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SHRI

SAILEELA

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF SHIRDI SANSTHAN





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**Official Organ of
Shirdi Sansthan**

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**To spread the message of SHRI SAI
BABA all the world over is the aim and
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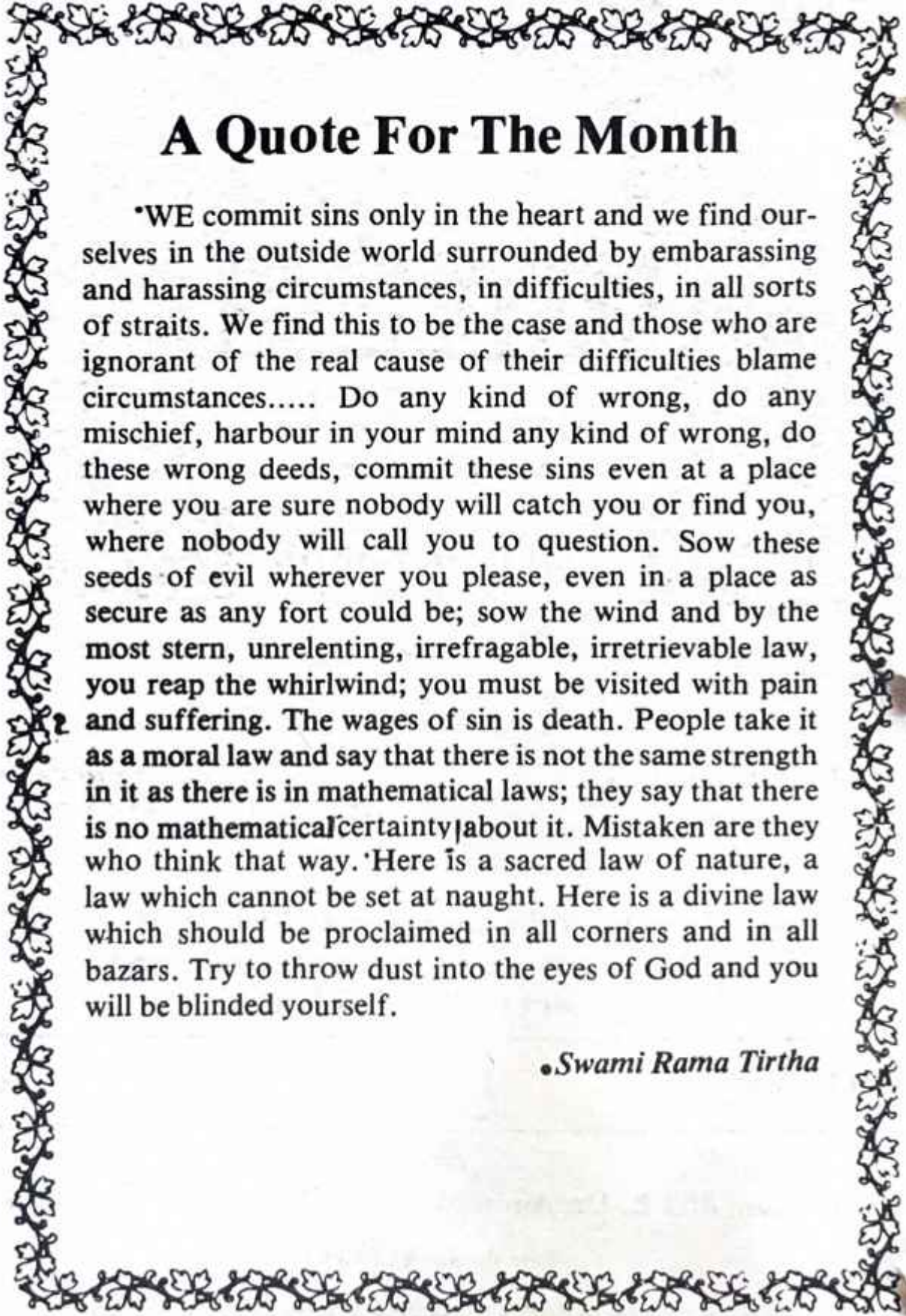
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A Quote For The Month

*WE commit sins only in the heart and we find ourselves in the outside world surrounded by embarrassing and harassing circumstances, in difficulties, in all sorts of straits. We find this to be the case and those who are ignorant of the real cause of their difficulties blame circumstances..... Do any kind of wrong, do any mischief, harbour in your mind any kind of wrong, do these wrong deeds, commit these sins even at a place where you are sure nobody will catch you or find you, where nobody will call you to question. Sow these seeds of evil wherever you please, even in a place as secure as any fort could be; sow the wind and by the most stern, unrelenting, irrefragable, irretrievable law, you reap the whirlwind; you must be visited with pain and suffering. The wages of sin is death. People take it as a moral law and say that there is not the same strength in it as there is in mathematical laws; they say that there is no mathematical certainty about it. Mistaken are they who think that way. Here is a sacred law of nature, a law which cannot be set at naught. Here is a divine law which should be proclaimed in all corners and in all bazars. Try to throw dust into the eyes of God and you will be blinded yourself.

•*Swami Rama Tirtha*

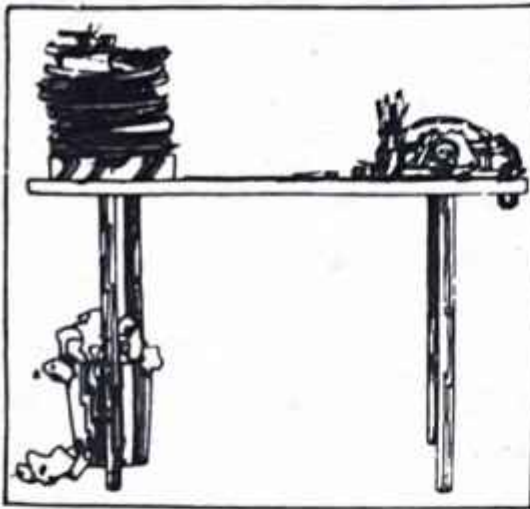
SHRI SAI LEELA

JULY 1987

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EDITORIAL



'Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

St. Luke; 23:34

These were the words of compassion uttered with his dying breath on the cross, by Jesus Christ. Treachery, falsehood and utter contempt from the men around him, and the physical torture could not perturb the equanimity of his mind. Rather, the spectacle of human weaknesses

flooded his heart with compassion for the erring humanity. If ever there was a manifestation of Divinity in man, of the Divine Love which is the true religion of mankind, it was indeed here!

But, then, Christ was by his own proclamation the Son of God and therefore far above the common run of humanity. So also were the Buddha and Mahavir who preached 'Ahimsa' or compassionate love and respect towards all life. It is interesting to note how all saints think alike and teach the same gospel; and we remember how Saibaba always told his devotees to respect life and to shun the taking of human life as the greatest sin. The two brothers who were born as sheep in the next birth were only paying for their sin of killing each other ("Shri Sai-Sat-Charit", Ch. 46). Moreover, this urge to take revenge and kill develops into frenzy and pursues a man birth after birth, if it is not satisfied. So it happened in the case of Veerbhadra and Chanabasappa. ("Shri Sai-Satcharit", Ch. 47) The whole point of these tales is to bring home to the devotees the heavy price one has to pay for such sins. In fact, Baba even went a step further and said that since all the living creatures are God's creatures we should respect them as such and refrain from killing even those creatures which are known to pose a danger to our life. In the 22nd Chapter of "Shri Sai-Sat-Charita" Baba's views are stated very clearly when he said that since God dwells even in poisonous creatures like scorpions and snakes, we must love them too, for they too follow only God's will if and when they harm anybody.

To be able to rise above the petty, selfish ends, to be able to

look beyond the self, at others — even when these “others” happen to be one’s ‘enemies’ — with forgiveness and love; it is this, the strength of the noble and the enlightened. The absence thereof is precisely the weakness of the struggling and the striving ones. We, the teeming millions cannot even approximate to anything like divinity or sainthood because we are victims of our passions that goad us on towards “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” attitude towards our fellow-beings. Anger, hatred, enmity, when uncurbed by reason and unmitigated by compassion and love, tend to take a turn for violence, resulting at times, in the destruction of life. And it ultimately leaves us “to stew in our own juices”, so to say, until redemption comes to us through the healing touch of the saints or our Guru, setting right our ‘account’ in the book of the great Chitragupta, the accountant of the Gods.

Admittedly then, lack of sympathy, understanding, and the power to forgive — these are some of our greatest failings that arise out of our ignorance of our true self. A little thought can bring out the futility of all killing which can at the most destroy the physical body but not the soul of man which remains unharmed. It is our ignorance that wrongly identifies the body with the true self. Hence it is that Christ said, “they know not what they do.”

But destruction of life is a sin which adds to our evil deeds, and the evil thoughts that precede the evil act, make our minds impure. Ahimsa, according to Gandhiji, is not merely ‘not to kill’ but “not to hurt any living creature by thought, word or deed, even for the supposed benefit of that creature.” One may feel that whereas intentional destruction of life with an evil motive can be prevented by thought and restraint, we may be destroying many of God’s tiny creatures quite unintentionally and unknowingly during our day to day activities. To purify ourselves of such sins, “Shri Sai-Sat-Charita” tells us that Baba used to practise five types of ‘Yagnas’ or sacrifices every day. (Chap. 9).

Such then is the importance of not hurting and destroying any of God’s creatures. As with unfulfilled obligations, and hatred and enmity, so also with destroying of life, there is no redemption for man until he pays for such evil deeds. The sooner one recognizes such undesirable tendencies and disciplines oneself to eliminate them, one is already a few steps nearer to God.



OM SAI, SHRI SAI, JAYA JAYA SAI

The most powerful mantra which brings internal happiness (bliss) and glory to mankind, and the mantra which elevates man to the level of God was bestowed by our beloved Shri Sainath of Shirdi himself when he was in his flesh and blood. Perhaps, it was His will that this mantra should get popularised 50 years after his leaving his physical body.

Though earlier this mantra was popularised by his ardent devotees to a certain extent this was not so done as to reach the nook and corner of the world, until one of his ardent devotees in Andhra-Pradesh, Shri Shankariah of Hyderabad came forward to take up this holy task. This great devotee, by the blessings of Lord Shri Sainath himself served the mankind by propagating this great mantra — “OM SAI, SHRI SAI, JAYA JAYA SAI”. This is gradually spreading through the length and breadth of the country. Recently, this was chanted continuously for 49 days at VIJAYA-WADA by Shri Sai devotees, from different parts of the country. This was a glorious success. This mantra japa was mainly for bringing peace and tranquility to the present world in turmoil.

Under the able guidance of this holy and great Shri Sai devotee Shri R. Radhakrishna Iyer, for the first time this great mantra was introduced in Hubli, (Dharwad dist. of the Karnataka State) under the aegis of Shri Balaji Temple (Shri Mouni Baba Math) situated in the Railway Colony area at Down chawl, Hubli in the year 1984. He conducted Saptaha for 7 Sundays and the concluding 7th Sunday was celebrated with grandeur by large gathering of Shri Sai devotees. Since then this practice is being followed every year. Last year, it was celebrated under the auspices of Shri Shirdi Sai Mandir at P.W.D. Compound, Hubli for which Shri S.N. Jadi, is the Chairman. The love and the grace of Lord towards His devotees was so much that the concluding day, incidentally, fell on Shri Ganesh Chaturthi day i.e. 7-9-1986. LORD SAINATH himself presided over the concluding function as Lord SAI GANESH. The vibrations of mantra was so great that the people of the whole area was rejoicing over the peace and bliss that ensued.

The next day i.e. Monday, day of The Rishi Panchami, was celebrated as part of Saptaha, with vagar sankirthan, Shri Vishnu Sahasranamah, Mahaprasad, Bhajanas and narration of the

Experiences of Shri Sai devotees. Thus the Maha mantra is slowly spreading in this part of the country.

Shri Radhakrishnan Iyer, is a great Shri Sai devotee and very well known to the readers of Shri Sai leela by his valuable contributions. He needs no introduction. I was inspired by lord Shri Sainath to write this article about this great devotee. Because of His immense love towards Sri Iyer, Lord chose him and he has become the first person to introduce this great mantra "OM SAI, SHRI SAI, JAYA JAYA SAI" in Karnataka, and in this way Shri Iyer is to be remembered for a long time to come and his work is one of epoch making. There is no doubt that this Maha mantra will spread to all nook and corner of the country soon, as per cherished dreams of the great Shri Shankariah and Shri Radhakrishna Iyer.

Shri Radhakrishna Iyer, who is 70 years now had his brilliant career in Railway Workshops, Hubli (Karnataka) as a chageman in production units and served the Department for nearly 40 years. He is one of the beloved sons of Late Shri A. Ranganath Iyer and Smt. Rukmini Ammal. Shri A. Ranganath Iyer, was himself an ardent devotee of Shri Sainath and his son SHRI RADHAKRISHNA IYER has rightly emulated his father's qualities faithfully. Now, Shri Radhakrishna Iyer, after his super annuation is totally dedicating his life for propagation of 'Shri Sai Cult' at a time athiesm is showing its ugly head and man is suffering form the malady of endless desires. Shri Iyer is bringing about a transformation of people through this Mahamantra. His only wish is that this powerful mantra should spread all over the country in an organised manner, ensure human welfare and lasting happiness. I hope, Shri 'Sai' devotees will dedicate their lives too for propagating this Mahamantra "OM SAI, SHRI SAI, JAYA JAYA SAI".

I am one of the many devotees who pray to our beloved lord Shri Sainath to bless this elder devotee with many more years of healthy life to serve the mankind, at large.

JAI SAI RAM

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SAI HELPS

The following incident may seem trivial to most. But as for me it is of profound importance, because it was since then that my faith in Sai Baba became concrete.

On September, 13th 1986, my friend and I boarded a city bus near our college and we were homeward bound. I had with me my friend's (beautiful and expensive) saree and I was carrying it to return to her. We got different seats and as our stop was still a long way, I had placed the saree packet on my lap and was immersed in reading a book. After a couple of stops, a lady with an infant requested me for my seat. As I got up I realized I had some urgent work at the next stop. So I hurriedly got down with my friend. That errand did not take as much as 3 minutes and we immediately caught the next bus. After going some distance it suddenly struck me that I was not carrying the saree packet any more. I told this to my friend and after a quick recollection we got down from the bus planning to take an auto to follow our previous bus. After a little difficulty we got an auto. The moment I sat in it my head and heart were only with Sri Sai Baba and I heard myself imploring Him, "Sai, please help me." With the prayers from within we tracked the bus to its last stop. We were a few moments late, as the bus had already started again, depot-bound. Again the two of us took an auto and asked the driver to follow the bus. The bus halted because of a traffic jam enroute and I almost jumped out from the auto and got into the bus. I asked the driver and conductor about my packet. The conductor quickly remembered seeing us board the bus at our college stop; nevertheless asked a few questions before handing me over my belonging — my friend's beautiful and costly saree.

