke.

My son, who is practising in Bombay, being M. D., was also called for further discussion. He too concurred with the opinion already expressed by the doctors at Hubli. In my mind, I was feeling to go to Bombay to perform the obsequies of my late mother; but my son and doctor friends did not allow me to start even in an ambulance and, thus I had to postpone my departure to Bombay.

On the 12th of June 1975, at midnight in my dream, I saw Shri Sai Baba standing near me and asking me not to be nervous. He further started massaging my right side, which was paralysed, muttering the words, "मत डरना । सब कुछ ठीक हो जायगा ।" (Do not be afraid, everything will be alright). Immediately after uttering these words Shri Sai Baba disappeared. I awoke, opened my eyes and explained to my wife and others my whole dream. I began to feel alright from that moment and then in a month's time, I was brought to Bombay for some other operation, which we got successfully done. The surgeon prescribed to me some exercises for my paralysis and now I am able to walk without anybody's help. When there was absolutely no hope of my recoument, I have recovered to eighty percent. I feel that this all is due to Shri Sai Baba's grace and favour for which I will remain indebted to Him for all my future life.

Now I have completely retired from all my social activities and I am concentrating my whole attention to Shri Sai Baba in order to get mental peace, so that I may end my life in peace. ★

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*Float on! Float on!
And may the little light
Of these earthen lamps
Reach the other shore!*

MUMUKSHU

Shri Hemadpant, by grace of Sai Baba, has written a unique book in Marathi "Shri Sai Satcharita". The book contains the practical philosophy of life. One, who reads it several times with respect and patience, clears his thoughts, understands the meaning of the text in right perspective and develops sense of devotion.

Those, who have translated this book in different languages, have rendered excellent service to the devotees. Shri Nagesh Vasudev Gunaji has translated it in a very lucid style in English language.

We bow our heads in deep reverence to Santnayak Bade Baba, Sadguru Sainath Maharaj, Shri Hemadpant, Shri Nagesh Vasudev and all other saints and with their blessings continue to develop our thoughts on 'Brahma Jnana or Self realisation'.

This refers to pages 89-92 of 8th edition" "Qualification for Brahma Jnana or self-realisation"—an intense desire to get free. The desire arising out of realisation that he is bound. One, who works earnestly and resolutely to get free from bondage, is considered qualified for spiritual life.

It is rather surprising that this realisation and desire does not develop in most of human beings. They are fully involved in pleasures and pains. Mystery lies in the concept of pleasure and pain. Normally these are considered extremely opposite in nature. Therefore efforts are made to attain pleasure and avoid pain.

The pursuit of pleasure is so intense that it pervades the life of an ordinary human being. He resorts to materialistic pleasures—eating, drinking, gambling, illicit sex relation, lust of wealth, power, fame etc. Quite often the means are secondary to ends. Having achieved something, the thirst and craving for the next goal automatically develops with greater intensity.

Involvements and reaction of these efforts results into bondage. Effect of pleasure is of a short duration. After-effect is still worse. Ultimate result is the pain. Defeated and frustrated individual again starts the same exercise and the cycle continues in one form or the other. Pleasure ending into pain. The more you strive for it, higher the degree of pain.

At some fortunate moment one realises that pleasure, in absolute term, does not exist and reduction in the degree of pain is interpreted as pleasure. For example heat and cold are not two different things. Heat is real. Cold is just lesser degree of hotness. It is yet another state of heat which, expressed in comparison with another hotter object, is defined as cold. Cold in itself does not originate from any other source. Same thing applies to pleasure and pain. Pain is the absolute real thing which exists and the pleasure is the lesser degree of pain.

A saint illustrated the paradoxical situation that pleasure and pain exist together. He explained to someone who likes to eat chocolates. Maximum number of a particular brand of chocolates he could eat is 16. Beyond that number the pleasure turns into pain in stomach, vomiting etc. If that is so why should an eater of chocolate having eaten one chocolate consider himself in the state of pleasure? Has he not progressed or advanced to a stage which is 1/16th of the pain at that moment? This applies to all worldly pleasures, which are just some form of pains.

One who can realise this phenomena is a Mumukshu, because he knows that all pleasures ultimately lead to pain and bondage. He is the one, who has realised the futility of these pleasures. He is the one, who is looking for eternal pleasure "anand or bliss" which is directly proportional to right efforts. Therefore it does not end up in pain. The more he craves for it, the more he strives for it against all odds, the more he enjoys the fruits thereof.

