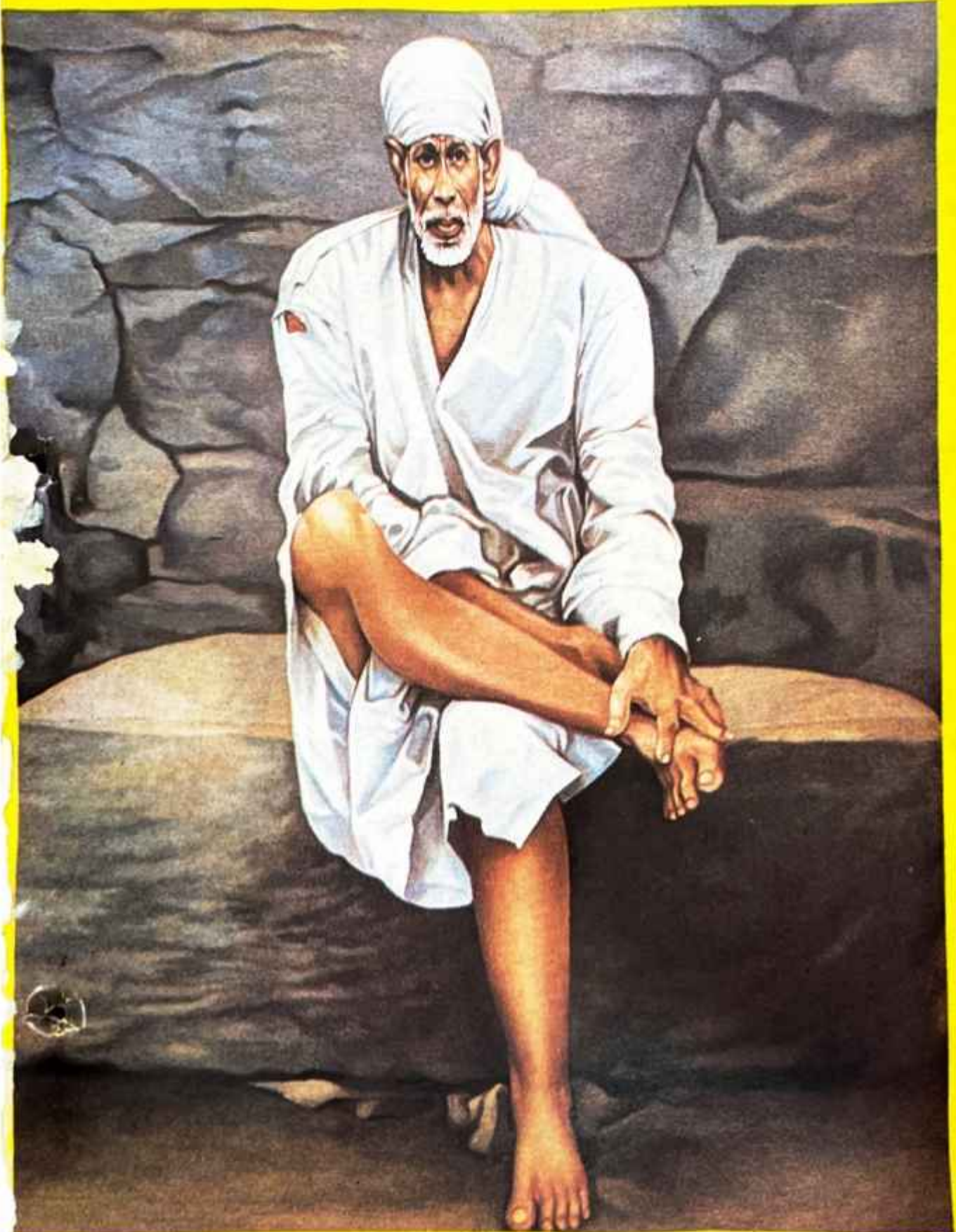


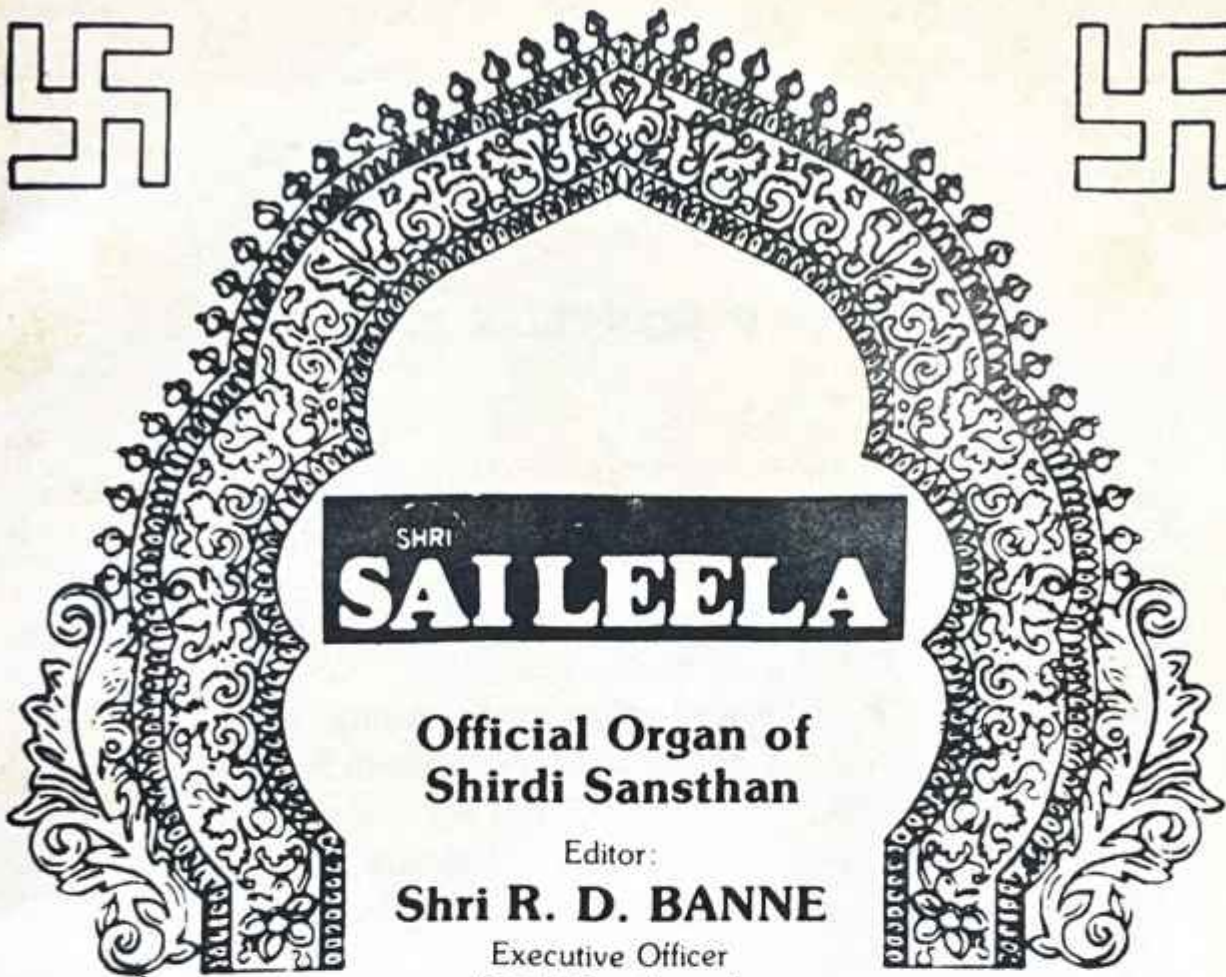
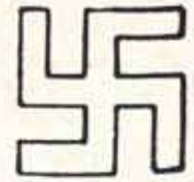
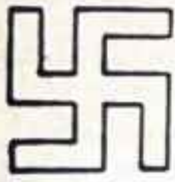
SHRI

OCTOBER 1987

SAILEELA

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF SHIRDI SANSTHAN





SHRI
SAILEELA

**Official Organ of
Shirdi Sansthan**

Editor:

Shri R. D. BANNE

Executive Officer
Shirdi Sansthan of
Shri Sai Baba

Executive Editors:

Prof, Smt. Indira Kher
M.A., Ph.D.

Shri Sadanand Chendwankar
B.Sc., S.T.C., R.B. Pravin

**To spread the message of SHRI SAI
BABA all the world over is the aim and
object of Shri Sai Leela**

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*The Editor does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in
the articles published.*



A QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

I saw the mountains stand,
Silent, wonderful, and grand,
Looking out across the land,
When the golden light was falling
On distant dome and spire,
And I heard a low voice calling,
'Come up higher!.... Come up higher!
From the lowland and the mire,
From the mist of earth-desire,
From the vain pursuit of pelf,
From the attitude of self;
Come up higher!.... Come up higher!'

James W. Clark

SHRI SAI LEELA

OCTOBER — 1987

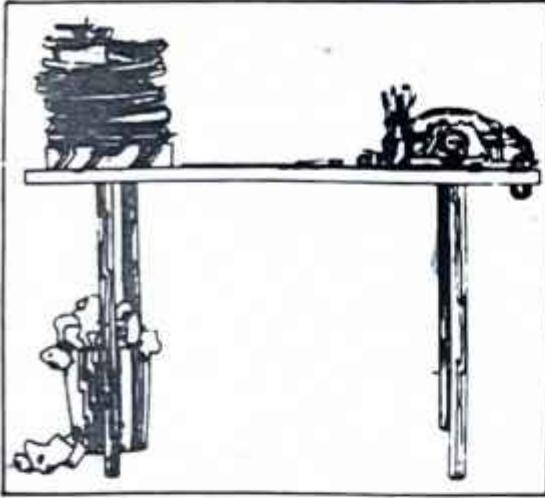
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EDITORIAL



To err is human; to forgive, divine. This forgiveness comes with the all-embracing love and compassion which are the attributes of divinity and are personified in saints and prophets. We, the ordinary mortals fall far short of these divine attributes and have to strive constantly to cultivate them. Our difficulties in achieving this goal are manifold and are, to some extent, created by our own shortcomings. In other words, we

are our own enemies.