As I verbally thanked him, my heart and mind thanked only Sai. All through this ordeal, my friend was a great help and it was Sri Sai who only must have guided us to take the necessary timely actions. This incident has had a great impact on my mind in strengthening my faith further in Sai, the Saviour.

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**SHRI SAI BABA AND HIS DEVOTEE
KHUSHALCHAND SETH OF RAHATA**

by: V.B. KHER

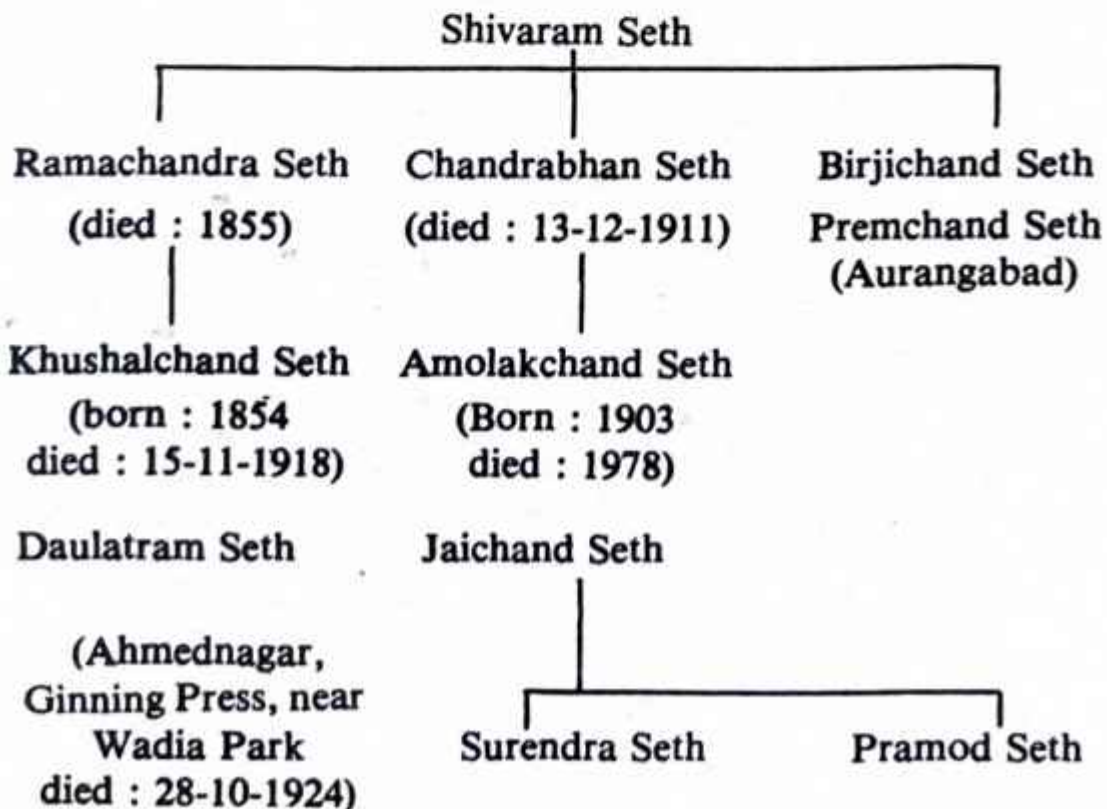


(The following article is based on the information gathered by the writer during his personal visit to the family of Sands at Rahata and the statement of Amolchand Seth published by Shri Nrisimhaswamy in Volume III of Devotees' Experiences of Sri Sai Baba)



It is now known from researches that Shri Sai Baba arrived in Shirdi sometime between 1868 and 1872 and lived there upto His Mahasamadhi in 1918. In this span of about fifty years of his life in Shirdi, he is known not to have moved out physically beyond the villages of Rui, Nimgaon and Rahata. (Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, Chap. 40, 37). Shirdi is flanked by Nimgaon on the eastern side and Rahata on the western. Sai Baba would bring saplings of marigold and jāsmines from Rahata and plant them in the plot of land in Shirdi where Sathewada was later constructed. (Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, Chap. 5, Vs.46&51).

Khushalchand Seth, a landlord and merchant of Rahata was one of the earliest devotees and supporters of Sai Baba. Khushalchand Seth was a descendant of a Rajasthani family known by the name of "Sand" which had migrated to Maharashtra and settled down there. There are references to Sri Khushalchand Seth in three different chapters in Shri Sai-Sat-Charita. We shall refer to these at the appropriate places. But before we do so, we shall trace the family tree of Sand family and then proceed to examine the relationship which existed between Sai Baba and Khushalchand Seth.



Chandrabhan Seth, the uncle of Khushalchand Seth, was a devotee of Baba whom Baba often visited at Rahata. Even after the death of Chandrabhan Seth, Sai Baba's bond with the Sand family continued and it was strengthened by Khushalchand Seth as a result of which Sai Baba looked after his welfare (Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, Chap. 8, 127-130). Khushalchand Seth was a year old when his father died. The family business was then carried on by the firm known as "Shivaram Ramachandra Sand" under which name it continued until 1928. The family of Sand owned two thousand (2000) acres of land at various places, ginning factories at Ahmednagar and Vambori, moneylending business in the establishment at Ganj Bazar, Ahmednagar, warehouses at the Cotton Market, Ahmednagar and Hundi establishments in Selu and Jalna in Marathwada, then a part of Nizam's Hyderabad State. Since Sai Baba hailed from Pathri (15 Kms. from Selu), it may be surmised that he may have known Sand family since his early days. So it is not a matter of surprise, if soon after his arrival in Shirdi, Sai Baba initially toyed with the idea of taking up his residence in Rahata and enquired of Chandrabhan Seth for a suitable place. Chandrabhan Seth had offered him the place in Rahata known as "Pawarwada" owned by Sands. But Sai Baba, for reasons best known to him, finally decided in favour of Shirdi for his abode. It is also known that Sai Baba lived for some months in a Chavadi at Rahata. That may have been during the time when Sai Baba agreed to accompany the fakir Javar Ali and left Shirdi for that purpose. Javar Ali has been variously referred to as Ali, Akbar Ali by Amolakchand Seth in his statement given to the late Shri Nrisimhaswamy. The photograph of Javar Ali was originally published by Shri Nrisimhaswamy in the Biography of Sai Baba authored by him. The same photograph is now being published for the first time in Shri Sai Leela. The correct name of the fakir is Bapushah Jindewali, Ahmednagar.

The photograph of Bapushah Jindewali was printed at page 59 of Volume II of *Shri Santasangha Pustakamala* published by Krishna Jagannath Thali in 1914. The following information is given about him under the photograph. "He enjoys a very extensive renown in Nagar and thereabout as a very pious avaliya. He was intensely devotional and had realised God within. A number of people had experienced his benevolent powers and had become attached to him. In the *Chitramaya Jagat*, Poona is published a photo of his dead body with an immense crowd of people following his coffin."



The story of Javar Ali is narrated in Chapter V of Shri Sai-Sat-Charita in verses 116 to 155. It is reproduced hereinbelow. "In the fifth year after the wrestling bout (of Sai Baba with Mohiddin) a fakir from Ahmednagar named Javar Ali came with his disciple to Rahata. Seeing an open space near the Sri Veerabhadra temple, the fakir camped there. The fakir was indeed fortunate or else how could he have found such a delightful and renowned disciple like Sai? The village was well-populated; many of its inhabitants were Marathas. One of them, Bhagu Sadaphal became his attendant. The fakir was a very learned man. The Quran-e-Sharif was at the tips of his fingers. And many seekers of the material and spiritual and the pious flocked around him. He started construction of *idagah* (a place of prayer). But after a time, he was charged with having defiled the temple of Sri Veerabhadra. The construction was therefore stopped and the fakir driven out. He then came to Shirdi and stayed at the mosque with Sri Sai Baba.

"The fakir was a sweet talker and attracted the villagers towards him. But they said he had cast a spell even upon Baba and charmed him. The fakir asked Baba to be his disciple, and when Baba who was full of frolic consented, he felt happy and took away Baba along with him. Javar Ali then became the guru and an eminent person like Baba his disciple. Both decided to stay in Rahata. The guru did not know the accomplishments of the disciple but the disciple knew the shortcomings of his guru. But Sai behaved like a true disciple and was never disrespectful to him. He did not consider the propriety or impropriety of the guru's orders, but carried them out meticulously. He even carried water for his guru. And so continued the service of the guru, the visits to Shirdi becoming only occasional.

"People thought that Sai was bewitched by the fakir and was lost to Shirdi. Though people thought that Javar Ali was exerting a magnetic pull over Sai with his magic powers, Sai was enacting the role of a disciple who was wearing off his ego. One may well ask, 'How can Sai have any ego?' But he acted thus with a view to the guidance of the world for that was the mission of his life. The villagers of Shirdi were affectionate devotees of Sai. They were deeply attached to him and thought it improper to stay away from him. The villagers were upset thinking that Sai was completely won over by Javar Ali, and they began to consider seriously how to get him back.

“A contingent of devotees from Shirdi went to the *idagah* at Rahata to try their best to persuade Baba to come back with them. But Baba adopted a different line of argument. ‘The fakir is wrathful. Don’t go after him. He will never let me go. So better that you go away from here. He may return any moment and devour you in his terrible temper. Highly inflammable by nature, he will turn red with anger. You are well-advised to leave at once and pick your way to Shirdi.’ The devotees were completely puzzled on hearing this unexpected argument from Baba, when the fakir suddenly appeared on the scene and accosted them thus: ‘What are you discussing? Have you come for this boy? If you intend to take him back to Shirdi, you may as well abandon the idea.’ But though the fakir spoke thus at first, in the end he yielded to the devotees’ pressure and requested them to take him too along with Sai. So the fakir went with them. He could not leave Baba and Baba too could not leave him. No one knows how this happened. Sai was Brahman incarnate; Javar Ali was full of ignorance. He was put to test by Devidas and was exposed.

“Devidas had a well-proportioned body, with lustrous eyes and a handsome face. He was ten or eleven years when he first came to Shirdi. The young pilgrim clad in *langot* put up in the Maruti temple. Thus Devidas had come to Shirdi, twelve years before Baba arrived there with the marriage party (of Chandbhai). Devidas was highly enlightened and Tatyā Kote, Kashinath and others became his chief disciples and followers. Javar Ali was brought before Devidas who with his ascetic powers totally vanquished him in a religious debate and the fakir was driven out of Shirdi. Javar Ali then escaped to Vaijapur and years later he visited Shirdi once again and bowed before Sainath. His illusion that he was the guru and Sai his disciple was dispelled but Baba accepted him as before. Such were the inscrutable ways of Baba. The fakir’s illusion vanished when it was destined to, but until then Sai played upto it. Without disturbing the illusion of the fakir that he was the guru, Sai played the role of a true disciple thus pointing out the moral of this incident. It is best that a disciple should submit to his guru and the guru should accept him as his own without which (relationship) there is no spiritual salvation. That is the moral of this incident. But rare is the person who will have the courage to shed his ego.”

The portrait of Javar Ali (Bapushah Jindewali) was kept in the



ginning factory of Sands near Wadia Park at Ahmednagar. Daulatram Seth had seen Baba with Javar Ali at Ahmednagar. Javar Ali was for some time staying at Bara Imam Kotla near King Gate at Ahmednagar.

Baba would go to Rahata to meet Khushalchand Seth in a bullock cart or tonga. Rahata is one and a half miles from Shirdi. The villagers of Rahata would receive Baba at the village boundary with a percussion band and conduct him in a procession to the house of Khushalchand Seth. Baba would then be seated comfortably and served light refreshments. Over the repast of fruits, they would talk of old times reminding each other of tales of those times and converse happily. The repast over, Baba would return to Shirdi with his companions. (Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, Chap. VIII, 131-136).

Swami Sai-Sharananand has in his autobiography in Gujarathi published posthumously in 1983 narrated an account of one such visit to Khushalchand Seth at Rahata.

One afternoon after the Arti and meals, Bapusaheb Jog told Vamanbhai Patel (as Swami Sai-Sharananand was then) that Baba had gone to Khushalchand at Rahata and he and his wife were proceeding there by a bullock cart and would Vamanbhai accompany him? So they three started. After crossing the river on the way they reached Rahata and the cart stopped on a side. They alighted and followed Baba to Khushalchand's house. Khushalchand Seth received Baba hospitably and worshipped him. Baba was seated on a gaddi and had a bolster to recline against. Kakasaheb Dikshit, Vamanbhai etc. sat opposite Baba. Then Khushalchand Seth placed a plate full of fruits before Baba. Vamanbhai picked up a banana, peeled off the outer covering and handed it over to Baba. Baba ate half of it and handed over the remaining half to Vamanbhai as *prasad*. After spending sometime there Baba returned by the cart to Shirdi. The visit of Baba to Khushalchand Seth on that occasion was to ask for a loan for Narvekar.

The descendants of Sand family (Jaichand Seth and his sons) feel that there must have been *rinanubandha* or strong ties of previous lives between Saibaba and Khushalchand Seth. They said that the two would meet at least once in eight to ten days. If Khushalchand Seth was not able to visit Shirdi, Sai Baba would ask Tatya Kote for a tonga to go to Rahata or would even foot the distance. He would first go to the orchard owned by Khushalchand Seth on the main road from where a message would be sent to Khushalchand at his establishment. Khushalchand Seth would then go to the outskirts to welcome Baba with pomp and ceremony and conduct him to his residence where he would be worshipped and received cordially. Baba would enquire about all the members of Khushalchand's family and bless them. If pressed to partake of refreshments he would take milk and roti. Thus Baba would spend half an hour with them and would then return to Shirdi in Khushalchand Seth's tonga. During Khushalchand Seth's visit to Shirdi, he would often take his son Daulatram also with him. Sai Baba last visited Khushalchand at Rahata three days before his Mahasamadhi. It is significant that within a month or so of Baba's Mahasamadhi Khushalchand Seth passed away.