Therefore efforts extended for pleasure, which turn into pain, are to be stopped. Efforts are to be made to achieve 'anand/

bliss'. This can be obtained through many ways. Common factor is one-thoughts, words and action at any stage should not produce contradictory results. Results are in direct proportion to efforts and are in the same direction. For example helping the poor, serving the sick, attending prayers, discourses, spiritual development and so on. ★

S. R. Joshi

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Punyatithi Festival at Sai Niketan Dadar

This year being the 61st year of the Mahasamadhi of Shri Sai Baba, a special festival lasting for five days from 29-9-79 to 3-10-79 has been arranged at Shirdi. However, this festival is also celebrated at all Sai temples in their humble way on Dasara. On 1-10-79, the devotees started visiting Sai Niketan, Dadar, from about 8 a. m. They were coming, worshipping Shri Sai Baba and going away. From 9-45 a. m. to 12-00 noon Mrs. Kamalabai Joshi, from Kurla, performed Keertan on the life and teachings of Shri Sai Baba. The audience was increasing slowly and slowly. At twelve noon there were about 150 devotees in the office, who all joined the Aarti, which was sung with great devotion. The office was kept open upto 7-30 p. m. and on a very moderate estimate, we may say that more than two thousand devotees must have come for darshan on the Punyatithi day. ★



DAS GANU

There will be hardly a person amongst the devotees of Shri Sai Baba, who has not heard the name and fame of Das Ganu. Of the two persons, whom Shri Baba deliberately sought early in his residence at Shirdi, Das Ganu was one; the other being Nana-saheb Chandorkar. These two gentlemen were responsible for making 'Baba' a household name in Western Maharashtra, particularly in Bombay City and Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri districts. Das Ganu as an itinerant minstrel and Nana-saheb Chandorkar as a revenue official on camp, in the far flung Taluka places, spread the name and fame of Shri Baba in the region referred to above. Whilst performing his Kirtans, it was Das Ganu's custom to exhibit a portrait of Shri Sai Baba on a pedestal before starting his Kirtan and rapidly setting out his experiences of Baba and the miracles he worked, his service to the sick and ailing and how he assuaged the agonies and miseries and helped to solve the temporal and spiritual problems of all, who sought his help.

When Baba first met Das Ganu, the latter was still in service in the Police Force of the then Bombay Presidency. His full name was Ganapat Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe. He was a Tamasha fan. After a good deal of persuasion, he left the Police Service and joined Baba's band-wagon. The progress then became rapid. By Baba's grace and inspiration, he started writing metrical compositions. Amongst his compositions are (1) Bhakta Leelamrit and Sant-Kathamrit (life stories of modern saints), (2) Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini and (3) Sai Stavanmanjari.

Bhakta Leelamrit, cited above, carries three full chapters depicting a glowing account of Shri Sai Baba. Sant-Kathamrit, in its 57th Chapter, sets out in detail Baba's discourse on Dnyana given to Nana-saheb Chandorkar on one occasion. It is a veritable

mine of 'Advait' philosophy. Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini, an elucidation of the substance of Isa Upanishad, was undertaken by Das Ganu for the benefit of Marathi readers, at the instance of Shri Baba. He worked on it strenuously for a long time and had proceeded far into it when doubts, began to assail him. He discussed the matter with a few learned and scholarly persons with a view to resolve the doubts. Some of them were dispelled, but not all. A crucial doubt remained unresolved and Das Ganu started smarting. At about this time, he happened to go to Shiridi. Shri Baba, jestingly, inquired about his well-being. Das Ganu bitterly flung back to say that at Shri Baba's instance, he had launched upon the translation of Isa Upanishad, but stumbled on the road and his mind was uncertain whether he had understood the real import or kernel of the Upanishad. Baba then asked him what his difficulty was. Das Ganu explained the difficulty and enthusiastically looked forward to Baba's assistance; but Baba, psychoanalyst and adroit artist that he was, coolly told Das Ganu that his doubt would be resolved by the maid-servant of Kaka Dixit at Vile-Parle, when he would go there. And true to the letter of Baba's words, whilst washing early morning Kaka's household utensils the maid-servant, of tender age, was heard singing a tune which brought a wisp of fresh air, opening the portals of Das Ganu's befuddled mind and the difficulty was resolved. The point at stake was "how human happiness or sorrow arose". Did it depend on external environments or was it embedded in the human mind itself? The ditty sung by the maid-servant who was seen to be dressed in tattered clothes, came out of the fullness of her heart. In other words, happiness or misery is a vritti (modification) of the mind and did not depend on the external conditions impinging on the mind. It is truly said that "mind is its own place and it can make in it a heaven of hell and a hell of heaven".