We are our own enemies in more than one sense. Not only are negative qualities like **jealousy**, self-love, hatred, enmity some of our greatest stumbling blocks but because of these we are unable to appreciate the good qualities in others. Moreover, there are differences in thinking, opinions, judgments between different people, each one of whom tends to think that he alone is right. His best defence lies in finding fault with others and thus a critic is **born!**

Critics and criticism are unsavoury terms. But little do we realise that our critics can be our best friends and benefactors too. As a Marathi saying goes, lucky is the man who has a critic for his neighbour! A benevolent critic is no more a contradiction in terms than a benevolent dictator. But for this, criticism should be positive and constructive, healthy and salutary, charitable and dignified and should also be received with an open, receptive mind. Criticism is not to be for its own sake, as a frivolous pleasure, but it is to be for a constructive purpose. Or else, it degenerates into an exhibition of a perverse mind, a peevish temper and gall.

Criticism is not the way of the saints to guide the erring souls. Baba always said that if anyone spoke ill of another, it is he who was hurt. To make his devotees realise, the harm caused by idle gossip and ungainful, uncharitable criticism and to create a distaste for it in their minds, he compared such gossip-mongers and critics to pigs who feed with relish on the excreta of others.

To refrain from such harmful pursuits should really be our goal. Though difficult of achievement, it is not impossible to school our minds with a conscious and prolonged study. Frail as our minds are, we are apt to succumb at times to the temptations. If so, the least we can do is to be constructive and helpful in our attitude. The aim is to build, not to demolish; to make way for progress, not to drag the feet of others. If there must be criticism let it not be like the "ill wind that blows nobody good"!



SAI NATH

Oh Sainath dressed in white robe
Thy lotus feet I love,
Thy hands have blessed everyone
Thy face a pool of kindness
Thy laugh a spring
Compassion and forgiveness symbolize thy eyes
Thy life an inspiration,
Thy words a life-giving nectar,
Eleven sayings of Thy greatly inspire thy devotees
Shirdian abode of spiritual bliss
Thy lap a heaven, for all devotees.

*Naresh P. Jagasia,
New Lucky Palace, Bldg. No. 2,
Flat : 302, Navghas, Vasai (W),
Thane Dist., Maharashtra.*





COMMENTS: SHRI SAI LEELA EDITORIAL OF MAY, '87

*Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts in glad surprise
To higher levels rise.*

*The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls
And lifts us unawares
Out of all our meaner cares.*

— H.W. Longfellow

Such in fact was the effect of the words of the editorial on me. They were pregnant with import enshrining the essence of Baba's teaching in word and deed. They exhilarated me on one hand and made me pensive on the other. It has compelled me to make a frank confession of my woeful shortcomings in the practice of the great virtue of gratitude, though the heart never failed to brim with feelings of indebtedness. For, virtue like justice has not only to be felt but seen to be felt through corresponding action.

It has been rightly said that virtue cannot be compartmentalised. They all constitute one harmonious whole and any one of them cherished and practised to perfection automatically proliferates into others, one by one, in the individual. In this respect, gratitude is the one virtue which is prone to be slipped over more often and forgotten to be repaid. Hence it would seem that Baba went out of the way to inculcate it by exemplary generous repayment, many times over, for not only small services rendered and 'dakshinas' given to Him but even subjective attitudes where if one takes one step, He takes ten or even a thousand and hurries forward to meet the devotee and grant her/his wishes. It is this point that the editorial drives home with telling illustrations from the Sai-Satcharita.


These things are now crystal clear to me and I lose no opportunity to follow the same in thought, word and deed. But earlier, I often lagged behind in the translation of this noble precept not withstanding I was trained into treading the path of कृतज्ञता. For even as a boy I was told by my elders to water the tulsi plant before plucking the 'dhalams' for puja, as an act of gratitude. And at college, I was greatly charmed by an act of R.L. Stevenson as describ-

ed by him in his 'Travels with a donkey'. After spending a peaceful night among the pines, he left a handful of coins at the spot where he had slept in grateful payment to beneficent nature! Thus, many a good turn in kind and coin went by unpaid, because they were mostly spontaneous. Then one day, long after I came under Baba's protection it suddenly dawned upon me that I had gone on accumulating a tidy debt of gratitude yet to be discharged. So, I sat down and listed them and estimated that all this would total upto about two hundred rupees with interest. Since I am convinced that Baba is the Universal Transmitting Agent for reaching the various untraceable benefactors, I decided to remit the amount to Him (the Sansthan). Ironically, once again I am (not) ashamed to confess I lapsed into forgetfulness. It was then that the EVER-WATCHFUL and FORBEARING Baba took over and in HIS OWN INIMITABLE WAY shook me out of my inertia!

About this time it happened that one of my sons at Gwalior sent me at Jabalpur through an office colleague two one hundred rupee notes enclosed in an open cover along with a letter to be handed over to me. No doubt it was a careless act but he went by trust. But the good man gave me the cover minus the money about which I came to know only after reading the letter. He, however disowned any knowledge of it. Two hundred rupees was a considerable amount for a middle class person in those days (1970) and I was upset.

Suddenly it became evident to me that I had myself earned this punishment for my almost incorrigible neglect to fulfil my vow to Baba to send an identical sum to make up for my indebtedness. So 'forthwith I remitted Rs. 200/- by M.O. and felt at ease.

On the intercession of a friend, my son's colleague agreed to pay back the amount in monthly instalments of Rs. 25/- each but backed out after the first one. The next morning as I was taking a stroll on the outskirts, imagine my surprise when across my path on the ground I noticed a brand new hundred-rupee note, neatly folded twice lying at my feet. There was none about the place it being early morning in winter. I bent down and picked it up. I was stunned to note that exactly under it folded identically lay another crisp 100 rupee note. I realised that this was indeed Baba recompensing me for my having made amends for the past lapse. It made my heart 'in glad surprise to higher levels rise'.



After keeping the amount for about five years I spent it. Then, on an impulse to make full amends, I remitted an equal amount to the Sansthan and thereby attained peace of mind.

*Dr. P.S.R. Swami,
D-9, P&T Colony,
Hyderabad 500 020.*



MY WISH

I wish I had lived during those days
when my most dear Lord Sai,
the greatest self-effacing fakir
in his long overflowing kafni
raised His comforting hand
and blessed the fortunate devotees.

I wish I had lived during those days
when my most beloved Sai,
the kindest master par excellence
with His radiant bewitching eyes
showed divine motherly love
and bathed the swelling multitude.

I wish I had lived during those days
when the grand alms-seeking mendicant,
the Supreme master of renunciation
with his dull simple open tin
stretched His tender loving arm
and waited for bread at devotee's doors.

I wish I had lived during those days
when my mother-father all Sai,
The Satchitanand Brahman Sadguru
with exceeding kindness and firmness
demanded of devotees dakshina due
and showered His divine loving grace in lieu.

*N. Rama Rao,
Principal,
Kendriya Vidyalaya,
Trimulgherry,
Secunderabad-15.*



SAI TEMPLE

NEAR

OLD DELHI

An enchanting marble statue of Sri SAINATH MAHARAJ was ceremoniously enshrined amidst chanting of Holy 'SAI NAMA' on 5.4.1987, the Holy day of Durga Saptmi in 'SHIV-JAGDAMBA' temple at 21, Darya Ganj, New Delhi, which is very near old Delhi. Sri Sai Baba's Moorthy was given holy bath and beautifully and traditionally dressed with all 'ALANKARS'. There was individual Puja and offerings. The 'BHAJAN MANDLI' of the shrine sang melodious 'SAI BHAJANS' and a 'HOMAM' was also performed.

At this auspicious and blissful occasion, there was a large gathering which included ardent Sai devotees like Sarvashri K.C. Chandok Ji, S.K. Gupta Ji, V.R. Dorkar Ji, Adishwar Lal Jain Ji and Smt. Nirmala Sanghi Ji etc. After the noon Arti, the function concluded. All present were given Sai prashad alongwith Photos, lockets and Udi. Some persons came forward to know more about Sri Sai Baba from the Sai devotees, and all needed information was given as required individually along with Sai literature.

May Sai Baba shower His choicest grace and blessings on all who come to Him here and grant them protection, guidance and wisdom!

'JAI GURU, DATTA SAI'

*Reporter : P.K. Kapoor,
1121, Chah Rahat,
Delhi 110 006.*



“LORD SAI AND LORD AYYAPPA”

SAI THE PRAYAKSHA DAIVAM (GOD)

Every year lakhs of devotees trek to the famous Ayyappa temple in Sabari Hills situated in the high ranges of Western Ghats in Kerala (South India).

Lord Ayyappa is the bestower of health, happiness and prosperity to His real and earnest devotees. Earnest desires are fulfilled, at the appropriate time.

The akinness between Sri Sai and Sri Ayyappa is very striking and devotees of Sai and Ayyappa shall find this identity if they dwell for a while on the subject.