After Baba's Mahasamadhi, Khushalchand Seth was of the view that the body of Baba should be interred in the open and a fine tomb erected over it. However Baba was laid to rest in the Butiwada (known as Samadhi Mandir) as per his last wish (Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, Chap. 43, 156-158).



IS IT NECESSARY FOR A SADGURU TO BE ALIVE ?

Necessity of a Sadguru

Since the days of Upanishads, the necessity of a spiritual preceptor (Sadguru) for attaining God-Realisation has been considered indispensable. For instance the Mundak Upanishad says:-

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुभेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः
क्षेत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥ (1-2-12)

(To know That one should, holding sacrificial sticks in hands, go to a Guru who is both a scholar and established in Brahman)

In Geeta Shri Krishna tells Arjuna:-

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ (4-33)

(Know that by long prostration, by question and service; the wise who have realised the Truth will instruct thee in (that) Knowledge.)

Sant Tukaram from Maharashtra says the same thing:-

सद्गुरुवाचोनि सांपडेना सोय ।
आपणासरिखे करिती तात्काळ ।

(No shelter other than Sadguru is to be found. He turns the shishya (disciple) immediately into his own likeness.)

And Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa also re-affirms it:-

“When going to a strange country one must abide by directions of the guide who knows the way. So in trying to reach God one must implicitly follow the advice of one single Guru who knows the way to God.” (693)

Shri Sai Baba also confirmed the necessity of a Sadguru for Self-Realisation. In Ch. 2 of Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, we know how Shri Sai Baba convinced Shri Dabholkar that a Guru is a must, by ridiculously addressing him as “Hemadpant” on account of his hot discussion with Shri Balasaheb Bhate on the very first day of his arrival at Shirdi. Also in Ch. 32 the story of 4 aspirants (including Baba Himself) in search of God and Baba’s ultimate success in Self-Realisation due to complete surrender to a Guru are explicit proofs of Baba’s views in the matter.

Thus there is no question about the necessity of a Sadguru for Self-Realisation. The question is whether he should be a living person, or whether a non-living person can be accepted. If an aspirant (sadhaka) can find a perfect Sadguru in flesh and blood, nothing like it. It is easy then for him to serve the Sadguru in person and secure his favours. He can listen to his talks and discuss any doubts with him also. In rare and fortunate cases such as that of Swami Vivekananda, a Sadguru may procure a divine vision to his disciple by a mere touch of the hand only (shaktipaat).

What to do if a living Sadguru is not available?

But how and where to find such a perfect preceptor (Sadguru)? Swami Vivekananda has rightly said:-


“There are many Gurus who, though immersed in ignorance, yet, in the pride of their hearts, fancy they know everything and not only do not stop there, but offer to take others on their shoulders and thus the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.” (III. 47)

A perfect preceptor is he “who has himself crossed the terrible ocean of life and without any idea of gain to himself, helps others also to cross the ocean.” Finding such a Guru is like the fabled pearl-oyster succeeding in catching a drop of the marvellous Swati rain to convert into a beautiful pearl.

Hence if one is not lucky enough to get such a perfect Master, an aspirant should consider any God or Goddess such as Shiva, Rama, Krishna or Durga as a Guru. Shri Ramakrishna has said, “Who is whose Guru (spiritual guide and teacher)? God alone is the guide and Guru of the universe.” (687). So if one approaches God with sincerity, earnest prayers and deep longing, He will surely guide him towards spiritual uplift and if really necessary will send a living Sadguru to him.

Alternatively the aspirant should consider great saints, like Ramana Maharshi of Arunachalam, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of Dakshineswar, Swami Samarth of Akkalkot or Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, who have cast off their mortal bodies, as Sadguru. These saints, although not living physically, do exist with subtle bodies in the universe and are able to contact and even appear before their devotees in person. Shri Sai Baba has said:-

“Believe Me, though I pass away, My bones in My tomb



would be speaking, moving and communicating with those who would surrender themselves whole-heartedly to Me. Do not be anxious that I would be absent from you. You will hear My bones speaking and discussing your welfare.”

— (Shri Sai-Sat-Charita, Ch. 25)

Examples of non-living Gurus

In Maharashtra in early 17th century, Samarth Ramdas, a famous saint and Guru of Shivaji the great, did not have a living Guru. Instead he considered Shri Rama (the 7th incarnation of Shri Vishnu) as his Guru and as a result Ramdas while in meditation, received Mantropadesh from Shri Rama in person.

Other two examples are of this century only and refer to Shri Sai Baba guiding His devotees in spiritual matters long after His samadhi. First one is about H.H. Narasimhaswamiji, Founder-President of the All India Sai Samaj of Madras and who was responsible for the spread of Sai Cult in India especially in the South in the thirties. In his early life Swamiji was a leading legal practitioner and a Member of Madras Legislative Council. In 1925 his son and daughter fell into a well unexpectedly and died. As a result he developed great renunciation in life and went out in search of a Guru. He went to Arunachal, Pandharpur, Nasik, Dwarka, Kedgaon (Narayan Bet), Sakori and met living saints like Ramana Maharshi and others like Meher Baba, Narayan Maharaj, Upasani Maharaj but was not satisfied. At last in 1933, he went to pay his homage to the samadhi of Shri Sai Baba at Shirdi and got attached there permanently. He met and interviewed more than 60 devotees who had personally seen Shri Sai Baba and after a great study and research wrote 4 volumes on the life of Shri Sai Baba and a number of useful books on Charters and Teachings of Shri Sai Baba. He used to consider Shri Sai Baba as his sole Sadguru, so much so, that whenever being photographed, he would sit with Shri Sai Baba's photo on his lap. Thus, even 18 years after Baba's Samadhi, Shri Narasimha Swamiji under Baba's guidance and inspiration reached a very high state of spirituality and was honoured and respected as a great saint in the South.

Another example is about Mota Maharaj of Gujarat. He left his body recently i.e. in 1976. He had been in a state of liberation (jeevan-mukta) since 1939, He was initiated initially by Dhuniwale Dada of Saikheda and Upasani Baba who were living then. But he

also used to consider Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur and Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, although not living then as one with the above living saints and used to address them as his sadgurus only. Actually there is a miracle in Mota Maharaj's life that Shri Sai Baba in 1938 (20 years after His Mahasamadhi) appeared in person twice before Mota Maharaj at Karachi, tested him as a disciple and explained to him yogic process in detail for Self-Realisation. Then, on 29th March, 1939, Ram Navami Day at Kashi (Varanasi) Shri Sai Baba gave Mota, the great experience of non-duality and fixed him as a Self-Realised soul for ever. No wonder Mota Maharaj in his auto-biography says, "He (Shri Sai Baba) gave final touches to my spiritual progress."

The above are the experiences of great spiritual giants. But even a person like me who is at the lowest rung of spiritual progress, gets constant guidance and inspiration from Shri Sai Baba (who is not in body today) having considered Him as my sole Sadguru for the last 10-12 years. Required religious books have come to me automatically. Desires of visiting Shirdi and other far-off places of pilgrimage have been fulfilled unexpectedly without any physical strain or without any necessity of spending a single paisa. My difficulties in understanding Sanskrit scriptures and other philosophical books have been solved either during my daily reading of Shri Sai-Satcharita or by sudden flash of realisation. Best of all, with Baba's great grace, this humble person, who has been a soldier wielding a rifle all his life, has been inspired to wield a pen that too on philosophical and religious subjects and with quite a reasonable success. Isn't this something as good as or more than being under the guidance of a Sadguru in flesh and blood!!

Advantages of a non-living Guru

Actually there are some advantages in having a Sadguru who is not living. Having no opportunity of seeing him in person, we usually form a mental picture of his personality and behaviour by seeing his photograph or painting and by hearing about his divine qualities and miraculous powers. Thus our faith and devotion to such a Sadguru is always great and unshakable. On the contrary if the Sadguru is living, we are likely to be irked by his physical defects, awkward behaviour and dirty habits, if any, and thus there is a danger of our doubting his greatness and dignity and losing our faith in him. The real and great saints purposely behave in an



irritating and crazy manner and ordinary persons cannot understand their import.

Another advantage is that since such a Sadguru is not living, we are not likely to be led away or cheated by his outward show or advertisement through his pet (and probably paid) followers. In the case of a non-living Sadguru, his greatness is already known and tested fully and there is no danger of being cheated. Some living Gurus fall a prey to great honour, rich comforts and heaps of money offered to them by their devotees and thus losing their spiritual status become unable to lead their disciples to Self-Realisation. There is no such danger of disillusionment in the case of a Sadguru who has already left his human body.

Importance of a disciple.

In spiritual matters it is not enough to secure a perfect preceptor (Sadguru) only. The disciple or the aspirant himself must have acquired a status necessary to receive the favour. He should have real renunciation (non-attachment), should have conquered all the senses and have earnest desire for Self-Realisation. This is exactly what Shri Sai Baba told Bapusaheb Jog who asked Him as to when will Baba bless him (Ch. 44);-

“I shall consider you blessed when you will renounce all attachments, conquer lust and palate and getting rid of all impediments, serve God whole-heartedly and resort to the begging bowl (accept sanyas).”

And the same was illustrated to all the assembled devotees, when in Ch. 16-17, Baba disposed off a rich gentleman come to Him for Brahma-jnan (Self-Realisation) saying:- “Roll up your bundle of Brahma viz. currency notes. Unless you completely get rid of your avarice or greed, you will not get the real Brahma.”

And how differently Baba treated Nanasaheb Chandorkar, Kaka Saheb Dixit and Upasani? Baba Himself sent for Nanasaheb not once but thrice. To Kakasaheb He sent Madhavrao Despande at Ahmednagar and Upasani though not willing to stay on at Shirdi, Baba forced him to return in 10 days by using His divine powers.

So if an aspirant is not able to find a suitable Sadguru, he should not get disappointed but without spending any more time

and energy in search, should continue his sadhana incessantly. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said:-

“It is mysterious law of nature that as soon as the field is ready, the seed must come, as soon as the soul wants religion, the transmitter of religious force must come. ‘The seeking sinner meeteth the seeking saviour’. When the power that attracts in the receiving soul is full and ripe, the power which answers to the attraction must come.” (IV 22-23)

Conclusion

Shri Sai Baba in Ch. 2, after taunting Shri Dabholkar (Hemadpant) for his arguing with Mr. Bhate, asserted that without a Guru there is no Self-Realisation. Also in Ch. 32, Sai Baba narrated the story of four aspirants in search of God and concluded that a guide in the form of a Sadguru is essential for this purpose. But the same Shri Sai Baba in Ch. 44 has also said that after He discards His mortal body, His devotees can still attain Self-Realisation by surrendering to Him completely:-

“I feel indebted to him who surrenders himself completely to Me and ever remembers Me. I shall repay his debt by giving him Salvation (Self-Realisation)..... So leaving out pride and egoism and with no trace of them, you should surrender yourself to Me who am seated in your heart.”


Similarly in shloka 34 of Ch. 4 of Bhagawad Geeta, Lord Krishna although Himself a Seer of Truth (and jagat-guru) advises Arjuna to approach the wise who have realised the Truth. But the same Lord Krishna has later asked Arjuna to surrender completely to Himself and promised to save him from downfall:-

*Sarva dharmaan parityajya
maam ekam sharanam vraja
aham twam sarva paapebhyo
mokshayishaami maa suchah*

— (Ch. 18/66)

(Abandoning all Dharmas (of the body, mind and intellect) take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.)

Thus Shri Sai Baba Himself and Lord Krishna too have solved the question of aspirants who are unable to find a living Sadguru.



When such great authorities are available to us why should we have any doubts or get disappointed? Moreover to Sai Devotees, I would accost them in the following words of Shri Madhavrao Despande (Shama) addressed to Shri Kakasaheb Dixit who had become despondent on reading the discourse of nine Nathas on Bhakti in Ch. 2 of Ekanathi Bhagawat:-

“It is a pity that one who by his good luck got such a jewel (Guru) as Baba, should cry out so abjectly. If he has unwavering faith in Baba, why should he feel restless?....Where is the cause for fear and anxiety?”

— (Ch. 45)

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SAI GIVES

**Shirdi Sai possesses nothing,
Only ye shalt emulate Him;
Shirdi Sai yet gives everything,
Only ye Shalt bow to Him!**

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THE UN-FAILING POWER OF PRAYER TO BABA

This letter of self-experience should show to the disbeliever that the age of miracles is not yet over; that Baba's soul is all-pervasive and He is ever looking after the welfare of His devotees and of those who firmly believe in Him.

I have completed 72 years of my life span. Of late, and especially after a recent sensitive operation I had undergone, I was increasingly finding it difficult even to walk and even my slow gait was unsteady. I was finding it equally difficult to sit down for my prayers, too.

On my birthday, I prayed, with depth in my heart, that if there was no further life purpose left for me, I should be removed from the scene and this constant agony to one who had led a very active life be removed. I had tried various medicines and tonics but to no avail; evidently my body cells were all decaying with age.

Suddenly, within two days of this prayer, a thought flashed through that I should take Shilajit which had been lying on my shelf and which had not suited me. Reluctantly, I started taking the pills, twice a day as prescribed and in less than a week, I began to feel a different person; able to walk firmly and do the normal routine as in the past. I attribute it not to shilajit which had not suited me earlier but to some cosmic energy, suddenly transmitted into me.

This may just be my belief but I believe it as a self education and self revelation. I write this letter to all my Sai brothers and sisters to have faith in Baba but a deep genuine faith which flows through the tears of one's eye.

Jai Sai Nath and humble prostration.

Mr. R.P. Kapur I.C.S., (Retd.)
MADHUBAN — 132 037.

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SAI BABA — A Phenomenon

In the first instance, I would like to narrate as to how I became Saibaba's devotee. Sometime in the year 1972-73 I had got a small book called "Sai Stotra" and after I read this, I became enthusiastic to go to SHIRDI. When such a thought came to my mind, it was a Thursday. Subsequently a person returned Rs. 10 to me which I had lent to him earlier. I started from Aurangabad to Shirdi with Rs. 10/- only. This was an indication of Grace of SAI.

There was a doubt in my mind about SAI BABA, and hence I concluded if it is proved if Saibaba is not a GOD, then my prayer and worship will cease. On the same night one SANYASI came in my dream and stood near my head, uttering thrice "STILL YOU HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD ME". After 15 or 20 minutes again voice was heard into my ears and it enlightened me "YOU TAKE A STONE AND TRUST IN IT; AS A MASTER OF FACT I AM A PERSON LIKE YOU WHO IS SPEAKING AND WALKING; IF YOU TRUST IN ME I AM READY TO FULFILL ALL YOUR AMBITIONS". This is a 2nd experience which made me believe in SAIBABA.