The other lesson, which Shri Baba wanted to bring home to Das Ganu, was that wisdom was not confined to celebrities; it could as well come from an uncouth, illiterate person like the

maid-servant, who was as much the handiwork of God as a so-called celebrity like Shri Baba himself.

The seed of spiritual life was planted by Shri Baba in Das Ganu and with Baba's blessing, it sprouted into a full-blown flower. Otherwise, service in the Police Department and his love of Tamasha, an erotic dramatisation of rural life, ran counter to the germination of spiritual growth. Shri Baba's blessings carried Das Ganu on the crest of a wave of popularity and he became a missionary to spread Shri Baba's message amongst the masses, who were steeped in ignorance, intolerance, superstitions and all sorts of preconceived ideas of life.

As was the vogue then, Das Ganu, Kirtankar, was, in the early years dressed in a long flowing gown, a dhoti underneath, an uttariya flung across his shoulders and a red turban on his head. Shri Baba assigned to him the fourth Ramnavmi celebrations at Shirdi. The first three celebrations had been carried out without the participation of Das Ganu. The fourth and all subsequent celebrations, till his demise, were the handiwork of Das Ganu. When Das Ganu first participated in the fourth celebration, he was dressed as was his vogue. Before starting the Kirtan, he went to Shri Baba for his blessings. Shri Baba sarcastically remarked that he looked like a bride groom in his habiliments. Baba asked him why he came dressed in this fashion. He explained the purpose. Shri Baba ordered him to take down the accouterments which Das Ganu quietly did and placed them at Shri Baba's feet. Shri Baba, simultaneously, reminded him of the tradition of Narada Muni, who strolled the three worlds for his Sankirtans bare-bodied, only in a loin cloth. Ever afterwards, in all weather, Das Ganu performed his Kirtans bare-bodied. He never accepted even a farthing for his Kirtans. Shri Baba's advice and admonition stuck to him through his lifetime. What a transformation!

On the next morning, very early, when Shri Baba took his Mahasamadai, Shri Baba appeared in a dream to Das Gnu, who

was then camping at Pandharpur, and told him that his Masjid was in ruins, he was harassed by the oil merchants and grocers at Shirdi and that he was leaving Shirdi for good. Shri Baba then requested him to repair to Shirdi instantly and place plentiful flowers on him as his last wish.

When soon thereafter, the actual message about Shri Baba's Mahasamadhi reached him, he went post haste to Shirdi with a platoon of his disciples. For full twenty-four hours, he and his disciples sang the glory of God's names continuously and placed this figurative garland of God's names on the Mahasamadhi as their humble tribute to Shri Baba, who was the very image of God. Das Ganu passed away at a ripe old age, full of honours, a King among Kirtankars and a cynosure to the eyes of the devout.

The main purpose of this brief article is to bring out how on one occasion Das Ganu was moved to tears by a miracle which Shri Baba worked on him. On one of his several pilgrimages to Shirdi, Das Ganu sought Baba's permission to go to Prayag for a holy dip in the Ganga waters, at their confluence with Jamna and Saraswati at Prayag. The time when he intended to go there was very auspicious; but Shri Baba would not give the permission. Shri Baba told him that such a long and costly journey was unnecessary, as Prayag was where he stood if only he had firm faith in Shri Baba. On this assurance from Shri Baba, Das Ganu instantly prostrated himself on Shri Baba's feet and lo and behold, a trickle of water began to drip from Shri Baba's toes!

Overwhelmed by this graceful miracle, Das Ganu, there and then, spontaneously, composed a song to immortalise this experience. This song shows the high degree of honour and devotion that Shri Das Ganu had for Shri Baba.