A few features are given in an attempt, with His Grace, so that the Almighty's omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence could be realised. Details of birth and origin of both Sai and Ayyappa are not clear as yet. Sai Baba was first seen under the neem tree and his parentage is still not clear. Ayyappa was found as a baby in the thickets of forest by king of Pandalam when he went on a hunting venture.

Sai Baba was a celibate all throughout his sojourn; so also was Ayyappa. Both tamed tigers. One gave salvation to a tiger in his presence and the other brought a herd of these wild beasts to the palace.

Both assured their devotees that they would manifest whenever and wherever they craved for them and this is verily the experience of devout worshippers even today.

No caste, creed or religion is bar to either Sai or Ayyappa.

Sai had and still has numerous devotees of different religious faiths. He lived in Masjid and always uttered 'Allah Malik'.

Lord Ayyappa's friend and comrade-in-arm was a muslim, Vaavar by name whom devotees propitiate even before they proceed to do so to Ayyappa. Both strove for the unification of warring religious faiths. Though both had no home, family, or progeny, they strove for the welfare of their devotees and mankind at large.

Yet another unique feature is their attainment of Samadhi. Ayyappa told His devotees as to where He could be seen in Samadhi and it is to this mountainous abode that lakhs of people go all through the year and year after year.

Sri Baba got His Samadhi Sthan built by Shriman Booty even before his Mahasamadhi and it is this Samadhi Mandir that millions are visiting for seeking His blessings and succour.

SAI IS PRATYAKSHA DEIVAM (GOD)


Sri Baba said that even after His Samadhi He would communicate with His devotees and look after their welfare and this is being experienced by many even to this day. Also he had exhorted his devotees that they have to un after their welfare and this is being experienced by many even this day. Also he had exhorted his devotees that they have to undergo the effects of Poorvajanma Karma and there can be no escape from that. An incident in this connection I wish to narrate here.

“A devotee was suffering very much from an incurable disease and when he could endure the agony and pain no longer, he became desperate and to end his miseries threw himself one night into a well. Immediately the Maharaj came there and took him out with His own hand and advised him “You must enjoy the fruit good or bad of your past actions and if enjoyment is incomplete suicide won't help you. You have to take another birth and suffer again; so instead of killing yourself, why not suffer for some time and finish up the store of fruits of your past deeds and be done with it once and for-all”.

In my personal life He has been often giving adequate indications, warnings, and guidance and enabling me to face even worst calamities.

The death of my wife is an instance to the point. Sai had in a different manner informed me that her life would come to an end at a particular time which was nearer. Of course I could not hazard the exact time. But as the sickness progressed almost everynight I was made to count, months, weeks and then days. Still as a mortal and a husband I had also a feeling that she might come around. True, the exact date of her final departure I could not anticipate but Sai indicated that her period of existence had come to an end and her sufferings also along with that and beckoned me to face the situation with courage along with my daughter. Sai gave the final indication by perceptible changes in His eyes in His portrait I worship and also gave me the dream of her having passed away.

These indications I was passing on to other members of the family — not directly — but in various indirect methods, which they might perhaps not have understood. Indeed, if she had continued to exist she could be undergoing torture, besides being a burden to



others. So Sai saved her from the agony even though for her age she might have had justifiable ambitions. But Sai has His own reasons and His ways are inscrutable.

He is always with us and never allows me to forget Him. A recent incident is worth-narrating for the benefit of Sai brothers and sisters.

My brother-in-law had a call for an interview on 28-11-86 at Ahmednagar and he booked his ticket sufficiently in advance by Navjeevan Express leaving Madras on the 27th November, '86.

On the morning of 26th November when I was just about to leave for my office and was discussing about his trip, it suddenly dawned on me, "Why not myself also join him and visit Shirdi from Ahmednagar". Sai was calling me!

I knew it was impossible to get confirmed accommodation by that particular train. Still I thought of getting at least a wait-listed ticket and to make the trip somehow or other. My nephew, Mr. Ravi who went to procure the ticket telephoned home from the Railway Station that my number would be 116 on the waiting-list and asked whether he should book the ticket at all. He was asked to get the ticket. But he came home telling that I got a confirmed and comfortable berth. Is it not Sai's Grace! which wrought this miracle. Where was my No. 116 in the waiting list and how could I get a confirmed lower berth accommodation but for His intervention. It appears when the booking clerk was about to hand over the wait-listed ticket he suddenly held back saying that there seemed to be some cancellation of tickets to Ahmadnagar and on checking up he found that there was a vacant berth and it was allotted to me. Sai is always by the side of His devotees. Even though my humble self is yet doubtful of the intensity of my devotion I experience He is beside me always.

I left my brother-in-law at Ahmednagar to attend to the interview and proceeded to Shirdi by bus. I reached Samadhi Mandir just in time for noon Aarti. After my offering of Pooja I waited to collect His UDHI without which I could never take leave of Him. But the vessel at the Samadhi Mandir was empty as the devotees had emptied it. Then I went to Masjid and there also the same situation. I returned to the Samadhi Mandir and approached an uniformed employee and sought his help who directed me to Room No. 19 i.e. Sansthan Office. The office was already closed for lunch. I came back and expressed my disappointment. Then he pointed me to a Lal Kapdawala

(a person wearing red shirt) near Baba's Samadhi and asked me to approach him. I went to him and beseeched him for some UDHI. First he suggested to collect it from Masjid or Room No. 19. I told him that I had already tried and failed. Immediately, saying "You want Baba's UDHI, come and have along with His blessing". He opened a side cup-board, plunged his hand inside and brought-forth a large handful of UDHI. But I had no paper or any other thing to receive it as I was holding a brief-case in one hand and a suit case in the other. But surprisingly a newspaper bit came flying to the side of the Samadhi. He picked it up and deposited the UDHI in that paper and handed over the same telling "All your wishes shall be fulfilled". My hairs stood on end. This happened under the very glistening eyes of Baba at the Samadhi. Is not Baba living with us!

My brother-in-law met me at Shirdi and that too by a stroke of Sai's grace. Had I been looking at any other direction I would have missed him. But it was not to be so.


Again our return journey was astonishingly pre-arranged by Him. We wanted to reach Dhond by road and catch Bombay-Trivandrum Jayanthi Janata upto Renigunta from where it is not a problem to reach Madras.

When the train arrived, all the compartments were full and no one would open the doors of reserved coaches. Suddenly one coach near which my brother-in-law was standing was opened and also one T.T.E. appeared on the scene. We could not believe ourselves and were thrilled that two berths were available and they were vacant all the way from Bombay because the other passengers never allowed anybody else to entrain enroute from Bombay. Baba had sent the message to bring 2 berths vacant for us.

We reached comfortably ahead of time we had thought of as possible.

SAI IS PRATYAKSHA DAIVAM (GOD)

He directs; He admonishes; He reprimands; He provides; He saves. I obey His dictates. I am in His hands and at His feet. Keeping His exhortation. "If anyman or creature comes to you do not discourteously drive him away but receive him well and treat him with respect. God will bless you if you quench the thirst of the parched throat, feed the hungry, cover the naked and give your verandah



to rest. You may refuse money to anybody but do not abuse. Let anybody speak hundreds of things against you, do not retaliate with bitter reply. If you always adhere to these invaluable exhortations, you will certainly be happy. Let the world go topsy-turvy but you remain where you are. Remaining in your place, look on calmly at the show of all things passing before you. Do not scandalise anybody for it is like pig gorging dirt.

God has not given me any opportunity to do good to anybody. But I do not do or even think of doing any harm to anybody.

Hold His feet fast and you are sure to be crowned with success and happiness.

OM SAI, SRI SAI, JAYA JAYA SAI.

*A.S. Menon,
No. 3, II Main Road, Arumbakkam,
Jagannath Nagar, Madras 600 106.*



FATHER DEAR FATHER SAI

Father dear Father Sai.
Take me to your Lotus feet
And care me for as your child,
Bestow upon me your blessings
and show me your light, divine
Take possession of my heart and soul
And mould me as you wish,
Forgive me if and when I am wrong
And lead me on to the right path.
Father dear, Father Sai.
My life is at your feet
And my mind is at your stake,
Take me to your Lotus feet
And protect me from the worldly ways.

*Miss. Hema N. Shenoi,
16th Yeshwant Kunj,
Near Hariniwas, Naupada,
Thane-400 602.*

BABA AS THE BASIS OF LIFE

The action as a result of a good thought produces a sweet effect as its result. In this way, good thought stored in the mind goes a long way in making our lives worth-living. Our Beloved Lord Sai Baba has also taught us to lead a simple life with high thinking. Through out His worldly sojourn He exemplified by His own behaviour that as we think we become. His very life is a living-message to the whole of mankind for all time to come He proved that the real happiness is founded on our state of mind and never on the outside occurrences which are simply the results of our past actions. If we lead our lives according to His advice, He makes such results of our past actions bearable for us by His grace. Just as the medicine in a bottle declared as out-dated, while remaining in bottle does not have any bad effect on any one, similarly, the results of our karma stored in our destiny would not harm us because of His grace. When Bhagawan Sri Baba becomes the only hold and the only basis of our lives, there would remain no fear and anxiety which could render our life restless. This is the Master-key to happiness and peace for an individual in this world. Just as a lotus though grows in water yet grows over and remains out of it, we should live in the world unattached to it and unaffected by it. Just as a cow lives on grass which is very cheap but gives us milk instead which is costly and very rich in proteins, we in the world should adopt and live a simple life and try our best to give the world the best possible by us. This is the golden way taught to us very lovingly by our beloved Bhagawan Baba. Just as the world seen outside has its strong basis with in which is unseen, we should have our pure and unsullied joy based on our clean conscience within which it is hidden from the outside world. This is yet an another great lesson taught to us with all kindness by Sai Baba. In fine, Bhagawan Baba is the Renowned Charioteer of the chariot of our life. Our safety in life and beyond is thus ensured by Him. Why then fear, when He is so near us.