During the year 1977 I was suffering from a serious disease which compelled me to take one month bed rest when my service was purely temporary. However I would have to produce a fitness certificate from Sr. Medical Surgeon of Govt. Hospital for rejoining. I had tried my best for getting the certificate but in vain. And thus three days were lost in the process. At last I became angry and with full devotion to SAIBABA I sat down in front of his photo and earnestly prayed and reminded him. "O Saibaba keep your words of assurance alive and show me your grace in obtaining the certificate and accordingly I threw a thick paper to his Photo and prayed whole-heartedly for an hour and said to him "Please do not make me lose my carrier and help me to solve as it was a problem before me for resuming duty". After-wards I left the house to meet one of my friends Shri Wadekar and I met him and told him my problem; then we both went to Govt. Hospital and met the Sr. Medical Surgeon, narrated all my difficulty. Actually I had not taken treatment from Civil Surgeon (Govt. Hospital) and hence it was not possible for me to get this fitness certificate from him for obvious reasons. Yet he gave me such a certificate. This was another great experience in my life of Shri Saibaba's Grace.

During the year 1980 I was blessed with a son. At present he is 7 years old. We are calling him SAINATH. At birth his weight was very low due to pre-mature birth, hence there was not much hope of life except by the Grace and blessings of Saibaba. I kept on chanting the MANTRA "OM SHREE SAI SAMARTH" for 5 days and as a result of this my son is alive today hale and hearty and we are grateful to SAIBABA.

Now frequently, we are experiencing many miracles of Saibaba. We have full faith and confidence in him. We consider that everything happens as per his will only. My humble prostrations and adorations unto Him.

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PILGRIMAGES TO HOLY PLACES

(We reproduce by the courtesy of the Ramakrishna Order the editorial which appeared in the January, 1968 issue of Prabuddha Bharat under the above title.)

Places of pilgrimage have played a significant role in perpetuating and preserving the spirit of the religions throughout the ages. Interlinked with the history of every religion, there are spots and places which stand like monuments enshrining within their folds some sacred thoughts or holy associations of the past and the pilgrims visiting these places have always felt vibrations of a sanctifying wisdom and elevating emotion in their hearts to make them renew their faith in their respective paths. The place where Christ was born or the spot where the Buddha attained his divine illumination is no mere historical site bearing the traces of some forgotten historical past. The temples of Badrinath and Kedarnath are no mere remains of some ancient architecture or tourist points commanding panoramic views of the mighty Himalayas. There are



shrines embodying within their walls some associations of holiness and devotion, which like geologic stratas of mountains have arisen one layer on the top of another. Hundreds of saints, seers and devotees of God have visited these places and poured their hearts' devotion on them. Centring round these places and spots have thus developed legends and mythologies upon which numerous epics have been written and sung. Symbol or legend is as essential as history or philosophy and every religion, to take roots, has to have it. Commenting upon the need of symbols, Swami Vivekananda writes: "Symbols have great influence on the human mind. But great symbols in religion were not created indefinitely. We find that they are the natural expressions of thought. We think symbolically. All our words are but symbols of the thought behind, and different people have come to use different symbols without knowing the reason why. It was all behind, and these symbols are associated with the thoughts; and as the thought brings the symbol outside, so the symbol, on the contrary, can bring the thought inside." (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 37-38). So, through these legends and symbols the thoughts of God become, so to speak, solidified in any place of pilgrimage. These solidified thoughts transfix the minds of the pilgrims before whom there unfolds a different world which is real with its constellations of experiences, emotions and delight. It matters little whether the legends or the symbols are a chronological chaos or a jumble of events, ideas or persons. The notion of time is minor to the pilgrim. To fulfil his yearnings in the world of spirit and not in the surrounding cosmos, is of paramount concern to him. His is a spiritual necessity in which the spirit is of greater importance to him than the chronological procession of facts and data. His belief in those legends becomes a vehicle of introversion. His soul gets elevated and dilated by it. Places of pilgrimage have, therefore, within them some imperishable clarity and rectifying bearings of some association and ideal that give the pilgrims feelings of exalting inspiration and uplifting devotion and thus prevent them from converting these spiritualist spots into the museums of dead gospels or gilded mausoleums of deities. Importance of a place of pilgrimage does not depend upon suitable geographical or topographical location or on the magnitude of a material structure. Magnitude is nothing, spirit is all. There are great heads on medals which are very small. The delight from a large landscape or a little picture is the same. Even so, great sense of holiness might remain associated with the name of an obscure

village, a tiny temple or a narrow cave and, to the pilgrims' eyes all are equally significant. It is out of their faith and devotion that a place of pilgrimage comes into being and it is the extent of this faith that makes such a place important or unimportant for them. Where there is faith, there is the splendour of light. Where it appears, all controversies become fraternal colloquies and souls accelerate their flight in the evolutionary wake. Behind the sensorial veil of the images, symbols and legends, the pilgrims catch the glimpse of a living deity. The Hindus, for example, look upon the snow-clad Himalayas as the abode of their great god Shiva, who is believed to be lost in one eternal aeon-old meditation. Deep into the sanctuaries of some temples and caves, they feel the presence of their forgotten teachers and famous saints with whom they seem to have their silent but unmistakable communion. The Christians make pilgrimage to Jerusalem which, to them, is one of the greatest seats of holiness. The Buddhist pilgrims visiting the holy shrines of Bodh-Gaya still stand for a while under the Bo-tree where Buddha sat and meditated and send their fervent prayers to the Enlightened One. Unending streams of men and women, therefore, plod patiently to these holy places at different corners of the globe, ecstatically singing hymns, constantly repeating prayers and ungrudgingly enduring the hardships and trials of various nature. While they embrace untold physical suffering, strain and endurance, their souls absorb fresh courage, determination and aspiration. The sceptics may at times discover superstitious beliefs behind these urges and ideas of pilgrimage. They may look upon the legends and mythologies as stupid confabulations and laugh. But the pilgrims who have built a sincere spiritual link, which defies space and survives trials, can afford their laughter. For, the ineffable substantiality of what they gather at these sacred points makes them invincible in their faith and fortified in their conviction. They require no further countersign of the outside world to make their memories of pilgrimage turn into burning realizations of their souls.

Pilgrims's seeing and feeling

A pilgrim is not merely a traveller or an explorer who journeys in pursuit of the unknown or the unseen things of the world. There is much to distinguish between what the Greek Argonauts saw during their adventurous travels and what the Chinese pilgrims of old experienced during their visits to the Buddhist shrines in India. The Greek Argonauts idealized life as endless travel. They used to



say: 'The essential thing is not to live; the essential thing is to see.' Describing the aim of travel, the Greek philosopher and traveller Solon said that one travels 'in order to see'. But the seeing of the traveller is quite different from that of the pilgrim. One is actuated by the thrill of adventure and the other by the zeal of devotion. One sees the outward appearance, analyses it, examines it, but the other sees the inward spirit and sees it as a whole. The aim of one is to know, and that of the other is to feel and get transformed. One sees things with the physical eyes, while the other sees them with the mind's eye. In a sense, the pilgrim is poet, artist, historian and traveller bound into one. He is a mystic. It is this mystic vision of the pilgrim that makes a real difference in seeing. Sri Ramakrishna, it may be recalled, once made a pilgrimage to the holy shrines of Benaras and Vrindavan. Through his mystic vision he saw the holy city of Lord Shiva to be made of gold, as the scriptures declare. The spiritual vibration of devotion and piety of the countless pilgrims and devotees of the Lord was distinct to him in those places. Shiva's golden city was so real to him that during his stay there he looked upon each and every particle of its dust with utmost devotion and respect. One day, while standing in a boat outside Manikarnika Ghat, the great cremation ground of the city, he actually saw the Lord god Shiva, with ash-covered body and tawny matted hair, solemnly approaching each funeral pyre and breathing into the ears of the corpses the *mantra* of supreme liberation; and the Divine Mother sitting by the dead removing their worldly bonds. So long the scholars versed in the scriptures had only nurtured a faltering belief that a person dying in the holy city is granted liberation by Shiva. Sri Ramakrishna's unique experience, the scholars admitted, confirmed that belief to be true. Entering into the holy city of Vrindavan and Mathura, he recalled the hallowed legends about Lord Krishna and his heart became overflowed with divine emotions. With tearful eyes he said, 'O Krishna! everything here is as it was in the olden days. You alone are absent.'


Sri Chaitanya, it may be remembered, became transformed into a different person as he returned from his pilgrimage to Gaya. He turned mad with the thought of Krishna. The deity in the holy Jagannath shrine of Puri was no lifeless image to the pilgrims like Shankara and Sri Chaitanya. The Lord appeared before their eyes as real and living God palpitating with divine grace and throbbing with wonderful charm.

Swami Vivekananda wandered through the whole of India not

as a tourist, traveller or explorer, but as a humble pilgrim of old. The whole sub-continent, to him, was an abode of the gods and goddesses, a vast holy shrine of which Badrinath in the north and Kanyakumari in the south are the two towering landmarks. His image of India was much broader, much more real than that of any other person. He, therefore, wrote: "This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans, where the eternal Himalayas, rising tier above tier with their snowcaps, look as it were into the very mysteries of heaven." (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 285). India before his mind's eye ceased to be a dead map, it became a fragrant and colourful cosmos in whose mountain-tops, temples and river-beds had accumulated centuries of history and the history of the centuries. Did not the pilgrim - Vedantist turn into a mystic when, by his precise, brilliant and highly coloured insights, he discovered the eternal glories of India? Does not the same pilgrim thunder with historian's realism when he goes into the roots of India's present degradation and repeats the words of his Master saying 'an empty stomach is no good for religion'? The agony of his soul was bitter, because his vision of India was broad.

The eye with which Swami Vivekananda saw the holy temple of Kshir Bhavani at Kashmir was the pilgrim's eye and the ears through which he heard the voice of the Divine Mother there were pilgrim's ears. 'One day he had been pondering over the ruins and desecration of the temple wrought by the vandalism of the Mohammedan invaders. Distressed at heart he thought: "How could the people have permitted such sacrilege without offering strenuous resistance! If I were here then I would never have allowed such things. I would have laid down my life to protect the Mother". At this very moment he heard the voice of the Mother saying: "What, even if unbelievers should enter my temples and defile My images! What is that to you? Do you protect Me? Or do I protect you?"' (*Life of Swami Vivekananda: By His Eastern and Western Disciples*, 1965, pp. 598-99). The valiant patriot was transformed into a little child of the Mother.

His experiences at the shrine of Amarnath were equally meaningful. The deity here was no mere cold ice-pillar to him. 'The cavern', to quote the words of Sister Nivedita, 'had revealed itself



to him as the secret of Kailas'. The pilgrim residing within the uncompromising Vedantist saw Shiva made visible before him. 'Amidst the buzzing, swarming noise of the pilgrim-crowd, and the overhead fluttering of the pigeons, he knelt and prostrated two or three times, unnoticed; and then, afraid lest emotion might overcome him, he rose and silently withdrew.... And for the rest of his life, he cherished the memory of how he had entered a mountain-cave, and, come face to face there with the Lord Himself.' (*The Master As I Saw Him*, 1930, pp. 148-50).

These experiences, visions, seeings,hearings and the feelings of the pilgrim like Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Chaitanya, Kabir, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekanand reinforce the spirit of holiness that remains submerged, as it were, beneath the dust and stones of the places of pilgrimage and which so often escapes the attention of ordinary minds. Viewed in the light of these experiences the legends no longer remain as legends. They become expanded, rarified, brightened into beauty, melted into softness and turned into ethereal moulds and help us ferret out the amazing outbursts of spiritual truths lying hidden under their veil.

For a true pilgrim, therefore, the pilgrimage is a long contemplation. His physical body, to him, is simply a vehicle and his mind an instrument. Through this very mind he perceives the abiding taste of holiness and, as he returns from his pilgrimage, the inner cavity of this mind becomes his spiritual knapsack inside which he brings his rich store of treasured memories, whose magic transports will continue to impart sparkles of joy even when he remains surrounded by the drabness of everyday life. By closing his eyes he then travels vertically in the wings of his memories through the space and time and reaches the foot of that once - visited holy shrine again and drinks the air of bliss and holiness around it. The mind itself thus turns into a veritable place of holy pilgrimage. It is this pilgrim-mind that matters much. Emphasizing upon this point Sri Ramakrishna often said: 'One who has it here (in the heart) has it there; one who has it not here has it nowhere.'

Pilgrimage and Tourism

Pilgrimage in modern times seems to drip in emptiness. It has lost much of its ancient spirit. For its reasons one may recall the remarks of Henry Sigerist who, while commenting upon travelling,

writes, "Travelling has lost much of its charm to-day as it is far too quick. The transition from one world to another, from one landscape to another is too abrupt to be fully realized and enjoyed. We travel more often than people did before there were railways, but see and experience less. Formerly people prepared for a trip some times for years and perhaps even learned the language of the country they intended to visit. Then they took time off, months, a year or even more, kept diaries, visited with people in the foreign lands and such a journey was an inspiration for life." What the writer says about travels also applies to the pilgrimages to the holy places in general.

Places of pilgrimage in olden days, as we have already noted, served as the nerve-centres of religious thoughts. They had contributed much towards the spiritual, social and cultural unification of the people of similar faith. In India, for example, every place of pilgrimage was regarded as a great centre of spirituality, where visiting saints, wandering ascetics, devotees and scholars who assembled from different parts of the country proved to be sources of great inspiration to the people. There was thus a steady flow of pilgrims from far and wide to the different holy shrines of India for all the time. We have it on record that during the Buddhistic era pilgrims like Hieun Tsang, Fa-Hien, Hiuan Chao, Tao Hi from China, Aryavarma and Hiuen Yieh (A.D. 638) from Korea and others from Japan, Tibet and Nepal travelled their way to the holy Buddhist shrines of India, where they joined many great assemblies, set afoot many learned discussions and drank at the very fountains of Buddhistic culture and religion.