An English rendering of this Marathi song is given below for the benefit of those Sai devotees, who do not understand or speak Marathi. The song occurs in Chapter 4 of Shri Sai

Satcharita written by Shri Annasaheb Dabholkar, a sincere devotee of Shri Sai Baba.

Song

1. "O King of Sadgurus, your prowess and Leelas are inscrutable. You are the mercy boat by which the Jada Jeevas would cross the ocean of samsar.
2. You became for me Lord Krishna and took me to Prayag to bathe me in the Ganga-Jamuna waters dripping from your two toes.
3. You yourself have become Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and stride the wide earth.
4. Your lips utter deep wisdom like Brahman personified and at times ascending Tamo Guna, you assume the fierce aspect of Rudra.
5. Sometimes you play childish pranks like Shri Krishna and converting the devotees' minds into pools of water, sport in them like the swan.
6. If one were to take you to be a Yavana (i. e. non-Hindu), you delight in sandal-paste; if one were to regard you to be a Hindu, you always reside in a Masjid.
7. If one were to take you to be a wealthy person, you beg your livelihood. If you were to be taken as a mere Fakir, you shame Kubera (Croesus) by your liberal gifts.
8. If your abode is taken for a Masjid, a Fire burns there perpetually in a Dhuni from which you give Udi (holy ash) to all and sundry.
9. From early morning your humble devotees worship you and at mid-day they perform your Aarati.
10. On all your four sides, your devotees gather like multitudes of insentient things and wave the chowries and chamaras to keep you cool and comforted.

1. There is then a din of the sounds of horns, sanais and other musical instruments and the gong sounds the loudest and orderlies cease to and fro yelling out to keep order.
2. When the Aarati is being performed, you look like Vishnu sitting on His shining throne. In the evening, sitting near the dhuni, you burn your worldly likes and desires.
3. Such Leelas of the three gods you show every day and thus project to us the image of Baba Sai.
4. Though a witness to such Leelas, my mind restlessly wanders all around. Now, I pray, you please still and steady it.
5. I am the meanest of the mean sinners and prostrate at your feet. Now, Guru Raj, relieve Ganu Das of the triad of afflictions, adhyatmic, adhidaivic and adhibhautic to which he is heir." ★

R. S. Gavankar

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I Bow To Lord Sainath

सदा निबवृक्षस्य मूलाधिवासात् ।
 सुधास्त्राविणं तिक्तमप्यप्रियं तम् ।
 तरुं कल्पवृक्षाधिकं साधयन्तम् ।
 नमामीश्वरं सद्गुरुं साईनाथम् ॥

[श्री साईनाथ महिम्नस्तोत्रम् चतुर्थः श्लोकः]

Translation

I bow to the Lord Sai Nath, who by His constant stay at the foot of the Neem tree, made, it—which though bitter and unpleasant was yet oozing nectar (the oozing of this tree is called Amrit, i. e. nectar, on account of its healing properties)—better than the Kalpa-vriksha (wishfulfilling tree).

Object of Worship And Prayer

From generations it is an accepted theory that man must pray and worship the creator for salvation and to get liberated from the bondage of this mundane world.

To achieve this goal, man prays and worships the Lord. In doing so, he has his own method or choice of his chosen deity's image before him for concentration, devotion and dedication with an ultimate object of surrendering himself to his deity wholly.

For the purpose of worship of his deity, one should be scrupulously clean and pure in all sincerity, both in body and mind, as a mirror. He should eschew egoism, avoid faltering and wavering in concentration and should solidify the mind as that of a rock. He should have control over his mind and overpower the faltering or wavering of the mind, which is an utmost vital factor as the mind is a devil powerfully attempting to shatter his concentration and distracting his mind. He should, therefore, defeat this devil viz mind, and over-power it by his steadfastness.

For his satisfaction and only to please his eyes and mind, thinking that he is satisfying and pleasing his deity, man decorates the deity in various forms and fashions to the extent he is capable of and to extent he could afford, according to his status and ability; may be with devotion too, but this should not be done for show of public, boast or egoism, nor is he permitted to adorn or decorate his deity at other's cost for his purpose; and whatever he does for his good and in his own interest for his self-elevation, should be by himself, with his own means, with all sincerity in deep faith and devotion to please the Lord and the public. It may also be noted here that man cannot please and satisfy God, who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and all pervading. But if the Lord is really pleased only by his bhakti and if the Lord admits, accepts and owns one by his

dedication, devotion and surrender, then external decoration and adorning the deity, pomp and show are, not at all necessary. If the Lord, in fact, is satisfied with ones devotion from the depth of his heart, if one has dedicated himself to the Lord with a craving and craze to attain salvation or Moksham then anything least, offered to the deity, is quite enough and satisfying to the Lord.