Jai Sai Ram.

*Shyam Jiwale
Janardhan Bhuvan,
9, Chhabildas Road,
Dadar (W), Bombay-400 028.*



RAMAKRISNA VIVEKANANDA IN THE RUSSIAN HORIZON

We reproduce by courtesy of the Ramakrishna Order the Editorial in its July 1987 of "Prabuddha Bharat" based on the recent interest taken by Russian academicians in Swami Vivekananda's and Sri Ramakrishna's message of Practical Vedanta or universal peace, and harmony and in the spiritual ministrations of the Rama Krishna Order towards that goal.

In the mid February of this year Moscovites suddenly saw something which they had never even dreamt before. Three best hotels of Moscow, especially the Kosmos Hotel, suddenly began to hum with one thousand celebrities from eighty different countries. They were all invited to Moscow to attend a three-day International Forum on *Nuclear-Weapon-Free World for the Survival of Humanity*. The host, of course, was Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev who reminded the audience in his concluding hour-long speech, 'You have arrived in the Soviet Union when essentially revolutionary changes are under way.'¹

Revolutionary, indeed, was this gathering in the Kremlin Palace in the entire history of Russia. Among the participants in the three-day Forum were Peter Ustinov, actor Gregory Peck, writer Graham Greene, economist John Kenneth Galbraith, fashion-designer Pierre Cardin, Nobel-peace prize winner Physicist Andrei Sakharov just released from long solitary imprisonment in Siberia, and American actor Kristofferson who is running a mini-series on *Amerika* (a new T.V. film in which Kris stars as the leader of a guerilla movement opposing a Soviet rule in U.S.A.). Besides these internationally known artists, writers, and intellectuals there were one hundred and thirty religious leaders including Christian monks representing different churches, and two ochre-clad monks from India, Swami Hiranmayananda and Swami Gitananda of the Ramakrishna Order, Belur.

Never before in Soviet history the iron curtain was lifted both for the insiders and outsiders in such a way. Gorbachev called this lifting 'broad democratization' and the beginning of our 'New Approach to Humanitarian Problems!'²

The Forum was meant for an all-out effort to end nuclear proliferation. But the most important aspect of this Forum is that it was not just political. The participants were not just diplomats.

They were mostly thinkers, intellectuals, artists, writers, and even religious leaders. Gorbachev's chief aim now was to take leading men and women from all walks of life, of all nations, especially the thinkers and academicians, into confidence for an all-out effort to stem the possibility of a nuclear war. In the Peace Conference he gave a bold call for a change: 'Society is ripe for a change', he said, 'If we back off now, society will not agree to a return. We have to make the process irreversible. If we do not, who will? If not now, when?'³

Moscow's warm invitation extended to Swami Hiranmayananda, the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Order, to speak in the very opening session meant for the Religious leaders from different parts of the world, was striking. The Swami spoke on Sri Ramakrishna's harmony of faiths and religions as the way to ensure global peace and harmony. And this is the message through which a super-power like Soviet government could proceed in order to ensure peace in a war-free world. Post-revolutionary Russia deplored religion as an opium for the masses. Today after seventy years of the revolution Russians are in need of a religion, a new religion which is rational, universal and man-centered. In Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideals Russians may discover *that* religion which would help them fulfil their great dream as the peace-maker of modern times.

As a nation Russia was always conscious of its own greatness, and of a great role it was destined to play in the world civilization. The old Russians thought of their society 'as the one society pregnant, as the Old Believers maintained, with the future hopes of Mankind.'⁴ In the mid-sixteenth century Moscow emerged as the fourth great capital of a universal state under Christian inspiration. Like Rome, Russia built up its new great holy city of St. Petersburg. For two hundred years it stood until with the communist take-over of Russia, its name was changed into Leningrad.

Modern culture in Europe, according to Historian Arnold J. Toynbee, was primarily a culture of middle class intelligentsia or the bourgeoisie. With the fall of Bastille in French revolution, monarchy in the West got shaken and stood in fading glory. Long before the Bolshevich revolution, Russian bourgeoisie intelligentsia stood against the domination of the Petrine Czarism. It is from the great bourgeoisie writers like Gorky and Tolstoy that the



revolutionary Russia drew inspiration. When the Petrine policy of westernization failed to deliver the goods, says historian Toynbee, 'a long-suppressed insistence on the uniqueness of Russia's destiny reasserted itself through the communist revolution'.⁵

The bourgeoisie culture brought the trend of modernity in the West. One of the foremost factors in this modern culture was the 'ghost of Aristotle,' the spirit of critical enquiry and the scientific investigation into everything in life. With the rise of this critical spirit, the old religion was found to be wanting. Tolstoy's persistent abhorrence of 'miracles' and dogma is well known. Pre-communistic Russian intelligentsia developed the new humanism whose foundation was MAN and his basic nobility in the face of struggle for existence. The exploitation and impoverishment of the common man despite his undying nobility, under the Czarist regime, became the central theme round which the new socialistic system built up like a huge monolithic structure. A basic humanistic outlook on life, a deep respect for common man's essential goodness and greatness unspoiled by Czarist oppression, was the theme of the pre-revolutionary Russian writers like Maxim Gorky whose *Mother* stood out as the glorified symbol of Russian humanism.

But as the modernization of Russia began with the successful implementation of western technology, a new spiritual problem arose. The blasting success of technology had opened new avenues for the passage of western liberalism into the Russian soil. From the very beginning there was, as Toynbee shows, a marked 'determination of Russian souls to preserve their spiritual independence.'⁶ This cry for 'spiritual independence' is being increasingly heard today in all materialistic societies. And 'spiritual independence' presupposes the existence of freedom both in the physical and spiritual levels of life. Toynbee wrote as early as 1955, 'If Russia's reaction against the West was to succeed, she must appear as the champion of a faith that could contend on equal terms with liberalism'.⁷ Recent policy of liberalization in Russia is, in a way, a vindication of the historian's vision of the emerging Russia of the future. Economic liberty is a must. But it is never enough. Man does not live by bread alone. The spirit of struggle, sacrifice, and dedication with which the Bolsheviks served their homeland is unknown today to the younger generation who are born in a society economically provided in many ways by the all-powerful state

machinery. But the spirit remains starved despite all wealth. The recent hunger for the 'inner aspect of religion' in most of the affluent countries is a striking pointer to the failure of a mere economic or utilitarian society. Such societies are creating youth who are suffering, as Alvin Toffler writes, from a sense of 'perpetual purposelessness, which drives the younger generation to drug addiction and such other modern abuses like alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, psychological depression, suicide, vandalism and crime. The juvenile problem threatens, as Toffler points out, not merely the *how* of production, but the *why*.' 'The issues raised by it will reduce', continues Toffler, 'the great conflict of the twentieth century, the conflict between capitalism and communism, to comparative insignificance. For these issues sweep far beyond economic or political dogmas. They involve, as we shall see, nothing less than sanity, the human organism's ability to distinguish illusion from reality.'⁸

Theodore Roszak wrote in his book *Where the Wasteland ends*, 'We can now recognize that the fate of the soul is the fate of the social order; that if the spirit within us withers so too will all the world we build around us.' *The Modern experiment to live without religion has failed*, and once we have understood this, we know what our post modern tasks really are', writes E.F. Schumacher.⁹ He thinks that the 'right direction' lies in what he calls the 'Yoga of a new consciousness', 'the applied science of a religion' which help the scientist to manifest the 'the divine power that dwells within him.'¹⁰

In 1896 when Swami Vivekananda was in London, his devotees desired him to visit Russia. Initial preparations were also made. The trip however did not materialize. Yet Vivekananda was very much drawn to this great country. In the same year Vivekananda was struck by the Russian Emperor's fascination to India which was evident in his book *Travel in the East of Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia*, Vivekananda read the book and sent at once to India the following passage from the book to be published in *Indian Mirror* and *Brahmavadin*.

Tomorrow, India! Sleep deserts mine eyes. I vainly sought it in the balmy night; — in the gold and crimson of the rising sun, the dawn greets the promised land, where the heavens are pervaded with the charms of love, but passion is conquered by an unspeakable sadness — where life glows bright, yet all is as a dream, and breathes with beauty irresistible as death. O land of daring dreams and soaring thought! Thou risest out of the azure deep, whose mournful moaning echoes sadly back the discord reigning in the weary heart. India lies before us! Here holiness and peace appeared in visions unto men contemptuous of pleasures; since their age the people



live the self-same life, yearning for the Divinity for freedom, and atonement. Here, where the earthly realm of sorrow borders on the heavens, and when the soul is crushed by unceasing torments, this magic land calls us into a world of wonders, into the realm of the eternal mysteries of boundless wisdom.¹¹

In spite of Czar's appreciation of India, Swamiji, with his prophetic vision, was conscious of the fading glory of all monarchy and especially of the pathetic failure of Czardom so far as the condition of the masses were concerned. When he was in London in 1896, one morning the newspapers brought the news of a catastrophe that had taken place during the coronation of Czar Nicholas II. A vast crowd of thousands of Russian peasants from far-off villages had gathered to procure an enamelled coronation cup promised for each of them. Arrangements were poor. A stampede followed in the disorganized crowd. 2,000 people died on the spot, others got crushed or trampled by one another. In desperation the police, failing to control the crowd, fired. When the news was read out to Vivekananda, at once he burst out in pain, 'What misery! What suffering! For the sake of one cup all those people left their villages and came to the city! And so many killed! How poor the country is! They have given their lives for a two-bit enamelled glass!' That morning Vivekananda became silent. He strolled restlessly to and fro, his heart still in agony for the unfortunate victims of a royal coronation.¹²

Already Vivekananda saw the foreshadowing of a great upheaval in Russia. In 1895 he had made the prophetic revelation to a group of chosen disciples in Thousand Island Park in America, 'The next great upheaval which is to bring about a new epoch will come from Russia or China. I can't quite see which, but it will be either Russia or China'.¹³ After twenty-two years came the explosion.