Pilgrimage, for the pilgrims of old, was no hasty trip or empty travel. In the absence of modern means of conveyances like the railways and automobiles, they often had to move on foot for months and years to reach the campus of any holy shrine braving untold difficulties and often risking their lives. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien, as we know, took six years to reach central India after he had started from Ch'ang-gan in China. His stoppage in different places of pilgrimage in India covered another six years and he took three years to reach Ts'ing-chow on his return journey. Hieun Tsang, the other Chinese pilgrim, travelled for sixteen years to make his pilgrimage in India complete. Pilgrimage to the holy places was a spiritual necessity for every devout Hindu in the past and one always liked to move on foot. Kshudiram, Sri Rama-



krishna's father, it may be mentioned in this connexion, once made a pilgrimage to the holy shrines of southern India. He started on foot from his village home at Kamarpukur, visited the holy places and returned after about one year. During his second pilgrimage to the holy Vishnu temple of Gaya where he had his great spiritual vision indicating the descent of the Lord Gadadhar as his child, Kshudiram was an old man of sixty. Yet he started on foot and covered the entire distance. No doubt, pilgrimage, for a pious pilgrim like him, was a long contemplation for which his devoted mind stood prepared long before he set out on his arduous journey. It would be no exaggeration to say that minds of such pilgrims of old moved much faster than their bodies. It is true that difficulties of the journeys often prevented them from visiting many places. But they experienced much, because they were always animated by the urgings of faith and devotion.

But things are somewhat different to-day. With the advent of the railways and automobiles, pilgrims of today no longer journey to the places of pilgrimage on foot. Their pilgrimage today is hasty, short-lived and abrupt. They move fast, see many, know more, but feel little and experience less. It is because their bodies today move much quicker than their minds. They do not do those mental preparations which the pilgrims of old used to do. So when their bodies reach the foot of any holy shrine their minds stand far behind, perhaps hundreds of miles away. They therefore see the things with their physical eyes, and not with those eyes of the mind which alone can penetrate into the heart of the supermaterial beyond the apparent material veils of the holy places. Though they see many places, they experience little and when they return to their homes they so often return empty handed. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* there is one significant conversation between Sri Ramakrishna and Pundit Shashadhar centring round this question. The conversation may be profitably quoted in this context:

Pundit: 'How far did you go in visiting the sacred places?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Oh, I visited a few places. *(with a smile)* But Hazra (Pratap Hazra, the well-known devotee who lived at Dakshineswar temple garden and was of a perverse disposition) went farther and also climbed higher. He visited Hrishikesh, but I didn't go so far or so high.'

Reminding Shashadhar about the real purpose of pilgrimage,

Sri Ramakrishna further continued: 'Pilgrimage becomes futile if it does not enable you to attain love of God.'

Pilgrims today are more tourists than pilgrims. Science with its improved means of communications has no doubt made all the holy places accessible to us. It has certainly made our visits to the places of pilgrimage easier and more comfortable than before. But it has at the same time robbed us of our much valuable pilgrim-mind which has no substitute.



GIFT I ASK FOR

O Sai Mother,

The one gift that I ask for,

is that of your kind grace, love and mercy.

May I never lose the sight of your holy feet,
and always seek refuge in them.

May I always follow the path shown by thee

Abide in 'Self' and follow thee

With 'Shraddha' and 'Saburi' in my heart,

may I surrender my Tan-Man-Dhan to thee

Dear Mother, kindly accept this humble offering from me

Make this body 'Shirdi' and come to live in it.

I shall wash your feet with my tears and

kiss them till eternity.

Grant me your glance of grace and

do not be indifferent to me.

Abide in me and fill this heart

with intense Bhakti.

When the time for departure comes

Let thy name be within me and without me

The one gift that I ask for,

is to love me, forgive me but never forsake me.

*Dr. Vijay Lakshmi Verma,
7A/164, Faridabad,
Haryana.*



SHRI SAI BABA, THE BENEVOLENT

I experienced Sri Sai Mahima which I would like to narrate here. I am in the regular habit of doing Pooja and going to temples, from my childhood. A long time back, when I happened to see the photograph of Sri Sai Baba, out of ignorance I thought that he was a God of Muslims. After 1978, I developed some faith in Sri Sai Baba. Subsequently, my friend Sri Subrahmanya Chary used to tell me some stories/miracles from Sri Sai-charit. He is an ardent devotee of Sri Baba. 5 years ago, I went once to Shirdi and had the darshan of Baba's Moorthy.

After a very long time, the Management of the institution where I have been serving, conducted promotion test to our cadre employees. They released the promotion orders in order of merit for a certain number of posts. The next person for promotion was myself. I missed the chance. But after a few months, our management was kind enough to create one more vacancy and released promotion order to me also. This was my long cherished goal, and I achieved it. My joy knew no bounds. This achievement, I really feel, was possible only because of the blessings of Sri Sai Baba. I am grateful to Sri Sai Baba.

I am a firm believer of 'Cast your burden on ME (Sri Sai Baba) and I shall bear it.

*P. Varaprasada Rao,
H.No. 20-12, Gautam Nagar,
Malkajgiri, Hyderabad-47,
(Andhra Pradesh).*



SAI-LOVE

The "Love" bandied about,
Is no better than a butcher's love for his goat;
The SAI-Love talked about,
Is the purest of 'Love' for the world's good!

Mr. T.A. Ram Nathen

Unmatching and Incredible Grace of Shirdi Sai Baba

His Holiness Shri Shirdi Sai Baba has stated in Sai-Sat-Charita that His mission is not confined only to those who worship Him but His concern was all the more for those who have gone astray in their lives. Similarly Lord Jesus was equally concerned for his lost sheep as for His disciples. Shirdi Sai Baba gives protection to his devotees in all climes but at the same time brings back home strayed sheep who lost their way to Him. In Sri Sai-Sat-Charita, we come across an incident in which a tiger who was sick and furious when brought before Sri Baba, just bowed in reverence and then left his mortal coil. For the information of Sri Sai devotees and as a small measure of service to the Lord, let me narrate an episode which took place in my family recently.

I had not known about Shirdi Sai Baba till Dr. Babaji brought home to me leela of Sai Nath and I thank him heartily for this his sacred help to me this way. I own lands and a house in Punjab. Sometime back, I got a threatening letter from the terrorists asking us to leave Punjab and within a few days thereafter some two unknown persons had stealthly entered my house in my absence. They had crippled my dog by tying up his legs and closing his mouth with rags, entered the bedroom where my young son was asleep, tied up his legs and hands and closed his mouth filling it with cloth. The boy was suffocated and there was none else in the house. No, I am sorry, for, there was indeed a big portrait of our Sai Nath in the bed room. The terrorists happened to have a glance at the portrait by chance and they were driven out of the house the very moment, as I came to know it later, strangely, from a note of the terrorists themselves. Had there been a minute's delay on the part of our Sainath, the Omnipotent, great harm could have been inflicted to the boy and perhaps I would have lost him forever. Our neighbours a little later rushed to our house and freed the boy from the shackles.

After a few days, a chit of paper was left in our house by the terrorists themselves regretting their misdeed and informing me that Sai Sai Nath spoke to them in person from the portrait and advised them to leave of the heinous and criminal life adopted and pursued by them. The terrorists had also assured that they would not thereafter lead such a life but turn over a new leaf.



Thus, it is evident that Sri Sai Nath, not only saved the life of my son but have also wrought radical change in the lives of terrorists who symbolise the lost sheep. It is also clear that He is equally concerned with setting right the wicked and the strayed while granting rescue and succour in His inimitable style to His devotees, who have sincerely surrendered to him.

Jai Sri Sai Ram.

*G.S. Jaswal,
4, Sukchar House, Set No. 3
Tilak Nagar, Shimla-5.*



Permit me to Chant

Why you gave one this gift
and another that, is past
finding out. Capricious
you cannot be. Cosmos
how can be sustained then?
What you've chosen to put
into me is my earning.
Do you let one's destiny
work itself out, just looking
on as a disinterested witness?
Or, maybe once in a while you
play. Your Grace has a sway,
upsetting our arithmetic.
What would it avail to brood
on what I would have done
if you had bestowed the powers
which I have not? Rather
I should more worry with
how to work with those I have
and offer them at your feet.

How I wish I could produce
the notes of nectarine sweetness

or sculpt a statuette capturing:
the right hand never at rest
but carving one knows not what
patterns in thin air, the eyes aflame
with love abundant to go round;
or build with my hands a shrine
for the devotees to worship at;
or to go among the haunts of men
with the curative skill to end
the long-endured pain; or to repair
the roads broken or to clean up
the place they live in. But lodged
within me you have, you know
What it is, a small talent,
to weave, like flowers, my words,
and make a garland of them.
Unless you make me fit
to undertake those laudable things
kindly permit me to chant
Your glories and thus use
what you have endowed me with,
what I am accountable for.

*P.S. Sharma.
HSS Department,
IIT, Kanpur.*



INSUPERABLE SAI

Evil is surpassable,
Sin is forgivable,
Shirdi SAI is insuperable!

*T.A. Ram Nathen,
Flat No. 3, Block S-14,
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Budge Budge Trunk Road,
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HOW 'BABA' HELPS HIS DEVOTEES

While proceeding on long leave in connection with his son's marriage, my section Supervisor handed over charge to the next in-charge, during April, 1986. An Electronic Calculator, worth Rs. 200/-, was one of the articles handed over at the time.

For certain official work, one day I took the calculator and returned the same to the in-charge after the work was finished. After 15 days or so, somebody in the section wanted the calculator for official purpose. The in-charge simply asked the person, to collect the calculator from me. I told him that I had returned the calculator the same day. But the in-charge denied this and insisted that it was with me only. All the other colleagues in the section checked up their almirahs and informed that it was not with them either.

I was perturbed very much. Ultimately, I had to account for the same. If the calculator was not made available to the section, I had to give an explanation (and that for no fault of mine) and had to make good the loss. In addition to this, I had to take a Memo from the office. I was afraid of this. Then suddenly I prayed to my "SAI", who came to my rescue in tracing the calculator before 5 p.m., as other-wise the loss of calculator would be deemed to be on account of my negligence.

With this prayer and with the assistance of one of my colleagues I began to search the almirah of the in-charge once again. To my great surprise, within seconds, I found out the calculator in the second compartment of the almirah under the files. Then I handed over the calculator to the in-charge and told my colleagues that "SAI" only helped me in tracing the calculator out. That is how 'My Sai' came to my rescue when I was in a very awkward situation and saved me from the consequences of being found negligent.

**"IF YOU BELIEVE "SAI" HE WILL BE ALWAYS
WITH YOU AND CARRY ALL YOUR BURDENS
AND REMOVE, ALL YOUR WORRIES.**

*Mr. G. Nagaraja Rao
14-11-806, Nayabasti,
Naichal Singh Bldg.,
Begum Bazar, Hyderabad 500 012.*

My Experiences of Shri Sai Leela

The first introduction to the SAI BABA cult was in August, '54 when I went to the stock depot of the Controller of Telegraph stores, Jabalpur (M.P.) to purchase certain publications in connection with the then ensuing "P. & T. Accountants' Service Examination-Part II" to be held in November, '54. (At Part I of the said examination held in January, '53, despite thorough preparation and very good performance according to self assessment, I had failed. I took the same examination in December, '53 with a little better preparation and topped the list, which I could not believe until receipt of the official communication. This made me reckon success at the examinations as a matter of luck rather than merit). The official in charge of publications-sale was an elderly gentleman, ex-army Capt. P.V. Narayana Iyer who knew astrology, palmistry, numerology etc. and was a staunch devotee of Shri Sai Baba. After ascertaining my date of birth, birth-star etc. and seeing my palm, he gave a confident prediction that, with BABA's grace, I would pass the said examination in the first attempt and to that end advised me sending a token remittance of annas 6 every month to Shirdi and to make a resolve to visit Shirdi conveniently after clearing the examination. His prediction came true and I made my first visit to Shirdi in August, '55. What impressed me most then was the commingled culture at the holy place; each one reciting his own scriptures, praying his own way & prostrating before Sri Baba, though the pooja and the abhisheka etc. officially performed at the shrine led by the Sansthan's priests could, obviously, be through only one standard procedure open to all irrespective of caste & creed.

During the spring months of 1956 (Feb.-Mar.) our family got an opportunity to spend one full day in the presence of paramahansa Thanthanpal Baba of village Jamunia (near Barela on the Jabalpur-Mandla road). For the greater part of that day, Sri Baba inexplicably gave sumptuous prasad exclusively to my wife and only reluctantly permitted us to take leave of him. We were blessed with the birth of twins (both sons) on 21-12-'56 believed by my Mrs. to mark the blessings from Thanthanpal Baba and Shri Sai Baba about whom and Shirdi she had heard vivid narrations from me and gone through certain books from Shirdi. We paid our obeisance to Thanthanpal Baba shortly after the children's birth,



but the contemplated visit to Shirdi was deferred for a convenient time later.

Due to various factors, the overdue family visit to Shirdi with the twins could materialise only in December, 1959 shortly before their third birth day. Younger of the twins took seriously ill during the rail journey from Jabalpur to Manmad (passing loose motions & vomiting frequently as in cholera). On getting down at Manmad, I took him to the nearest available doctor for treatment before proceeding further. To my utter surprise, after ascertaining the preliminaries, the doctor told us that it was futile to waste time and money on treatment which according to him would be of no avail till the child reached Shirdi. However, on my request he gave him the requisite treatment (one injection and certain medicines) but repeated his advice to hasten to Shirdi. We could reach Shirdi in the evening. I had written to the Sansthan office earlier for reserving a room for us. However, due to unprecedented rush of devotees, we could not get a room immediately and were advised to spend the night on the terrace overlooking Sri Baba's Samadhi. The child's condition remained the same till he got a wink of sleep around 2 a.m. and we had to minimise the nuisance of foul smell by burning incense sticks around us. Next morning after the ablutions and purchase of pooja tickets, we joined the queue for abhishek at about 7 a.m. with the understanding that if the child committed any nuisance, I would come out with him leaving his mother & twin-brother to complete the pooja as they may not be able to visit again in a short time. But see the miracle of SAI BABA confirming the conviction of his doctor devotee; the child was perfectly calm and quiet till we completed the pooja and got down from the Samadhi at about 10.30 a.m. after which he started playing. Emboldened by this favourable development and on getting a room in the forenoon, I could venture going to Nevasa by road to bring my friend's mother-in-law from there (leaving Mrs. alone with the kids at Shirdi) and return in time to perform the next morning pooja and avail our reserved accommodation by bus and rail for the return journey to Jabalpur.