To quote an instance, it may be noted how Devi Rukmini, consort of Lord Sri Krishna, weighed her life-partner, Lord Krishna on scales with a few Tulsi leaves by her devotion, which is divine, in contrast to Devi Satyabhama, who tried to weigh the Lord Sri Krishna on scales by all her riches and fortune, whose bhakti or devotion was not as saturated and crystal clear as that of Devi Rukmini. While the former's was materialistic that of the latter divine and ethical. Devi Satyabhama's devotion was out of egoism. So the Lord requires love divine, not egoism.

To quote further, it may be noted with interest that all the noted saints, bhaktas mostly, are very poor or even those who had, relinquished their riches or fortune (since riches are obstacles to bhakti) like Tukaram, Tulsidas, Kanaka Das, Ramadas, Mira Devi, Surdas, Purandara Das and bhakta Kumbhara, who dedicated their lives to the Lord.

How the saints were immersed in their devotion and how blind they were to the mundane world, could be seen from how bhakta Kumbhara, in his devotion and concentration on God, being blind to the material world, did not notice or know that it was his child and not clay, which he mixed up for pottery making.

Saint Ramadas did not realise the consequences ahead of him, in utilising and spending the King Tanisha's state official finance for Lord Rama at Bhadrachelam. Ramadas unmindful of his son's falling into the well and drowning, first attended to the saint guests who visited his house, without displaying any grief or revealing the death of his son, lest the guests will refuse to

take meals (Parayan), fed them first and then prayed for his son, who got up from the well and came back. Out of devotion and divinity of Saint Ramadas that the Lord was pleased to give back his son to him.

As regards Mira Devi, she relinquished her royal husband and riches for the devotion of Lord Sri Krishna. And to quote Prahallad, the boy-bhakta to his Lord Narayana, that he refused and disobeyed his teachers, nay even his own father Hiranya Kasyapu, who subjected him to all the cruel tests in order to change his bhakti; but so undaunted and stubborn was Prahallad's Bhakti, that his father finally had to be killed by Lord Narayana to prove that Bhakti was supreme to power.

To sum up, it could be said that all saints and bhaktas, who sought the Lords grace, were those, who relinquished all their riches and fortune of worldly comforts, unmindful of the agony to their bodies in this mundane world; some did penance for a long time in solitude, lonely in forests but not in palaces. There is not a single instance of one doing penance and seeking Lord's protection in a royal palace, as such places do not converge into places for devotion to Lord.

In this mundane and material world, one seeking Lord's grace can only **Pray, Pray and Pray**. Decoration to Lord is secondary. As we cannot do anything else to acquire the Lord's grace, in addition to prayers, we offer things as a token of gratitude. This is done only by material minded men and not by saints and bhaktas. Yet, Lord will not appear to him and bless him personally, unlike in very rare instances, under very extraordinary cases, like Dhruva and Markandeya, to whom the Lord appeared and blessed them. These are exceptions and rare instances as they were adamant and bent upon seeking refuge only in the Lord.

From the foregoing, it is brought out that our prayer should be sincere, devoted, dedicated and with deep and unshakable faith, we should surrender to Him for salvation or Moksham, at

the time of our departure from this world, and for our better place, nearer to God in our next birth, as rebirth is certain as per Dwaita philosophy, as soul and body are different from each other, as the soul casts off the worn out cavacha, necessarily requires a fresh one.

So your worship of Lord should be for a better place nearer to God, in your next birth and not for worldly show in our existence. But the punishment for past Karma should be suffered, of course, with some remission for your devotion now. With this end and aim in view, if you pray and worship, you are really blessed and that is the prayer that pleases the Lord (Shri Sai).

Vedas, Upanishads and holy scriptures preach the same and guide you, depicting the glories of the Lord (Sri Sai). It is only by uttering the name of the Lord sincerely day in and day out every minute, wherever you are and whatever you do—in sleep or when you are awake—that one can attain salvation or Moksham and thus liberate himself from the Mundane world; but not through decoration or adorning the Lord with all your riches, with pomp and egoism for show to the public, just because one can afford to spend lavishly to his capacity.