Vivekananda was fully aware of a historic antithesis rising against a self-centred Petrine Czardom. He was acquainted with communistic theories even before the first communist revolution did really happen in Russia in 1917. With his deep identification with suffering masses of India, and the negroes of the West, Vivekananda felt the urgent need of socialism for a total uplift of the masses. So far as our knowledge goes, in India Vivekananda was the first man who could declare — 'I am a socialist'.

But Vivekananda also foresaw that the only philosophical or rational basis on which true socialism or communism could stand with confidence and satisfy the needs of humanity, was the Vedanta

philosophy with its supreme respect to the infinite potentiality and divinity of each individual, high or low. After his return to India he spoke out these ideas to *Hindu* in 1897:

All the social upheavalists, at least the leaders of them, are trying to find that all their communistic or equalising theories must have a spiritual basis, and that spiritual basis is in Vedanta only. I have been told by several leaders, who used to attend my lectures, that they required Vedanta as the basis of the new order of things.¹⁴

And again to his English Friend Mr. Sturdy, Vivekananda wrote. 'There is only one basis of well-being, social, political or spiritual — to know that I and my brothers are *one*.'¹⁵ Whenever the advocates of equality struggled to bring this equality on the physical plane by the use of force, the result was a failure. No two blades of grass in the universe are equal. At the same time behind the small ripple and the gigantic wave remains always the same infinite ocean. It is only at the spiritual level, behind the physical plane, that equality abides.

Deeply impressed by the wonderful sense of freedom amongst American men and women, Swamiji wrote to his Madras disciples: 'Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and wellbeing. Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.'¹⁶

The first impact of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda in modern Russia was felt in the life and thoughts of Leo Tolstoy who got these ideas through letters or books sent to him. This was in the first decade of this century. From nineteen-sixties the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order started visiting Russia. Swami Dayananda and Swami Nityaswarupananda visited Russia before mid-sixties. Next to visit Russia was Swami Ranganathananda. His lecture delivered to the students and staff of the Moscow University is widely circulated in India in a small book with the title *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism*. But more extensive and intimate relation with the Russian thinkers was made when Swami Lokeshwarananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, visited Russia twice in 1980s at the invitation of the Soviet Writers' Union. At once an intercultural exchange began between Russian intellectuals and the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. Dr. E.P. Chelisev, eminent scholar of USSR Academy of Sciences recently spent three months at the Calcutta Institute of Culture on a special study tour on Swami Vivekananda. Russian intellectuals, mostly writers, thinkers, and scientists began to pour in. In May 1986 a



group of eminent Russian intellectuals met the Indian Press at the Institute of Culture, Calcutta. There they openly declared that 'religion is opium', but the religion of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is not opium. It is the true religion since it dehypnotizes man of all miracles, slavish dependence on rituals or ecclesiastical authorities. This year, in January 1987, fourteen top level Russian intellectuals and scientists again came to the Institute of Culture to participate in two seminars — one on Sri Ramakrishna and the other on global peace. They visited educational centres of the Ramakrishna Order, and finally its headquarters at Belur Math where they met the senior monks of the Order, including the President whom they requested for a trip to Russia. This trip by the Russian academicians was followed by Swami Hiranmayanandaji's trip to Russia in February 1987 where he was invited to participate in the International Forum on *Nuclear-Weapon-Free World for the Survival of Humanity*.

But the finest fruit of this new Indo Soviet Cultural exchange is a book entitled *Swami Vivekananda Studies in Soviet Union*. This book, released at the Institute of Culture on 11 March of this year, was compiled by the celebrated intellectual Dr. E.P. Chelisev. It is a collection of writings on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, by eminent Soviet intellectuals of today. The book, translated from Russian, is published by Swami Lokeswarananda but for whose acquaintance with Soviet writers, scientists and academicians this volume could not have seen the light of the day.

The 450 page book shows the gradual evolution of understanding about Vedanta and Vivekananda by the Russian scholars right from Tolstoy to present day Russian thinkers. During the last years of his life Tolstoy suddenly came in contact with the writings of Vivekananda and the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. The great Russian savant was at once 'charmed by Vivekananda's writings'. According to Prof. Danilchuck of the Institute of International Relations of U.S.S.R. ministry of foreign affairs. 'Tolstoy considered Vivekananda a part of his inner world.'¹⁷ After reading for the first time in 1908, Nazhivin's translations of Vivekananda's speech. Tolstoy wrote back to Nazhivin, 'The Hindu's article has left a great impression on me. This is unusually good. Here are my thoughts obscurely expressed.'¹⁸ As Tolstoy's acquaintance with Vivekananda's idea deepened, the veil of obscurity was lifted. Tolstoy declared again and again, that Vivekananda belongs to the level of Buddha, Christ, Socrates, Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer.¹⁹

From the very beginning Tolstoy had nourished an abhorrence of all miracles and miracle-mongering in religion. The wonderful rationality of Vivekananda's thoughts now entered deep into his thinking. 'Read Vivekananda's article on God, an excellent one. Should be translated. I myself thought of this itself', Tolstoy wrote. In Vivekananda he found 'prajna' the teachings of the sages. In 1909 when a third volume of Vivekananda's speeches and writings was presented to him, he remarked, 'the most eminent of modern Indian thinkers is Vivekananda and he should be published.'²⁰

Tolstoy had an instinctive abhorrence of miracles. In 1910 when Tolstoy read Annie Besant's *Theosophy and Modern Psychology*, he remarked, 'She rests on what is weak, what is erroneous, and Vivekananda on what is true.'²¹ The absolutely rational interpretation of God and religion, according to Tolstoy, is Vivekananda's greatest contribution to India and the humanity at large. Tolstoy felt sad that 200 million Indians 'highly gifted in both spiritual and physical strength' were overruled by a handful of Europeans 'who are immeasurably lower than those whom they rule.' 'The reason thereof', said Tolstoy, 'as seen... from extremely interesting works of the Hindu writer Swami Vivekananda is the absence of a rational religious doctrine.' Vivekananda himself brought this rational religious doctrine. About Ramakrishna Tolstoy first came to know from the extracts from Max Muller's book on Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna's wisdom overwhelmed him. He wrote, 'His selection of the "sayings" is wonderful. Ramakrishna died fifty years ago(?). The most brilliant wise man!'²²

Tolstoy died before the *Complete Works of Vivekananda* and the full biography of Ramakrishna were available to him. Today's Soviet writers have the opportunity of studying Ramakrishna-Vivekananda in depth. 'Interest in the life and work of this remarkable patriot thinker and social leader (Vivekananda) has been growing from day to day all the world over including the Soviet Union', writes Prof. Danilchuk. Last year when someone asked Prof. Danilchuk in Hyderabad why the Soviet people were turning to the Neo-Vedanta of Vivekananda instead of Christianity, the Professor at once gave a detailed idea about how the true base of

Russian language and culture had always been Indo-Aryan, and not Judeo-Semetic. A large number of the Russian words have pure sanskrit base. The religion of a Father in heaven was a later



introduction, he said, while the 'inner aspect of religion', the religion of the undying spirit in man, was embedded deep in the Russian soil.

Dr. E.P. Chelisev sees in Vivekananda a 'socialist', an 'anti imperialist', and a 'humanist'. He writes, 'The humanistic ideal of Vivekananda is to certain extent ideal with Gorkay's 'May with a capital letter.' Vivekananda's new humanism, according to Chelisev, 'played an important part in the general upsurge of national consciousness and the struggle of the Indian people for independence.'²³

While Chelisev cannot agree with the 'idealistic basis of Vivekananda's humanism' and calls Vivekananda's socialism 'Utopian Socialism', he can, nevertheless, not deny the power he exerted for the rejuvenation of masses in India. V.S. Kostyuchenko, Reader in philosophy makes a bolder statement, 'Through the haze of romantic illusions and utopian desires Vivekananda was nonetheless able to discern the contours of the future with adequate clarity — and, at times, even simply with striking precision.'²⁴ This 'precise' and clear vision about the global rise of the masses strikes the Russian thinkers with a genuine reverence for the prophetic dimensions in Vivekananda's ideas.


Chelisev finds that Vivekananda stressed the 'inner aspect of religion'²⁵ instead of rituals. It is with the ritualistic or the 'secondary details' of religion, as Vivekananda defined, that all differences and conflicts between religions have arisen throughout the history. He finds in Vivekananda's stress on the moral-spiritual aspects of religion rather than on rituals, a strong similarity with the present-day Russian thoughts. Chelisev writes that Vivekananda thought it 'possible to control the social-moral vices of contemporary Indian society with the help of 'spirituality' whose base, according to his views, was in the moral-religious principles of Vedanta. The moral progress, therefore, in Vivekananda's notion, as also for the Russian *narodniks* (populists), was wholly dependent on the efforts of 'theoretician-moralists'.²⁶ Chelisev also says that Vivekananda was the first to think that 'India must bring to the West the saving "spirituality"'.²⁷ 'Strength for Vivekananda is a complex formation, a peculiar identity of the inner and the outer, the spiritual and the physical', says Chelisev.²⁸ Obviously such rational ideas appeals to the present-day theoreticians of Russia.