One of my friends at Jabalpur, Pt. Narayan Prasad Tiwari, an Ayurvedic physician, had problem with his wife's health. Dr. S.C. Pande the then famous surgeon of Victoria Hospital diagnosed her to be suffering from "Sub-clavian Aneurism" requiring surgery for transplant of artery for which requisite facilities were not then

available at Jabalpur. He gave a letter to one of his associates in K.E.M. Hospital, Bombay for needful attention. The couple urged me to accompany them to Bombay in the second half of January, 1963, for help and assistance. Based on Dr. G.W. Carey's book "The Biochemic System of Medicine", I procured a bottle of 'Calcarea Fluor-6x & advised the patient to take 3-4 doses of the medicine everyday till the surgery. My Mrs. advised her to have faith in SAI BABA for the cure, take his Udi and resolve to visit Shirdi on the return trip if saved from the agony of operation. The K.E.M. Hospital authorities conducted all the requisite tests afresh by admitting the patient in the hospital for a week after which they concluded that the lady was only having an extra pair of cervicle ribs which could be kept pliable through regular exercises to avoid pain. No surgery was considered necessary. True to the vow advised by my Mrs., we returned to Jabalpur only after paying obeisance to Sri SAI BABA at SHIRDI for the miraculous cure. The lady has not had any significant recurrence of the malady since then.

Since my joining the Central Cost Accounts Pool in April '67 I have had opportunities to visit and enjoy the devout and salubrious influence of Shri SAI BABA and SHIRDI. Small but significant two incidents among such visits merit a mention here.

i. During a visit to Shirdi from Bombay, immediately before the abhishek or while descending from the Samadhi my purse containing identity card, return journey ticket and cash got dropped and on noticing the loss I got perplexed but immediately surrendered to the BABA's will entreating him to see me through the difficulty. Within moments rose an attendant of the sansthan with the purse in hand and calling attention of the devotee who might have dropped it. My gratitude to the BABA can be very well appreciated.

ii. After performing the marriages of my four children between July, '83 and September, '84 and shortly before my retirement in March '85, I went to Shirdi for a thanksgiving visit on 16-12-'84 from Manmad. At an intermediate stop, while I went to the toilet leaving my woollen muffler on the seat, the bus left for Shirdi. I took the muffler as lost and gone and proceeded to Shirdi by next bus from the place. Soon on arrival at Shirdi bus stand, however, fellow passengers from the earlier bus recognised me and helped to obtain the muffler from the officer in charge with whom it was deposited.



Hail SAI BABA. May his grace be bestowed upon all devotees through the thick & thin of life. SHRI SAI SHARANAM.

*P.N. Gujral B.A., LL.B., FICWA,
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“I Will Never Allow My Devotees To Fall”

Sri Sai Baba

An incident which happened in my early years is so green in my mind as if it happened only recently.

Lord Sri Hari, it is stated in our puranas, stretched out His helping hands to catch and hold young Prahlada when he was thrown down from the top of a hill. In the same way, Sri Baba also stretched out his helping hands to catch and hold a small boy who was rolling down and falling from the roof top where he had been playing earlier. When his mother ran out to see the boy hearing his cry, she was struck with an un-believable wonder to learn from the boy (her son) that Sri Baba caught and held him in his hands when he was falling to the ground from the roof top. It is indeed very difficult, nay it is simply impossible, to describe Sri Baba's leelas in proper and suitable terminology. Had not even a close great devotee like Sri Hemadi Pant taken His permission and blessings even before he thought of venturing to write out His leelas!

And to mention my own personal experience, I would like to say that there is a deep 'draw well' before our house at Nandyal and its depth is about 40 feet. After about 10 feet down from the top of the well, there is a hollow, rocky of course, for about 10 feet further down and after which the circumference of the well is pretty small upto the bottom with rocky protrusions around. And there it was! a steady spring of water at the bottom. In hot summer days, there used to be only scant supply of water and one had to wait for some time before being able to draw even a small quantity of water in buckets or pots etc. On the top of the well, thick granite

stone slabs had been fixed on which the needy had to lean for support while drawing water.

It was once a very severe summer and naturally the supply from the spring was scarce. I happened to draw water from the well with a small bucket. Unexpectedly, the rope was cut off halfway and the bucket with water fell down to the bottom. Wishing to recover the bucket from the narrow and dangerous bottom of the well, I thought I was wise to devise a plan. I tied up the end of a strong rope to one of the granite slabs on the top and had my people exert a firm grip over the knot. I got down with the support of the other part of the rope falling into the well upto a depth of 10 feet which was not so unsafe, so to say. The entire weight of my body had to be over the rope in the process of descending to the bottom, naturally. Unexpectedly to our bad luck, the rope just then snapped and I simply fell down with a jerk to the bottom dashing against the protrusions of the rocky pieces around the inner circumference of the well. The fall, as it were, was of 30 feet from the place where the rope snapped. Reaching the bottom in a sitting posture, I was not myself for about 5 minutes as a result of the impact of the unexpected occurring. The readers may well imagine themselves the state of my mind at this peril. When I returned to my consciousness, I realised I was deep down the well and sitting by the side of the bucket at the bottom and strangely enough with not a single bruise on my body. And how could one explain away this in the light of the description earlier of the features of the inner side of the well, except meekly saying the hands of divinity had only saved me from the jaws of an imminent death! Needless to state that those hands must be only of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, whom I had devoutly worshipped earlier.

My relatives and other neighbours had been trembling in this shock of a rare kind and had also concluded that death had taken me over; and they were beginning to sort out a plan to pull out the dead body to take recourse to the religious procedures, customary on such occasions. And when I cried out to them that I was safe and sound as ever before, at the bottom of the dangerous narrow well, I only took them for a second shocking surprise and astonishment.

Not only I but the entire populace were driven to conclude that it was only the Divine Spirit which had risen to the occasion instant-



aneously as if to prove to the humanity over and again that sincere prayers coupled with moral living never fail.

May we, therefore, pray faithfully and in all humility to avail of Sri Baba's ready Grace, and evolve spiritually to realise His spirit and its universality in nature.

*Mrs. D.V.K. Padmavathi,
30-25, Sri Sai Nilayam,
Srinivasa Nagar,
Nandyal - 518 501.*



SAI'S GREATEST MIRACLE

Twenty Fourth July, Ninteen Hundred and Eighty Six (24-7-1986) which was a "Doom's Day" in the life of my wife Smt. Gangadevi turned out to be the brightest day solely by the Grace of our Sat Guru Lord Shri Sainath Maharaj. The Sai devotees may be anxious to know how this happened.

My wife had gone to Hyderabad along with her brother in the second week of July, 1986 for medical checkup. The medical examination disclosed the necessity of immediate open heart surgery, otherwise her life would be in danger. Accordingly she was admitted in the Durgabhai Deshmukh Hospital, Hyderabad on 14-7-1986 and Cardiac catheterisation was performed on 15-7-'86. The doctors estimated rupees twenty thousands towards the cost of operation, room charges etc; and demanded rupees fifteen thousands to be deposited for undertaking heart operation immediately. My brother-in-law Mr. T.V. Venkatnarayana with the financial assistance from my cousin brothers managed the deposit. The sorrowful news was conveyed to me at Warangal through a special messenger on Thursday 17-7-'86 at 11.00 p.m. By that time I had finished my Sai pooja and was going through SAI Album (containing the cover pages of English Sai-leela magazines of the last five years) I was moved beyond measure by the above heart-stirring news and rushed to Hyderabad on 18-7-1986.

On my personal request the date of open heart surgery was postponed to 24-7-1986 being Baba's day. On the day of operation I applied 'UDI' on the forehead of my wife wrapped her breast with SAI SHAWL and administered Abhishek Tirth. She was taken to operation theatre at 12-30 p.m. What could I do at this critical juncture except shedding tears and repeating the name of SAI BABA for her life? My uncle Mr. T. Narayan Das, a noted astrologer predicted that the stars were then unfavourable to us. My cousin brother Mr. M. Ram Mohana Rao who is also an ardent devotee of SAI BABA could hardly believe these words. The whole process of heart operation took seven hours. At about 7.30 p.m. one of the Junior doctors came out of the operation theatre with a smiling face and declared the operation quite safe and successful. My joy knew no bounds and I bathed again but in tears of joy. I broke my fast at 7.45 p.m. by consuming two cups of tea with biscuits offered by my cousin Mr. S. Ram Murthy and relaxed myself.

What is the outcome of the above episode?

During the operation period my devotion to and concentration on Sri SAIBABA increased by leaps and bounds. I whole-heartedly surrendered at the Lotus Feet of the Almighty. This is the greatest of the great SAI miracles in my life.

How could my relatives come to my rescue and deposit the amount demanded by doctors for operation within no time?

How eight of my relatives donated blood?

How everything went on peacefully?

SAI's invisible hand is the only answer to the above three pertinent question.

My prostrations in gratitude for ever and anon.

*Mr. N. Machander Das,
Asistant Director, Planning & Statistics,
WARANGAL, (Andhra Pradesh).*





**BESTOW ON US THE DESIRE TO SEEK THE
"DIVINE TRUTH"**

Thy thought in our mind
 Thy image in our eyes
 Thy name on our lips
 Oh! Baba! We can swim the seven seas
 And reach the heavens with utter ease 1

We are so weak and meek
 But we shall climb the steepest of peak.
 We may not know the route or the road
 But we shall walk straight to the abode.
 We may not know how to pray or what to seek
 But as we prostrate before thee
 we could get all that we could think 2

Our body and limbs itching to taste
 the thrill of touch of thy "Lotus Feet",
 Our mind & senses craving to look at thy piercing glance
 emiting the radiant light.
 Our mind sailing in thy sublime thought,
 we long to remain forever lost 3

Let us curtail our need and forsake the greed and join the
 Baba's creed.
 Let us surrender to "Him" and Lo! from the clutches of
 ego and pride we shall be freed.
 Oh! Sai! Show us the path of undetered devotion and faith
 Bestow on us, Oh! Baba! the desire to seek
 "That" divine truth 4

OM SAI RAM! OM SAI NAM!

*S.S. Kasavagod,
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I LOOK UP TO HIM

Below the Portrait of Satguru Sai Baba sitting on stone are the two lines inscribed "If you look up to me, I look after you." How true and meaningful are the two lines!

Before April, 1956, I had no clear idea about Sai Baba. If I precisely remember, it was on the night of 4th April my eldest son who was at that time six years old, developed high fever and gradually his neck became stiff. Early in the next morning I rushed to Dr. H.L. Dua who was my family physician and lived nearby and narrated the condition of the boy. He at once came to my house and after thorough examination, declared it to be a case of Meningitis and advised me to shift the boy to the Hospital immediately. I went to the local Govt. Hospital and enquired about the availability of a special ward but in vain. As there was no elderly member in my house except my wife and as the other two children were small, I did not want to admit the boy in the General ward. So to be doubly sure about the diagnosis made by Dr. Dua I went to Dr. G..P. Shrivastava, who had retired a few months ago as Civil Surgeon of Govt. Hospital, Durg. Dr. Shrivastava also opined that Dr. Dua's diagnosis was correct.

They wanted his blood and urine to be sent for test immediately and accordingly it was done. The test reports were obtained within hours. Then a line of treatment was prepared by these two highly experienced physicians and Dr. Dua started giving injections to the boy every three hours. On the evening of 5th April Shri M.V. Ramachandran, Principal of my college, who was a staunch devotee of Sai baba (alas! he is now no more) came to my house and applied Sai Baba's Udhi on the body of the boy, mixed some Udhi with water and put it into his mouth and kept a packet of Udhi inside his pillow. While doing this he kept on murmuring something. Probably he was praying to Sai Baba for the recovery of the boy. While leaving my house, he told me not to worry as with Baba's grace the boy would be alright in a few days. He advised us to pray to Sai Baba with utmost devotion as Baba would never fail his true devotees who call him from the core of their hearts. Day and night my wife and I prayed to Sai Baba, as advised.

Miracle started happening from the evening of 7th April as the boy began to show sign of recovery. At night he called his mother



and me. By 10th April the boy was in a position to sit on his bed and within 10 days he was completely cured.

My friends and relatives were surprised at such a speedy recovery from this deadly disease which normally needs protracted treatment. This incident completely changed the complexion of my life. From that time onwards, all my family members and I became staunch devotees of Satguru Sai Baba and immediately after rising from bed in the morning we stand before the portrait of Sai Baba and offer our obeisance to HIM.

After taking bath we pray to Him and after sunset and before going to bed we stand before the portrait of Sai Baba and pray to him to grant us His blessings so that we may not deviate from the path of righteousness. My sons are all well-placed and my only daughter is married off and it is all due to Satguru's kindness.

What we have and what we are today is all due to His blessings. I request my Sai Bandhus to be honest, sincere, truthful and helpful to others as Sai Baba always wanted his devotees to be.

How long will I live, it is not for me to see but how good to live is! It is with this aim and conviction in view I look to HIM for his Kindness & Blessings.

*R.N. Karkun,
New Shanti Nagar,
Raipur, (M.P.).*



FOUR BIG LITTLE WORDS

TRUST in Lord Sainath: His promise is true
DELIGHT in Lord Sainath: It will bring joy to you.
COMMIT yourself, do Sainath's will everyday
WAIT on Lord Sainath: hear what He has to say.

*Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar
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Kil Kotagiri – 643 216
(NILGRIS), (Tamil Nadu)*

श्री साईलीला जुलै १९८७

हिन्दी विभाग

अनुक्रमणिका

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साई भक्ति जगाओ

दिये से मिटेगा न मन का अंधेरा,
साई नाम की दामिनी को जलाओ।
हटेगा न पथ से यह काटों का घेरा,
कुसुम-पथ बिछा साई-भक्ति जगाओ।
बहुत बार आई, गई है दिवाली,
मगर तम् जहाँ था वहीं पर खड़ा है,
मिटाना है इसको तो बिजली के बदले,
साई-भक्ति से जल के दीपक जलाओ।
यह मोह, यह माया, ये सुख, और ये दुख,
सलिल-कँण की नाई यह जीवनक्षण-भंगुर,
इस स्वप्निल जीवन के अंधेरे प्रहर को,
साई नाम की ज्योती से मिटाओ।
दिये से मिटेगा न मन का अंधेरा,
हटेगा न पथ से, यह काटों का घेरा,
साई-भक्ति के मन में दीपक जलाओ,
कुसुम-पथ बिछा साई-भक्ति जगाओ॥

— कुमारी तन्जुल सक्सेना

ई-१/२, नई प्रेस कॉलोनी फरीदाबाद-१२१ ००१.