Know thyself, you are nearer to God by sincere prayers, dedication and devotion, and you cannot hoodwink the Almighty by false praise, with camouflaged bhakti, to seek your ends, as such things will be promptly rejected by HIM.

Simply muttering hymns and counting the sacred beads, will not fetch fruits but sincere prayer and bhakti. Know thyself well bhakta, the theory of devotion.

With Pranams, Prostrations and Sashtangams to my Lord Sri Sai, My Saviour, Protector, Care-Taker, Guide and Philosopher. ★

B. Ramanadha Rao

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Grace of Our Sai Baba

The following incident was related to me by a couple, in Shirdi while we, I myself and my wife, had gone to Shirdi in the beginning of the month of March 1979 (9th and 10th of March 1979). In fact the couple was in the same train, rather in the same compartment, while we went to Shirdi.

On Friday, the 9th of March 1979, in the morning, while the couple was in the temple with their child, he was pulling his mother's hand and he had a fall. For some time the child did not feel any pain; but after some time he began to cry as he was feeling pain in his hand. On the advice of the Shirdi Authorities, the child was taken to the Sainath Hospital where the resident Doctor could not diagnose definitely whether the child had a crack or dislocation in his hand and hence the parents were advised to wait till the next day when X Ray would be taken.

Since the couple had a great faith in OUR SAI BABA, they applied UDI to the affected hand and placed their child before BABA'S photo saying, "BABA we have got this child by your grace and we place him at your feet and it is upto you to relieve him from pain and from any after effects of the injury." You would hardly believe that within a short time the child stopped crying and began to play as usual. After some time while the child was once again examined by the resident Doctor, he found that the child's hand was quite normal.

Was not the child's recovery from his injury a miracle and that too by OUR BABA'S Grace? ★

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Shri Baba Consecrates His Pothi

Inscrutable and unfathomable indeed are the ways of Shri Baba to impregnate the faith of His devotees in Him.

My efforts to maintain a steady spiritual progress by daily reading one chapter from "Shri Sai Satcharita" having proved futile, I thought of an idea of placing it at different places in Shirdi. Accordingly, on 8th July, 1979, I took the Pothi with me to Shirdi and on reaching there kept it on the Samadhi, at Dwarkamai, Gurupadukasthan and also at Chawdi. At each of these places I fervently prayed to Shri Baba to bless my efforts. Having done this, at night at about 8/00 p. m., I casually visited the Auctioneer's Office in the Samadhi Mandir, to buy a piece of cloth to cover the Pothi. I found only three pieces of cloth. Without much hesitation, I chose the simplest of the lot and came back to my room opposite Guru Padukasthan, to read the chapter No. 11 from the Pothi. I don't know what happened to me that night, but while reading, somehow I felt that I fully identified myself with that chapter at the time of reading. Having finished the chapter, I covered the Pothi with the newly bought cloth and to my amazement, I saw that the cloth bore the word "SHRADDHA" in vernacular. I had no words to describe my feelings of joy and so was dumbfounded to see Shri Baba's invisible hand which brought the cloth in my possession. While I was thus immersed in my thought, Shri Dave, my neighbour very aptly exclaimed from outside the room that "you will surely reach your goal if you maintain such full faith in Him". The next day happened to be the Guru Pournima day and I touched the Lotus Feet of Shri Baba and said that I would look to Him like a baby tortoise with a fixed gaze at His Foot- as He only blessed the Pothi earlier by materialising in it lumps of Vermilion, petals of Marigold and Shevanti and Akshata and now He had consecrated it by covering it with a cloth which bore the word "Faith".