V.S. Kostyuchenko finds three motifs in Vivekananda's works — *Reformation*, *Enlightenment* and *Restoration*. The motif of *Reformation* is 'universal religion, putting an end to religious discords, superstitions, fanaticism. The motif of *Enlightenment* is reason, science, education, shaking the stagnant forms of social existence. And lastly, the motif of *Restoration* is the humanist idea of 'free man on free earth'.²⁹

According to Komarav, a Sector Head in U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, Vivekananda is the first person in Indian history who realized the failure of 'feudalism' and the 'bourgeois culture' to bring an effective education of the masses. 'This conclusion', says Komarav, 'for the first time in India distinctly formulated by Vivekananda only, was a main attainment of the progressive Indian social thought before the first world war.'³⁰

Dr. R.B. Rybakov, another scholar from the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, in his 144-page essay on the *Reformation of Hinduism* deals mainly with the uniqueness of Ramakrishna. He finds in Ramakrishna a fulfilment of Karl. Marx's thoughts on religion. Karl. Marx wrote about Martin Luther, '... religion was for him the *direct truth*, so to say *nature*.' Quoting this line, Rybakov writes, 'The words of Marx, said about Luther, are fully applicable to the former... For Ramakrishna, religion was the highest truth. For the rationalist Vivekananda, it is like science, with no place for any thing secret, mystical, and supernatural.'³¹ Yet Ramakrishna was neither anti-world nor anti-man. 'In the midst of Ramakrishna's God-absorption'; Rybakov writes, 'the thought of reality of the surrounding world is a substantial part of Ramakrishna's message', which drove 'automatically' 'to the conclusion of desirability and need of active work'.³² In Ramakrishna Rybakov finds four dominant characteristics: 'the tendency to reconcile the contradictions of Hinduism, the attempt to create internally a logical system, and also to bring together the viewpoints of reformers and the orthodox, putting forward the idea of validity of every religion.'³³

Rybakov finds in anti-imperialist Vivekananda's sharp indictments of feudalistic exploitation and his clarion call to India for shaking off its century-old lethargy and diffidence, an enactment of Karl Marx's ideas: 'Shame is already a revolution of its own kind... Shame is an anger of its own kind, only directed within. And if a whole nation really were to have a sense of shame, it would be



like a lion who contracts his whole self, getting prepared for the jum.³⁴ India did stand up like a springing lion at Vivekananda's words.

The book is, indeed, epoch-making, in the sense that it heralds the beginning of a new epoch of closer relation and deeper understanding between Russia and India, an understanding which goes deeper than understandings at mere political, diplomatic or even economic level. It is now a cultural and spiritual understanding between the two great nations. And the common base that slowly emerges is the religion of Vedanta as preached and practised by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Ramakrishna's love for God in all religions and God in all men and women, and Vivekananda's unfailing respect to the Divine, even in the low and the sinner, unites today man with man and nations with nations.

Vedanta knew the utter unreality of a golden millennium in our external life. It is at a higher level of consciousness, as Vivekananda pointed out, that man sees the world 'deified'. 'An objective heaven or millennium therefore', wrote Vivekananda, 'has existence only in the fancy but a subjective one is already in existence. The musk-deer after vain search for the cause of the scent of the musk at last will have to find it in himself.'³⁵

Modern life, says William Faulkner, is 'a frantic steeplechase towards nothing'. Despite prosperity, materialistic societies today suffer from a nihilistic despair. President Nixon's statement about affluent America rings in our ears, 'Never has a nation seemed to have more and enjoyed it less.'³⁶ *Civitas Dei*, the kingdom of God, slowly appears to modern man as something not available in any projected or promised future, but as the spiritual infinitude and innate divinity within us. 'So far as this *Civitas Dei* enters into time dimension at all', writes Toynbee, 'it is not a dream of the future, but a spiritual reality penetrating the present'.³⁷ Religion is *here and now*, said Vivekananda. The promised millennium is within us, in our innate divinity. And the function of religion is to manifest it.

Vivekananda's clarion call to Indians to embrace the *Practical Vedanta* and to assert their soul force, resulted in a sudden upsurge of individual and national faith. The democratic-socialistic pattern of thinking in post-independent India based on the Practical Vedanta of Vivekananda, did push to nothingness the feudal supremacy and the caste-privileges of the past, opening out thereby

educational, cultural, religious and spiritual privileges to all Indians irrespective of caste, creed, and nationality. Vivekananda's call for 'renunciation and service' evoked tremendous response from many genuine souls belonging to the upper classes in India. On the sacrifice and service of these great national leaders, India has today emerged into a world power. 'Renunciation and Service' is not just a spiritual ideal. It proved an epoch-making power capable of creating new social order free from privileged classes. Before this power India bowed down twice, once when Ashoka embodied this ideal in his own life, and next when the ideal again became burning and embodied in the life and teachings of Vivekananda.

History is replete with stories of three kinds of saviours. Saviours with the pen, like Rousseau and others, have inspired humanity with visions of golden millenniums. Saviours with the sword, like Alexander, Chengiz Khan, Hitler and Napoleon, have sought to conquer nations and consolidate kingdoms. Humanity got bread, along with pools of blood and mountain of skulls. But like Adam and Eve expelled from Eden, it was yet to find its 'place of rest and providence'. It is time for Saviours as Son of God, like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, to lead us today through the path of religious pluralism, and service to the Divine within all members of our human family, to a world of peace and harmony. Vivekananda's words uttered in the Chicago Parliament of Religions nearly a century ago ring like a prophecy for today's war-tormented world seeking peace:

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight', 'Assimilation and not Destruction', 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension'.³⁸

Soviet President Gorbachev's historic attempt to unite humanity through this International Forum is a great stride towards a global solidarity. At this significant moment when the Soviet Government, as a super-power, is making an all-out effort to ensure global peace, the rise of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda above the horizon of Russia promises a turning point and a boon to humanity as a whole.



NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Seminar on Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.

On 19, 20, and 21 January 1987 a three-day Seminar on 'Sri Ramakrishna and His Universal Message' was held at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture. This was a part of the 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna held at the Institute. The speakers at the seminar were Russian and Indian scholars of eminence. The subject-matter for the first day was 'Global Aspects of the Ramakrishna Movement'; on the second day, it was 'Religion as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna'. The concluding session was on 'Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the Modern World'.

The seminar began with an opening song by Swami Balabhadrananda. The song was an invocation to Sri Ramakrishna, the Supreme Incarnation of God born to lead humanity towards godliness. Swami Lokeshwarananda, Secretary of the Institute, gave the welcome address and said that this seminar where Russian and Indian scholars were going to speak for the first time from the same platform, was a significant event and a powerful stride in the growth of spiritual solidarity of the world. Swami Hiranmayananda, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who presided over the opening session said that the unique feature of the Ramakrishna movement was that here one could attain self realization by progressing from dualistic worship of gods and goddesses, to qualified monism, and then finally to monism, the realization of the undying divinity dwelling within and enveloping the world without.

Swami Atmasthananda, Assistant Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who presided over the second session spoke about the love of Sri Ramakrishna and how the world today revolves round this all-engulfing love which unites humanity irrespective of caste, creed, and religion.

Prof. Amallesh Tripathi who presided over the concluding session spoke about the harmony between the truths mentioned in our scriptures and the various spiritual realizations in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The speakers from Russia were Dr. F. Kuznetsov, Dr. Rybakov, Prof. Kariakin, Dr. Adamovich, Mira Salganik, Prof. Mokulsky, Dr. Sergei Seribriani. The Indian speakers were Dr. Panduranga Rao, Dr. Rabindra Kumar Das Gupta, Dr. Raja

Ramanna, Mr. Amiya Kumar Mazumdar, Prof. Hossenur Rahman, Dr. Arindam Chakravarty, and Dr. Govinda Gopal Mukherjee.

What impressed the audience was that these Russian scholars who belonged to the Academy of Sciences and the Moscow Union of Writers, the two prominent institutions in Russia, were not just deep scholars but great admirers of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. The Russian scholars' speech indicated two broad reasons for their admiration, and perhaps adoration of Sri Ramakrishna. One was the historical background of Russia. Through struggles Russia became free from foreign rulers in the middle ages, and then again in this century Russian Revolution gave their countrymen freedom from tyranny and exploitation of a failing Czardom. Great men were leaders on both the occasions. The emphasis was on the right kind of leader, and the Russian scholars interpreted Sri Ramakrishna as the Divine Leader who brought revolution in our understanding of human life, its meaning and final goal. The other reason given by the Russian scholars was the experience of horrors and atrocities of the second world war. This made them think what man can make of man. The death of millions brought about by a devastating war, filled them with a dissatisfaction with a purely material civilization. Russian thinkers today are in quest of peace and human understanding. Swamiji's centenary celebrations gave them an opportunity to know of Sri Ramakrishna's life as the beacon light to humanity.

Over the years many Russians in different walks of life who are reading, thinking and pondering on modern life, are finding that completeness of human life lies not only in physical, economic or material but also in spiritual fulfilment. They found that the essence of the Ramakrishna Movement lay in its constant endeavour to help man manifest his higher spiritual nature and realize the oneness of humanity. The Indian scholars emphasized that the Cosmic Self binds the entire humanity like a thread on a string of pearls, and this is also the message of Sri Ramakrishna.