८५. "नाम और रूप धारण करनेवाले सभी पदार्थों में, जो सचल तथा अचल हैं, मैं विद्यमान हूँ। यह अष्टगुणी प्रकृति मेरी अभिव्यक्ति है, मेरा अद्भुत हस्तशिल्प।
८६. "यह गूढ़ प्रतीक 'ओऽम्' मेरे स्वरूप की अभिव्यक्ति है। मैं विश्व की प्रत्येक वस्तु में व्याप्त हूँ।
८७. "जहाँ 'आत्म' (मेरे स्वरूप) से भिन्न कुछ भी नहीं है, वहाँ कोई इच्छा नहीं होती। मैं विश्व के सभी दिग्भागों में और उनके अन्दर की प्रत्येक वस्तु में व्याप्त हूँ।
८८. "जब मैं इस प्रकार सर्वव्यापी हूँ तब "मैं" और "मेरा" की भावना लुप्त हो जाती है। जहाँ सब "पूर्ण" से भरा हो, वहाँ कोई सांसारिक इच्छा कैसे उत्पन्न हो सकती है?
८९. "सांसारिक इच्छायें बुद्धि में जन्म लेती हैं और उनका आत्मा से कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं होता। साईं महाराज "आत्मा" के मूर्तिरूप हैं। उनमें इच्छायें कहाँ से उत्पन्न हो सकती हैं?
९०. "सांसारिक इच्छायें बहुगुणी होती हैं। आत्मस्वरूप की अनुभूति के साथ वे उसी प्रकार नष्ट हो जाती हैं, जिस प्रकार सूर्य की प्रखर किरणों के प्रभाव से ओले धुल जाते हैं।
९१. "मन, बुद्धि तथा अन्य ज्ञानेन्द्रियों सहित मैं स्थूल रूप नहीं हूँ, न ही मैं विश्व हूँ। मैं अव्यक्त हिरण्यगर्भ (ब्रह्म का बीज) भी नहीं हूँ, किन्तु मैं सबका दृष्टा हूँ, कालातीत तथा अनादि।
९२. "त्रिगुणातीत तथा सभी इन्द्रियों से परे होने के कारण, इन्द्रियगम्य पदार्थ मुझे प्रभावित नहीं करते। मैं किसी कार्य का न तो कर्ता ही हूँ और न ही कारण।
९३. "इस अनुभूति के साथ कि मन, बुद्धि तथा अन्य इन्द्रियाँ भौतिक शरीर के स्थूल यंत्र हैं, (सभी सांसारिक अनुरागों

- तथा वासनाओं से) अनासक्ति उत्पन्न होगी, जिससे प्रच्छन्न आत्मज्ञान अनावृत होगा।
९४. “आत्मस्वरूप की विस्मृति (आध्यात्मिक दृष्टिहीनता) से यह भ्रान्ति कि (कि जगत सत्य है) उत्पन्न होता है। अपने अन्दर विशुद्ध आनंद की अनुभूति मुझे आत्मस्वरूप के रूप में जानना है।
९५. “अन्तर्मुखी होना तथा मुझ पर ध्यान एकाग्र करना मेरी सच्ची भक्तिपूर्वक सेवा करना है, जिसके फलस्वरूप परमानन्द की अवस्था का भान होता है। यह शुद्ध ज्ञान है।
९६. यह आत्मा ब्रह्म है। आनन्दमय आत्मा (आनंद से पूर्ण शुद्ध चेतना) ब्रह्म है। संसार माया है, क्योंकि वह मिथ्या है। वस्तुतः मैं वही ब्रह्म हूँ।
९७. “मैं वासुदेव (ईश्वर) हूँ, पवित्र अक्षर “ओऽम्” हूँ, अनन्त, शुद्ध, प्रबुद्ध (तथा) (आवागमन के चक्र से) मुक्त। सच्ची निष्ठा तथा भक्ति के साथ मेरी पूजा करने में आपका कल्याण निहित है।
९८. “इसे, मेरी वास्तविक प्रकृति को, समझ कर अन्तरतम से मेरी पूजा कीजिए। इसके अतिरिक्त, मेरे प्रति पूर्णतः आत्मसमर्पण कर दीजिये और मेरे साथ एक हो जाइये।
९९. “एक बार समुद्र में मिल जाने पर नदी अपनी पहिचान खो देती है और नदी के रूप में उसका अस्तित्व समाप्त हो जाता है।
१००. “जिस प्रकार तेल में भिगोयी बत्ती को जब प्रकाश की लौ से मिला दिया जाता है, तब वह स्वयं ज्वलन्त प्रकाश बन जाती है, उसी प्रकार की दशा उस व्यक्ति की होती है, जो किसी सन्त के प्रति आत्मसमर्पण कर देता है।

१०१. “जो परमात्मा, अल्लाह मालिक, के अतिरिक्त और कुछ नहीं सोचता, वह (बोधातीत) शान्ति का अनुभव करता है, निरिच्छ होता है तथा सबको एकसी दृष्टि से देखता है। उसका (परमात्मा से) पृथक अस्तित्व नहीं होता।
१०२. ऐसे व्यक्ति में अहंभाव की गुंजायश नहीं होती, जिसमें इन चार गुणों की चौकड़ी पायी जाती है — (१) इच्छा से मुक्ति (२) अहंकार से मुक्ति (३) विरोधी युग्मों (ताप-शीत, सुख-दुःख आदि — सापेक्ष जगत के आभासी विपर्ययों) से मुक्ति तथा (४) स्वत्वों से मुक्ति।
१०३. संक्षेप में, जब साईं इन आठ गुणों के प्रतिरूप हैं, तब अहंभाव के लिये कहाँ गुंजायश है? मेरा अस्तित्व उनसे पृथक नहीं है।
१०४. “जिसकी चेतना सम्पूर्ण विश्व में व्याप्त है, उसका मैं अंश मात्र हूँ। उसके प्रति पूर्ण आत्मसमर्पण कर देने से और अच्छी सेवा ज्या की जा सकती है?
१०५. “भागवत में एक दिव्य प्रवचन है: ‘मेरी सेवा, मेरी पूजा तथा मेरे प्रति पूर्ण आत्म-समर्पण मेरे साथ एकीकरण कर देते हैं।’
१०६. “(जिस प्रकार) कोई कीड़ा (पकड़ लिये जाने के बाद अपने बन्धन में प्रतीक्षित मृत्यु की आशंका से) भौर का निरन्तर ध्यान करते हुए स्वयं भौरा बन जाता है, (उसी प्रकार) ऐसा शिष्य जो निरन्तर अपने गुरु का ध्यान करता है, गुरु के साथ एक हो जाता है।
१०७. “गुरु के साथ ‘एकरूपता’ के विचार में ‘पृथकत्व’ उपलक्षित है। किन्तु गुरु उसे स्वीकार न करेगा। गुरु-शिष्य सम्बन्ध एक तथा अवियोज्य है।

१०८. मैंने उस एक का आशय व्यक्त करने का प्रयास किया है, जिसकी पूजा करने का मुझे (साई द्वारा) आदेश दिया गया था। इस सम्बन्ध में मुझे एक घटना याद है, जिसका मैं — जो कुछ मैं कहता रहा हूँ, उसका समर्थन करने के लिये — विस्तार से वर्णन करूँगा।
१०९. एक रोहिला (पठान) शिरडी आया और वह बाबा की सद्गुणी आचरण-विधियों से आकर्षित हुआ। वह वहाँ बहुत दिन रहा और उसने अपने को बाबा की सेवा में प्रेमपूर्वक निरत कर दिया।
११०. वह भैसे की भाँति मोटा-तगड़ा था। वह स्वेच्छाचारी था और किसी की नहीं सुनता था। वह केवल एक चोगा धारण किये रहता था, जो उसकी एड़ी का स्पर्श करता था। वह मस्जिद में ठहर गया।
१११. मस्जिद तथा चावड़ी (गाँव का बृहद कक्ष) में वह दिन-रात इच्छानुसार कुरान-शरीफ के कलमाओं (आयतों) को उच्चस्वर में प्रखरता से उच्चारित करता।
११२. साई बाबा शान्ति के अवतार थे। किन्तु ग्रामवासी उसके (रोहिला के) कोलाहलपूर्ण तथा शोरजन्य पाठ से, जो मध्यरात्रि में भी जारी रहता था, तंग आ गए। उससे सबकी नींद हराम हो गई।
११३. दिन में चिलचिलाती धूप में खेतों तथा जंगलों में कठोर परिश्रम करते थे और रात में भी वे सो नहीं पाते थे।
११४. हो सकता है कि उसने बाबा को प्रभावित न किया हो, किन्तु ग्रामवासी रुष्ट थे क्योंकि वे रात में शान्तिपूर्वक निद्रा से वंचित रहते थे।

११५. वे कुएँ और खाई के बीच में फंस गये थे। वे कब तक सहन करते, क्योंकि यह तो रातदिन का निरन्तर अनुत्रास था। वे बहुत परेशान थे।
११६. रोहिला स्वभाव से ही सनकी था और उस पर उसे बाबा का प्रबल समर्थन प्राप्त था। (फलस्वरूप) वह पहले की अपेक्षा और भी अधिक अनियंत्रित तथा निरंकुश हो गया।
११७. वह घृष्ट तथा अनम्य हो गया और लोगों से अपमानजनक भाषा में बोलने लगा। पहले की अपेक्षा वह अब और भी अधिक उद्दण्डता से व्यवहार करने लगा और सारा गाँव ही उसके विरुद्ध हो गया।
११८. साईं माँ के समान ममतामय थे और जो उनके प्रति आत्मसमर्पण कर देता उसकी वे रक्षा करते थे। अतएव, ग्रामवासी उनकी ओर उन्मुख हुए और उन्होंने उनसे हस्तक्षेप करने के लिए अनुयय-विनय की।
११९. किन्तु बाबा ने कोई ध्यान न दिया। इसके विपरीत, उन्होंने उनको यह कहते हुए फटकार दिया कि 'रोहिला को कष्ट मत दो, वह मुझे बहुत प्रिय है।'
१२०. "रोहिला की पत्नी दुराचारी है और उसके साथ रहने से इन्कार करती है। उससे चतुराई से बच निकलकर वह मेरे पास आने के लिये आतुर है।
१२१. "वह शालीनता से विहीन है और निर्लज्ज है। यदि उसे निकाल बाहर किया जाए तो वह जबरदस्ती लौट आती है।
१२२. "जिस क्षण वह चिल्लाना बन्द कर देता है, उसी क्षण वह दुष्ट औरत प्रविष्ट होने के अवसर को हथिया लेती है। जैसे ही वह अपने पाठ को पुनः आरंभ करता है, वैसे ही

- वह छूमन्तर हो जाती है, जिससे वह वाणी, शरीर तथा मन से पवित्र बना रहता है, जो मेरी प्रसन्नता का कारण है।
१२३. "उसके रास्ते में मत आओ, उसे उन्मुक्तता से चिल्लाने दो। मैं उसके बिना रात्रि व्यतीत नहीं कर सकता। उसके यहाँ रहने पर मैं परम प्रसन्नता का अनुभव करता हूँ।
१२४. "उसके गुलगपाड़े से मुझे लाभ होता है। वह उदार है और मेरे बहुत अनुकूल है।
१२५. "उसे जितना वह चाहे उतना चिल्लाने दो। उसका चिल्लाना मेरे लिए लाभदायक है, अन्यथा उसकी दुष्ट पत्नी मुझे कष्ट पहुँचाएगी।
१२६. "(अन्ततः) वह स्वयं थक जाएगा और स्वतः (चिल्लाना) बन्द कर देगा। उससे तुम्हारा प्रयोजन सिद्ध हो जाएगा। उसकी पत्नी मुझे परेशान न करेगी।"
१२७. क्योंकि स्वयं बाबा ने इस प्रकार कहा, अतएव और आगे प्रयास (करना) व्यर्थ था। यदि बाबा का मन उद्वेलित नहीं हुआ था, तो हमें ही क्यों चिन्तित होना चाहिए?
१२८. बाबा के प्रोत्साहन से रोहिला का स्वाभाविक जोश और बढ़ गया। फलस्वरूप वह और भी अधिक जोर से चिल्लाने लगा और (तब तक चिल्लाता रहता) जब तक उसका गला सूख न जाता।
१२९. बाबा की सहनशीलता पर लोग विस्मित थे। इसकी अपेक्षा कि उससे तीव्र सिर-दर्द हो, वह शोर उन्हें हर्षोन्मत्त कर देता था।
१३०. शोर के इतने प्रचंड होने पर भी यह आश्चर्य की बात थी कि उससे रोहिला का गला सूखा नहीं। तथापि बाबा ने सबसे अनुरोध किया कि वे उसकी भर्त्सना न करें।

१३१. रोहिला कुछ विक्षिप्त सा दिखलायी दिया तथापि बाबा के प्रति उसकी अत्यधिक श्रद्धा थी। वह बड़े उल्लास से कलमाओं का धार्मिक विधि से पाठ करता था।
१३२. उसे इसकी चिन्ता न थी कि उसकी आवाज़ कोमल है अथवा कर्कश। जब भी उसका मन करता, वह तत्क्षण चिल्लाकर अल्लाह का नाम पुकारता।
१३३. प्रकृति ने रोहिला को कर्कश वाणी प्रदान की थी। वह नियमित रूप से तथा निरन्तर 'अल्लाह-हो-अकबर' चिल्लाता और बड़े उल्लास से (कुरान के) कलमें पढ़ता।
१३४. बाबा को ऐसे लोगों का साहचर्य पसन्द न था, जो ईश्वर के प्रति पराङ्मुख हों। अतएव, उन्होंने रोहिला को, जो अल्लाह के नाम को निरन्तर दोहराया करता था, निकाल देने के विषय में नहीं सोचा।
१३५. बाबा ने भगवान के इस कथन के सत्य को सिद्ध करने के लिए कि "जहाँ मेरा गुणगान किया जाता है, वहाँ मैं सदैव उपस्थित रहता हूँ" इस अवसर का लाभ उठाया।
१३६. जो कुछ भी उसे दान में मिल जाता, उसी से रोहिला अपना भरण-पोषण करता था अन्यथा वह यदा-कदा बिना भोजन के रह जाता था। उसके ऐसी पत्नी कैसे हो सकती थी, जो बाबा को कष्ट पहुँचाती?
१३७. रोहिला निर्धन था (अतएव) उसके लिए विवाह अथवा पत्नी अकल्पनीय (बातें) थीं। इसके अतिरिक्त बाबा बाल ब्रह्मचारी थे। स्पष्टतः सम्पूर्ण कथा काल्पनिक थी।
१३८. क्योंकि बाबा कलमाओं के पाठ किये जाने से प्रसन्न थे, अतएव रोहिला का चिल्लाना उन्हें विक्षुब्ध न कर सका।