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श्री साई का प्रत्यक्ष चमत्कार

मेरे मित्र श्री नरेन्द्रसिंह पवार जो कि रेल्वे में कार्यरत है उन्हें 'फायरमन' के पद पर उन्नति के लिए विभागीय परीक्षा देनी थी। शारीरिक व अन्य सभी परीक्षण में वह उत्तीर्ण हो गये थे। केवल आँखों का परीक्षण रेल्वे के डॉक्टर को करना शेष था। आँखों के परीक्षण में वह भर्ती के समय भी कठीनाई से पास हुवे थे। इस पद पर उन्नति के लिए आँखों के परीक्षण में सफल होना अनिवार्य था।

अतः कोटा (राजस्थान) जाकर परीक्षण के पूर्व ही उन्होंने अन्य डॉक्टर से सम्पर्क स्थापित कर आँखों के परीक्षण हेतु निर्धारित किताब को पढ़ने का प्रयास किया, परन्तु वे उसे विलकुल भी पढ़ न सके। इस कारण वह अत्यंत निराश हो गये, क्योंकि आँखों के परीक्षण में असफल होने की दशा में उन्हें नौकरी से भी हटाया जा सकता था। उनके सहयोगी ने भी उन्हें परीक्षण में सम्मिलित न होने की सलाह दी। परन्तु उन्हें बाबा पर भ्रूट विश्वास था जिसका उल्लेख उन्होंने अपने सहयोगी को भी किया। परन्तु उनकी बात सुनकर सहयोगी इसने लगा।

सायंकाल चार बजे उन्हें डाक्टर व्दारा बुलाया गया। बड़े डरते डरते बाबा का स्मरण कर उन्होंने परीक्षण कक्ष में प्रवेश किया। डॉक्टर ने उन्हें वह निर्धारित पुस्तक पढ़ने दी जिसे कि वह सुबह पढ़ने में असफल रहे थे। किताब में से जो जो डाक्टर ने कहा उसे पढ़ने में उन्हें कोई कठीनाई नहीं हुई। उनके पढ़ने के क्रम को देखकर सहयोगी भी आश्चर्यचकित रह गये।

परीक्षण की सफलतासे उनकी आँखों से आनन्द अश्रु झरझर बहने लगे। क्योंकि यह उन्हें बाबा का प्रत्यक्ष अनुभव था। उनके सहयोगी ने भी बाबा के चमत्कार को अपनी आँखों से प्रत्यक्ष देखा।

इस प्रकार "बाबा" सदैव अपने भक्तों को जीवन की कठीनाईयों से प्रत्यक्ष उभार कर विश्वास को दृढता प्रदान करते हैं।

दशरथ सुर्वे

सरकिट हाऊस कम्पाउण्ड, क्वार्टर नं. ३, गुना (म. प्र.)

सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्

‘मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद’

सब जीवों पर करुणा डाले ।
अखिल विश्व का भेद खोले ॥
आदिगुरुत्वस्वरूप के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ १ ॥

मिला था ज्ञान भूतकाल में ।
मिलता रहा है वर्तमान में ॥
एसे परमपूज्य सद्गुरु के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ २ ॥

सबका मूल निर्गुण निराकार ।
पूर्ण सनातन परब्रह्म है ॥
सगुण रूप में नित्य साकार ।
चराचर व्यापित परब्रह्म है ॥
सबमे ही है वही समाया ।
उसने ही यह जग अपनाया ॥
उस पूर्ण सनातन ब्रह्म के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ३ ॥

बिना पुरुष-प्रकृति के, यहाँ ।
संभव हुआ है सृजन कहाँ ?
यह आदि युगल ‘पुरुष-प्रकृति’ ।
महाब्रह्म की चिरंतन शक्ति ॥

अनंत आदि युगल स्वरूप के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ४ ॥

आयुक्त भ्रमण का वह निरूप ।
सबमें होता है अपने आप ॥
सभी क्रियाओं का नित होता ।
अखिल विश्व को उसका देना ॥
उस ‘महासमर्थ’ ‘महाज्ञान’ के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ५ ॥

कारण उत्पत्ति स्थिति अथ ।
रज, तम और सत्व गुणोंमय ॥
उस महागुणात्मक स्वरूप के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ६ ॥

आकाश, वायु, तेज, जल, पृथ्वी ।
मूल तत्वों से व्यापित सृष्टि ॥
पंच महातत्व स्वरूप के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
मौंगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ७ ॥

जिससे होते सब कुल गोचर ।
ग्रह, तारे और नक्षत्र पलभर ॥

उन सबके साथ पृथ्वी माँ के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
माँगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ८ ॥

दृश्यादृश्य, सूक्ष्म और स्थूल ॥
ब्रह्मांडी पिंड है समूल ॥
उन सब सूक्ष्माकृतियों के
स्वरूपों को करके प्रणाम
माँगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ९ ॥