It was indeed remarkable to hear the Russian scholars say that Sri Ramakrishna, for the first time in the history of mankind, found by his own historic spiritual experiences that all religions lead to the same goal. This idea is expressed in the well-known saying of Sri Ramakrishna 'As many faiths so many paths'. Indian scholars spoke about this unity of religions which was based on Sri Ramakrishna's



experience. All scholars finally ended on the theme that Religion is one, while **religions** are many.

At the concluding session all the scholars dwelt on the theme that Sri Ramakrishna's message of unity of mankind is based on his experience of the presence of One Divine Reality in everyone. For the Indians, it was quite an experience to hear the Russian Scholars speak not only about Sri Ramakrishna but also about the Holy Mother as the Divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna, the ideal of purity and woman-hood, and a combination of the old and the new world. Through the speeches of the various speakers it was evident that Sri Ramakrishna's message is slowly ushering in a new age of spirituality with the widest breadth, the highest catholicity, and the deepest intensity. The speakers concluded on the note, as Swamiji said, That the history of the world is the history of a few men who have faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within us. Sri Ramakrishna is the universal Soul, Holy Mother is the universal Mother and Swamiji is the universal Teacher who asked us to believe first in ourselves, and then to strive sufficiently to manifest the infinite power immanent in us.

Sri. A.N. Ray, ex-chief justice of India, while giving vote of thanks at the concluding session, said that the Holy Mother had heard from Sri Ramakrishna that people from other parts of the world would oneday come to India. This seminar is a fulfilment of that vision. Nearly a century ago Swamiji went abroad to interpret the universal message of India to the western world. Today world's great scholars are coming to India to pay their respect to Sri Ramakrishna. The world indeed gets united today by Sri Ramakrishna's all-engulfing Love for humanity.

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 153

6. *Ibid.*, p. 152

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12. Ibid., p. 146
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- Swami Vivekananda Studies in Soviet Union* Translated from the Russian by Harish C. Gupta (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1987) p.175.
18. Ibid., p. 166.
19. Ibid., p. 159.
20. Ibid., p. 170.
21. Ibid., p. 171.
22. Ibid., p. 164.
23. Ibid., pp. 209-11.
24. Ibid., p. 289.
25. Ibid., p. 32.
26. Ibid., p. 66
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 51.
29. Ibid., p. 221.
30. Ibid., p. 121.
31. Ibid., p. 398.
32. Ibid., p. 368.
33. Ibid., p. 397.
34. Ibid., pp. 393-4.
35. *Letter of Swami Vivekananda*, dt. 1 November, 1896.
36. Alvin Toffler, *The Adaptive Corporation* p. 100.
37. Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, op. cit., p. 529.
38. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1977) Vol. 1, p. 24.

A HUMBLE APPEAL BY A DEVOTEE

It would be in the best interests of doing more and more humanitarian services, if all devotees, wishing to offer to Sai Temples, Missions and Institutions spread out all over the country, things for worship in various kinds such as costly garlands, agarbatties and sweets etc., offer only cash instead. This would undoubtedly help the trustees of the above institutions to help more needy people on a wider circle, in an organised manner. Devotees would surely remember Sri Baba's assurance which reads "I am Bount to giveten times the amount of dakshina my devotee gives me".



SAI THE SOURCE OF LIFE

The greatness of Sai cannot be merely described in plain words, by an ordinary person like me. Since I have dipped in the nectar of Sai's love and have experienced the sweetness of devotion I call upon all sai devotees to surrender to him completely, to enjoy the bliss of grace.

During 1983, I had a severe problem! My own younger sister with her husband and a cousin brother scolded me and insulted me! I was thrown out of my parent's house. At night with my child and my husband I just prayed to God! The younger sister never shared late mother's and elder sister's jewels with me. I was totally left in the lurch.

At that time we were staying at Santacruz. I had two ladies as neighbours, who were always grumbling, insulting all tenants! I was jammed between them! They always stood for arguments! I always refused to fight! It was not in my blood! I ignored it. My silence killed them and they started shouting and throwing rubbish in front of my house!

My sister's awkward behaviour, these old ladies' tantrums and professional jealousy at my work made me suffer a miscarriage. Suddenly after that I became too emotional and lost self-confidence. But my belief in God's grace grew stronger. It was at that time I started reading Sai-Sat-Charita and started to do Saphah! My husband had gone to visit his parents. I had gone out with my eight years old daughter. As I returned home I heard a loud noise. I went to the other room and saw the ceiling along with concrete had fallen on the bed! Sai saved us! If it had been night we would have been killed!

But the neighbours wished we were dead. I completed my first 'Saphah' of Sai-Sat-Charita! So my husband decided to sell the house. I was doing the second 'Saphah' of Sai-Sat-Charita!

I went to Dadar Sansthan and prayed in front of Baba, if he was pleased with my doing 'Saphah' he must bless me with a particular white gajra, which had a red rose at its centre. It was a Thursday, lots of garlands adored Baba's neck. A man was standing near Baba's statue and was keeping his both hands in receiving posture! I thought he must be new to this place. He could have taken any prasada. Instead he was waiting for the office boy who was removing garlands from Baba's neck to give him. Suddenly the office boy

turned and saw me! He came with the same gajra I had wished and gave it to me! My joy knew no bounds! The old man also came to me and said." See the miracle of Baba! I brought it and I wanted it and you got it!" I gave it to him as I had already known Baba's answer to my question. But the man refused, saying it is Baba's will and it is final. I gave him the peda as prasad! Thus my second Sapthah was completed.

Now I decided to do 7 Sapthahs! so while doing the third one, we happened to sell our Santacruz house! It fetched only 1.5 lakhs! But again Baba helped us by sending a Sai devotee to buy it. He bought it for 2.10 lakhs! and gave us Shirdi Prasad!

While doing my fourth Sapthah my father gave us some money for the new house, We had to pay for CIDCO. Our financial positions improved. My younger sister started visiting me. She had three miscarriages. One still born and one blue baby! Her husband had no job and she was also jobless! Selling the ornaments she was pulling on her days! As a Sai devotee she now says Baba taught her a lesson for her misbehaviour!

While doing the fifth Sapthah our new house was purchased from a Sai International Agent. The row is called T (It meant Thursday for me) and house number 14, i.e. $1 + 4 = 5$. Five resembles 's' of Sai! Various kinds of Shirdi Prasad started pouring from so many places. We shifted to our new house on Thursday. The first post to come to the house was from Shirdi with 'Udhi and Suntevada' along with Sai Leela on a Thursday! Our financial position further improved. As Baba said, there was no scarcity for food and clothes in his devotee's house!

My husband had a slip-disc! He was asked not to go by scooter. So we planned to buy a car. Baba sent money. My father financed for the car! We brought a second hand one and it came on a Thursday! We decided to visit Shirdi in that car. My sixth Sapthah completed!

All small tensions were borne successfully by me with grace of Baba! My father had a paralysis stroke. He stopped taking any food he had lost interest in his life. He considered himself as a burden on us and often wept. His health started deteriorating. Seeing his condition I went to Dadar Sansthan on a Thursday and requested Baba, either to relieve him from his sickness or take him to His feet by next Thursday While admitting him in a shushtrusha, in his ward there was a 'Sai's photo'. I left it to him. But father had premonition, On Tuesday



he signalled saying "in another two days I will go up!" Exactly on Thursday around 1.15 p.m. he passed away calmly during his sleep! I consoled, or rather Baba consoled me! Father was not allowed to suffer more! His calm face told us his death was peaceful.

My sister was again pregnant. By now she had sold all jewellerys and was penniless. I went forward to help her financially in her delivery. She was insulted and treated badly by the cousin brother and his wife. But a live child even for the sixth time was doubtful. I prayed to Baba at least to give her one child. I gave her my Sai-Sat-Charita book and Udhi, asked her to read daily two chapters and apply Udhi on her stomach! She was a severe diabetic and blood pressure patient! Aged only 27 years she cried whenever the feudal monitor reports came as the foetus was dead! but I told her not to lose faith in Baba! Uttering Baba's name whenever I touched her belly the baby moved! she said it was a boy according to sonography tests! I prayed to Baba (generally in conditions like this the male child always died whereas the females survived). Baba heard our prayers! He changed the child to be a girl. Though she had serious problems, Baba gave her life. The baby has been named as 'Shraddha'. She is 15 months old now!

Baba has been always there! When we were in Shirdi I remembered my first visit which was not a pleasant one for me. We had accommodation problems. So I prayed next time kindly grant me a better accommodation. Next time we were able to stay at M.T.D.C. hotel. That much Baba had raised our financial position. I wanted to buy a big rose garland. Baba read my mind. My hubby who sometimes behaves strangely bought the same to my surprise, even agreed to donate the sum of rupees which I had in my mind.

We went to Shirdi this November in our car along with shraddha and her parents. It was a pleasant trip! Well, I am waiting for Baba to call me to do my seventh saphah there!

Thank you Sai!
You are above us to bless us!
With in us to preserve us!
Before us to guide us!
After us to guard us!
So why worry?

*Mrs. Jaya Sree Ram
T-14, Aashirwad, Sector-6,
Vashi, New Bombay, 400 703.*

SIMPLICITY — SAI'S LIFE-STYLE

Your editorials are not only written in a fine literary style but are wisdom-packed and thought-provoking. I feel, many of our readers would feel the same way as I do. If enough letters would come to your desk as this, you may even allocate a column for Feedback.