उन्हें उनका (कलमाओं का) रात-दिन सुनना नींद की तुलना में जो विष के समान थी, कहीं अधिक प्रिय था।

१३९. एक ओर उद्बोधक कलमाओं का पाठ किया जाना और दूसरी ओर ग्रामवासियों द्वारा तुच्छ शिकायतें किया जाना — इन दोनों में जमीन आसमान का अन्तर था। पूरी घटना ग्राम-वासियों को पाठ सिखाने के लिए बाबा द्वारा उपयोग में लायी गई युक्ति थी।
१४०. इस प्रकार बाबा ने सबको यह शिक्षा प्रदान कर दी कि वे सभी जिन्हें रोहिला की भाँति भगवान का नाम प्रिय है, उन्हें प्रिय हैं।
१४१. बाबा के लिए जिनकी दृष्टि में, देखा गया पदार्थ, देखने वाला और देखने की क्रिया एक ही परमात्मा की अभिव्यक्ति थे, ब्राह्मण और पठान बराबर थे।
१४२. दोपहर की आरती के उपरान्त जब लोग विसर्जित हो रहे थे, तब बाबा के श्रीमुख से मधुर शब्दों की जो लड़ी मुखरित हुई, उसे अब सुनें।
१४३. “इसे सदैव याद रखो कि तुम कहीं भी हो और कुछ भी कर रहे हो, मुझे प्रत्येक वस्तु के सूक्ष्मतम विवरण की जानकारी रहती है।
१४४. “जैसा कि पहले वर्णन किया जा चुका है, मैं सबकी आत्मा में निवास करता हूँ, सबके हृदयों पर शासन करता हूँ, मैं भगवान हूँ, मैं स्वामी हूँ।
१४५. “मैं सम्पूर्ण सृष्टि के अन्दर और बाहर इतना लबालब व्याप्त हूँ कि वह छलक जाने के बिन्दु पर है। यह सृष्टि दैवी रहस्य है और मैं उसकी प्रेरक शक्ति हूँ।
१४६. “मैं जगज्जननी हूँ, मैं तीनों गुणों (प्रकृति की अन्तरंग

विशेषताओं) का सन्तुलन हूँ। मैं सभी इन्द्रियों का संचालन करता हूँ। मैं सबका सृजक, पालक और संहारक हूँ।

१४७. “जो (व्यक्ति) अपना ध्यान मेरी ओर केन्द्रित करता है, उसे कोई कष्ट नहीं होता। किन्तु जब वह मुझे भुला देता है, तब वह मायाजन्य विपत्तियों से पीड़ित होता है (माया अर्थात् भ्रान्ति-संसार माया है, क्योंकि जैसा वह दिखलायी देता है, वैसा वह नहीं है, कुछ इसलिए कि उस पर पर्दा पड़ा रहता है और कुछ इसलिए कि हमने उसे कुछ और मान रखा है)।

१४८. “जो कुछ दिखलायी देता है, मैं ही उसका रूप धारण करता हूँ, चाहे वह कृमि, चीटी, रंक अथवा राजा कुछ भी क्यों न हो। यह अमित विश्व, सचल तथा अचल, स्वयं बाबा का सच्चा स्वरूप है।

१४९. कैसा रोचक सन्देश! — कि सन्त ईश्वर से भिन्न नहीं हैं अपितु एक हैं और ईश्वर सभी सचल और अचल वस्तुओं में विद्यमान है। वह विश्व के परित्राण के लिये मानव रूप धारण करता है।

१५०. यदि तुम गुरु के श्रीचरणों में आत्मसमर्पण करना चाहते हो, तो तुम्हें उनका स्तुति गान करना चाहिये अथवा उनके जीवन की कथाओं का विस्तृत वर्णन करना चाहिये अथवा उनसे सम्बन्धित कथाओं को श्रद्धापूर्वक ध्यान से सुनना चाहिये।

१५१. अतएव, (सत्य के) अन्वेषक को अनन्यत्रित्त होकर (आध्यात्मिक उपदेश को) ध्यान से सुनना चाहिये, जिससे वह, उसके साथ जो वह सुन रहा है, एकाकार हो जाए। इस प्रकार वह ईश्वर की उपस्थिति का अनुभव करेगा और चेतना की तीनों अवस्थाओं तथा उनके ज्ञान को पार कर जायेगा।

१५२. यदि आपको उस समय जब आप संसार (दैनिक जीवन) में तल्लीन हों, किसी सन्त की कथा सुनने का अवसर अनायास प्राप्त हो जाये, तो उससे आपका कल्याण होगा।
१५३. तब आप अपने हित में थोड़ा यह सोचीये कि यदि आप उसे भक्ति-भाव से सुनेंगे तो उससे आपको कितना अधिक लाभ होगा!
१५४. उससे गुरु के प्रति आपकी श्रद्धा में अभिवृद्धि होगी और आपके (आध्यात्मिक) कल्याण की दिशा में क्रमशः प्रगति होगी। तब कोई अन्य भक्तिनिष्ठ धार्मिक अभ्यास अथवा निग्रह आवश्यक न होगा। परमात्मा की प्राप्ति होगी।
१५५. जब मन इस प्रकार अनुशासित हो जाता है, तब उसे सन्तों की कथायें सुनने की अधिकाधिक रुचि होती है और इन्द्रिययोग्य पदार्थों के प्रति उसकी आसक्ति का लोप हो जाता है। फिर उसे अत्यधिक आनन्द की अनुभूति होती है।
१५६. बाबा के इन मधुर शब्दों को सुनकर मैंने (जीविकोपार्जन के लिये) कोई नौकरी न करने का और अपने को पूर्णतः गुरु की सेवा में समर्पित कर देने का निश्चय किया।
१५७. तथापि मेरा मन बाबा के इस आश्वासन पर कि 'मुझे कोई नौकरी मिल जायेगी' विचरण करता रहा और इस विषय में कि क्या वह सत्य होगा, व्यग्र रहा।
१५८. यह संभव नहीं था कि बाबा के शब्द सत्य सिद्ध न हों। उन्होंने यह संकेत पहले ही कर दिया था कि मुझे दूसरी नौकरी मिल जायेगी, किन्तु उससे मेरा कोई लाभ न होगा।
१५९. किन्तु ऐसा भी नहीं था कि मुझे उसकी चाह न हो। मेरी भी रुचि थी। बिना माँगे कुछ मिल जाना भवितव्य होता

- है। किन्तु उसका उपभोग करना अथवा न करना व्यक्ति का विकल्प होता है।
१६०. मन ही मन मैं भी परिवार के पोषण के लिये नौकरी का इच्छुक था। उपचार के रूप में साईं ने मुझे शक्कर लपेटी टिकिया प्रदान कर दी।
१६१. मैंने दवा खा ली, क्योंकि वह शक्कर लपेटी थी और मेरे भाग्य जाग गये, क्योंकि मुझे अप्रत्याशित रूप से नौकरी मिल गई और मैंने धन की अपनी लालसा वश उसे स्वीकार कर लिया।
१६२. मनुष्य अपने जीवन में अच्छी वस्तुओं से भी अन्ततः अघा जाता है। यह बाबा का समोपदेश था, जिसने दवा के रूप में कार्य करके, मुझे, वास्तव में, लाभ पहुँचाया।
१६३. नौकरी स्थायी नहीं थी और वह उसी अप्रत्याशित ढंग से समाप्त हो गई जिस (अप्रत्याशित) ढंग से वह प्राप्त हुई थी। बाबा ने मेरी स्थायी भलाई के लिये पूर्व-स्थिति ला दी।
१६४. सजीव और निर्जीव वस्तुओं से भरपूर यह विश्व ईश्वर की एक अभिव्यक्ति है। तथापि ईश्वर इस विश्व से भी परे है और परमात्मा सबसे परे है।
१६५. सांसारिक सृष्टि से ईश्वर सर्वव्यापी है, तथापि सृष्टि ईश्वर से भिन्न है। सृष्टि का, चाहे वह सजीव हो अथवा निर्जीव, आधार ईश्वर है।
१६६. ईश्वर का पूजन करने के लिये आठ प्रकार के पदार्थ हैं, जैसे मूर्ति, यज्ञवेदी तथा अन्य। उन सबकी तुलना में गुरु सबसे अधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण है।
१६७. श्रीकृष्ण तक जो स्वयं परमात्मा हैं अपने गुरु सान्दीपनि के

चरणों पर नतमस्तक होते थे। भगवान का कथन है, "सद्गुरु का स्मरण करना, मुझे (नारायण को) प्रसन्न करने की सबसे अच्छी विधि है।"

१६८. "मेरी अपेक्षा सद्गुरु का स्तुति-गान करना मुझे हजार गुना अधिक प्रिय है। सद्गुरु की ऐसी श्रेष्ठता तथा परम महत्ता है।

१६९. ऐसा व्यक्ति जो गुरु की सेवा से मुँह मोड़ता है हतभाग्य पापी है। वह आवागमन के चक्र में फँस जाता है और अपने स्वयं के विनाश का कारण बनता है।

१७०. जन्म, मृत्यु, पुनर्जन्म—इस प्रकार चक्र चिरन्तन घूमता रहता है। अतएव, मोक्ष प्राप्ति के लिये हमें इन कथाओं को ध्यान से सुनना (पढ़ना) चाहिये।

१७१. सन्तों द्वारा मुखरित अचिन्तित शब्द तक अज्ञान का निवारण करते हैं और (व्यक्ति को) विपत्ति से बचाते हैं। अतएव, हमें उनको अपने हृदय में संचित कर लेना चाहिये।

१७२. हम नहीं जानते कि हमारे भाग्य में क्या लिखा है और कार्यरत शक्तियों का फल क्या होगा। यह सब सर्वशक्तिमान (ईश्वर) की लीला है। प्रेमी भक्त मात्र दृष्टा है।

१७३. मुझ प्रज्ञाविहीन के लिये यह सौभाग्य का जोर था, कि मुझे साईं जैसा शक्तिशाली गुरु प्राप्त हुआ। यह उनकी लीला के अतिरिक्त और कुछ नहीं है।

१७४. मैं इस ग्रन्थ की रचना के कारण का उल्लेख पहले ही कर चुका हूँ। बाबा से जो आश्वासन मुझे प्राप्त हुआ और जिसने ईश्वर और उसकी पूजा की वास्तविक प्रकृति को स्पष्ट कर दिया — उसका भी कथन कर चुका हूँ।

१७५. हे मेरे श्रोताओं (पाठको)! अब अगले अध्याय में इसका

विवरण सुनिये (पढ़िये) कि समर्थ साईनाथ शिरडी में कैसे प्रकट हुए।

१७६. अरे, (आप) सभी लोग! युवा तथा वृद्ध, सरल हृदय तथा विश्वासी! अपने सांसारिक जीवन से कुछ क्षण निकालिये और साई की इस असाधारण (विलक्षण) जीवनी को पढ़िये।
१७७. यद्यपि साई स्वयं अवतार हैं, तथापि वे (उससे) अप्रभावित रहकर दैनिक जीवन में लिप्त सामान्य व्यक्ति की भाँति विभिन्न भूमिकाएँ अभिनीत करते हैं और (अपने को) माया के प्रभाव के अधीन (प्रदर्शित करते) हैं!
१७८. साई के श्रीचरण पवित्र हैं और सूक्ष्म मंत्र (दिव्य नाम) 'समर्थ साई' द्वारा उनका ध्यान किया जा सकता है। अपने भक्तों को सांसारिक जीवन से मुक्ति प्रदान करने के लिए वे सूत्रधार हैं। उनकी जीवन-कथा पावन है।
१७९. क्योंकि यह ऐसा है, अतएव वह (व्यक्ति) भाग्यशाली है जो, साई की जीवनी का पाठ करता है और वह जो उसे ध्यान से सुनता है, क्योंकि इस प्रकार उनके हृदय शुद्ध हो जावेंगे।
१८०. साई की इन कथाओं का पाठ सांसारिक जीवन के समस्त दुःखों का निवारण कर देगा। साई उन पर कृपा-वृष्टि करेंगे और उनके सहज स्वरूप का ज्ञान करा देंगे।
१८१. आलस्य, विचरणशील मन, इन्द्रियभोग्य पदार्थों (कशाय) के प्रति आसक्ति, स्वाद लेने की अति — अध्ययन में बाधक हैं। इनका परिहार करें। तब अध्ययन आनन्ददायक बन जायेगा।
१८२. उनके सफल समापन पर धार्मिक व्रत तथा अनुष्ठान आवश्यक नहीं हैं। न ही उपवास तथा शरीर को क्लेश देना आवश्यक है। विचरण और तीर्थयात्रा करने की भी आवश्यकता नहीं।

है। साई की जीवनी का अध्ययन ही पर्याप्त है।

१८३. विशुद्ध प्रेम तथा भक्ति के गूढ़ तत्वों के प्रति जागरूकता से अधिकतम कल्याण का और अविद्या के विनाश का पथ सरलता से प्रशस्त होगा।
१८४. (ईश्वर से एकत्व प्राप्त करने के लिये) अन्य साधनों के आजमाने में परिश्रम करना व्यर्थ है। साई की जीवनी के अध्ययन से सभी कर्म, भूतकाल के तथा वर्तमान काल के, संचित (सभी पूर्व-जन्मों में किए गए कर्मों का संचय) तथा क्रियमाण्य (वर्तमान जीवन के कर्म जो पुनर्जन्म का कारण बनते हैं) निःशेष हो जावेंगे।
१८५. जिस प्रकार कोई कृपण व्यक्ति कहीं भी रहे किन्तु रातदिन उसकी मानसिक दृष्टि अपने गड़े हुए खजाने पर रहती है, उसी प्रकार साई हम लोगों के मन में (सदा) निवास करें।

आपका कल्याण हो। यहाँ पर श्री साई समर्थ की श्रद्धास्पद जीवनी का, जिसकी रचना सन्तों तथा सज्जनों की प्रेरणा से उनके भक्त हेमाडपन्त ने की, तीसरा अध्याय जिसका शीर्षक "इस ग्रन्थ की रचना के हेतु का उल्लेख करने की अनुमति" है, समाप्त होता है।





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— एम.एल. खन्ना

साई विला,

मकान नं. १५७७,

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