चींटी से लेकर सिंह हाथी ।
विचरते हैं सब वनके साथी ॥
उन सब स्थूलाकृति निर्मित
स्वरूपों को, करके प्रणाम
माँगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ १० ॥

जीव ही पिंड है ब्रह्मांड का ।
भोग भोगते कर्मकांड का ॥
उससेही पाते है प्रेरणा ॥

सनातन ब्रह्म की धारणा ॥
उस सनातन निजात्मा के
स्वरूपों को, करके प्रणाम
माँगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ ११ ॥

सब संतों की वाणी कहती ।
सब जीवों में "ब्रह्मबस्ती" ॥
नाम जाप में रमते जोगी ।
लय पाते हैं उसमें योगी ॥
उन सब संतों के अति कोमल
चरणों में नित, करके प्रणाम
माँगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ १२ ॥

गोदा तीरे प्रकटे साई ।
पूर्ण ब्रह्म शिरडी साई ॥
उदी लगाकर श्री साई के
चरणों में नित करके प्रणाम
माँगता हूँ शुभाशीर्वाद ॥ १३ ॥

कवि : राधाकृष्ण युता 'चेतम'

पाटकर वाडा, भगतसिंग पथ, डोंबिवली (पूर्व) जिल्हा थाने ४२१२०१



भजन

साईं हमारे दीनों के प्यारे
छोड़ गये तुम हमे बेसहारे
साईंनाथ ओ ओ साईंनाथ ओ ओ साईंनाथ ॥ ४० ॥

गरीबो का तू वाली है बाबा । तेरे सिवा न कोई
एक सहारा तू ही हमारा । ओ शिरडी के साईं
कैसा सितम ढाया, कोई समझ ना पाया ।
अब तो जागो ओ शिरडीवाले ॥ १ ॥

जीवन नैय्या बीच भवर मे । ना संगी ना साथी
तूही खिबय्या बनके आजा । क्यूं न रहम तुझे आती
दे दो दया की भीख ओ बाबा । दार पे तेरे हम आन खडे
साईंनाथ ओ ओ साईंनाथ ॥ २ ॥

किसको सुनाये किसको बताये । साईं हमारे हाल
कौन सुने अब तुम बीन साईं । हम दुखीया के सवाल
आजावो वो रखवाले, शिरडी के रहनेवाले
कब तक बाट निहारे हम
साईंनाथ ओ ओ साईंनाथ, ओ ओ साईंनाथ ॥ ३ ॥

टी. एस. एस. कोनार
सहा. कर्ज अधीक्षक, महाराष्ट्र राज्य सहकारी भूविकास बैंक,
जिल्हा शाखा भंडारा, मु. पो. भंडारा, जिल्हा भंडारा



साई से जन्म जन्मांतर का बंधन

समाधि मंदीर का ये कैसा विराट संम्मोहीत दृश्य है
जहाँ प्रेम, भक्ति और श्रद्धा का आविष्कार होता है ॥

जब हम संगमरमर की भव्य मूर्ती को देखते हैं
अभी बोल उठेगी ये मूर्ति ऐसा एहसास होता है ॥

जब हम समाधि और मूर्ती के चरण स्पर्श करते हैं
मनमंदीर मे इस मंगल मूर्ती की सुहानी याद रह जाती है ॥

भला कैसे विपदाओं हमारे पास रह सकती है
शिरडी के समाधि मंदीर मे जब साई के दर्शन हो जाते है ॥

ब्दारकामाई की भी हम कैसे तारिफ कर सकते हैं
यहाँ तो जगतजननी के अविरत प्रेम का हमें एहसास होता है ॥

यशोदामैया के प्यार और ममता की ये भूमि है
जहाँ हमारे दिल को तसल्ली हो जाती है ॥

पूर्व जन्मका कुछ लेनदेन का साई ये रिश्ता है
तेरे साथ तो हमारा जन्म जन्मांतर का नाता है ॥

कभी टुट नहीं सकता प्रेममिलन का ये जो बंधन है
तेरा निरंतन नाम एवम् निष्काम भक्ति ये तो हमारा जीवन है ॥

बिपीन कपीलराय स्वादीया
३०७, कमल कुंज, तीसरा माळा,
दत्त मंदिर रोड, संगीता सिनेमा के सामने
मालाड (पूर्व) बम्बई ४०० ०६४



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