For instance, your recent one in Sept. '86 issue *picturing* vividly Sai Baba's simple life-style. The Great Master was not only simple in his dress and demeanour, his philosophy that he put across was homespun. And as most of the saints, he too chose a small hamlet for his work of Lokasangraha (World's welfare). Because, by and large, the rural folks are plain and unsophisticated their hearts, pure like the morning dew.

Did Baba ever give public orations, fly on lecture-tours with secretary or conduct Seminars like the modern monks? And yet, he had carved a niche in a million hearts, enlightening their minds, enriching their souls (besides satisfying their domestic demands!), accelerating their evolution and thus helping them attain the Goal of Life!

What accounts for his universal popularity? Simplicity of life which he led. Someone aptly observed: "Greatest truth is simple; so are greatest men." Baba lived the spirit of Upanishads and Gita. He spoke little. But did much more. He taught the ignorant by example. Lord Krishna, in the GITA said:


"Whatsoever a great man does, that other men do.

Whatsoever he sets up as the standard, that the world follows"

(Ch. III (21) Transl. Swami Sivananda)

However, why simplicity is prescribed for one's progress in spiritual path? Because, multiplication of luxuries and comfort means more attachment and involvement in them which would allow less time for Divine contemplation. More attachment to material things results in more burdensome births. Further it fattens the ego, pride, conceit, jealousy and greed. So to avoid all these, wise men adopt a simple life — Simple living and High thinking, as they say. When Socrates was taken round the Super-market in Athens, he remarked at the end "Now I know, how many things I DO NOT WANT!"

But, lot of us, run after foreign things smuggled or otherwise



What a deplorable state of affairs! We hanker for status in society by possessing such things. How deluded we are. Saints like Sai Baba show us the right way; — the path to "SREYAS" (spiritual prosperity).

So, let us cherish the grand ideal set by Master Sai and resolve to lead an ordinary life when we shall have enough to spare to the have-nots and ample time to contemplate on the Supreme One; the purpose of Human Life.

*Shri V. Ganesh,
120-B, Rash Behari Ave.,
Calcutta-29.*

THE HOLY GRACE

O! Sai! The monarch of this universe,
How dare, I praise Thee in verse!
For Thy drop of mercy this restless soul
Craves eagerly with heart's open bowl. The nectar-drop of
motherly love,
Falling down from Thy bosom above,
Will make this child raise his hands
In praise of Thee, the Lord of Celestial Lands!

In the sweet smile of the dreaming body I see Thy grace;
In the fragrant blooming flower I see Thy lovely face.
I feel Thy caress in the fondling touch of the breeze
that checks my hopes from becoming frail and freeze.
In the whistling wind I hear Thy endearing whisper,
That tells me closely to trust Thee without any murmur.
I see Thy various visions in the varying seasons of the year,
That amaze and amuse us amply as our near and dear.
The pearly dews of the morn are tears of Thine,
For those who tirelessly toil in shower and shine.
The star-studded sky in Thy perspired brow,
Thy work and worry to free us from woe.
The thundering black sky is thy angry mood,
To see the idle and crooked snatching other's food.
How wisely Thou hast coupled the thorn with rose!
Only to make us know how pain and pleasure are close!

*Mr. V. Vijaykumar,
Principal, Govt. Junior College,
Narayankhed, Dist. Medak (A.P.)*

ADORABLE PRESENCE

"Sri Bhagawan is the embodiment of the Whole, unbroken awareness. The great light, one whose birth is for a purpose."

— Sri Ramana Ashtothara Sathanama Stuthi.

In love and reverence we called him 'Swamiji'. For thousands of his devotees, His Holiness Saipadananda Radhakrishna Swamiji means much more than a seer and a sage. He was a saint who did not hide himself in an ivory tower, but who mingled with men as a man. Sometimes, as I drew close to him, I felt that to touch the hem of his garment was to commune with Lord Sainath. The light of Lord Sainath shone in his eyes. The smile of Lord Sainath was on his face. A wonder of the infinite was in his far-away gaze. A fragrance of the spring breeze was in the wondrous words Swamiji spoke.

It was the second week of January, 1980. We were then at Wynad, about 300 km. from Bangalore, where Radhakrishna Swamiji stayed. Somehow my husband, Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar was quite restless. In fact we were all in a blue mood, the reason for which could not be deciphered. We celebrated 'Sankranthi' festival as a matter of course and there was no gaiety which usually accompanied such a festival.

On the 16th January, 1980, we received a letter from my mother-in-law who stays in Bangalore, in which she had regretfully mentioned that Shri Radhakrishna Swamiji cast off his mortal coil and attained 'Mahasamadhi' on the 14th January, 1980. We were terribly grief-stricken.

The shocking news made me speechless. But soon I felt Swamiji's presence closer and nearer, more than ever. He was standing by my side as if saying: 'I am with you always.' Swamiji is alive. His spirit is in us and with us. He can never die, has not died in fact. The four photographs of Lord Sainath, Bhagawan Ramana, Datta and Krishna adorning our shrine consoled us with the following message:

Lord Sainath: "Radhakrishna Swamiji is in me and I am in Swamiji. He is immortal. My apostle is never lost."

Ramana Maharshi: "Swamiji has fulfilled his mission. Hence he is here enjoying pure consciousness."

Datta: "Swamiji is there seated deep in all his devotees."

Krishna:

“Swamiji belongs to all those who chant
‘Vishnu-Sahasra-Namam.’”

Immediately I felt that Swamiji is a Chiranjeevi — one who is above death and lives eternally.

Verily there are two kinds of people in the world.

1) Those who are dead, even though they are alive, for they have forgotten God, the ‘Light within’ and living only for the little self, as a burden to mother earth.

2) Those who are alive even though dead in the material sense for, their dedicated lives of selfless service are the greatest blessing to all the world and is ever remembered.

I cannot believe that Shri Radhakrishna Swamiji is dead. The very thought hurts me and an uncanny uneasiness of the mind takes possession of me though temporarily. The thought that Swamiji is alive, he is now with me more than ever before in the Sai Spiritual Centre of Bangalore, which has been dearest and nearest to his heart gives me consolation, joy and strength. Is not our Lord Sainath’s spirit with us, working and helping in every moment of our life. Similarly Shri Radhakrishna Swamiji also is with us. Swamiji has merged with loving spirit of Lord Sainath and H.H. Narasimha Swamiji and the ‘Trinity’ are working for the good of all of us.

May all those who really love Swamiji continue to love him by seeing Swamiji in the sick, the poor and the helpless, for, our dear Swamiji has entered the heart of all these forms and is requesting our love, service and sympathy for the good of all.

Above all, Vishnu-Sahasra-Namam, which has been dear and near to the heart of Radhakrishna Swamiji, unites the dead (the departed) and the living. It makes us to feel the presence of God as we repeat it. So let us recite it as often as possible, wishfully requesting the compassionate and all-loving spirit of Radhakrishna Swamiji to be with us eternally.

The Sai Spiritual Centre at Bangalore is a perpetual monument of Swamiji’s mission to propagate Sai-philosophy. Out of sublime reverence, his devotees have installed a marble statue of Radhakrishna Swamiji just by the side of Lord Sainath’s marble-idol. As soon as one enters the portals of Sai Spiritual Centre, we come under the spell of the living presence of Lord Sainath and Radhakrishna Swamiji. It is indeed ‘the Shirdi of the South’, to be precisely and appropriately called.

Salutations to Lord Sainath and Gurudeva Radhakrishna Swamiji. My homage to Swamiji could be aptly concluded with a quote from the sacred Gita:

“As when one layeth his worn-out robes away,
And taking new ones, sayeth ‘These will I wear today’
So putteth by the spirit lightly its grab of flesh
And passeth to inherit a residence afresh.”

Radhakrishna Swamiji is no more on earth in the physical sense but he is ever present in the hearts of his devotees in spirit and his guiding hand and loving eyes hover over every home of his devotees reminding them of Sai Baba’s assurance: “*Why fear while I am here?*”

Mrs. Seetha Vijayakumar,
W/o. Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar,
Kil-Kotagiri Estate,
Kil-Kotagiri 643216.
Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.



GOD AND HIS DEVOTEES

GOD, someone defined as, G for Generator, O for Organizer and D for Destroyer implying the triple aspects of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadev. And to Sai-devotees who worship SAI as GOD, it would mean —

‘G’ for Generator of Love, Compassion and Wisdom;


‘O’ for Organizer of devotees’ lives who have surrendered to Him;

‘D’ for Destroyer of evil, (bad ‘Karmas’ and ‘Sanskaras’, etc.)

For did not Sai once say:

“YOU LOOK UP TO ME; I LOOK AFTER YOU —
BELIEVE! THESE WORDS ARE TRUE!”

And yet one day... I came across a Sai-devotee whose certain family member was laid up with an *incurable illness* and he was advised by another to invite a certain Tantric presently in the town to



perform a puja at home for a speedy recovery. I wondered and pondered over this!

Has Sai run out of all His powers and is incapable of curing his devotee's family member? Is He indifferent to His devotees' problems? Where's the snag?

Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh gives an answer in one of his writings. Says he, "You must have a clear conception of God first. Then you must have firm conviction. After having a clear conviction, now concentrate on God. At once, you will enter into communion with God!" In place of 'GOD' put 'SAI' and you get a quick response! Because, God with form — particularly of one's Master — is easy to contact. What is needed, brother, is "unshakable Faith, intense devotion and absolute patience." Then and then alone the devotee shall know the Divine ways and method of His work and be in perfect harmony with Him.

In fact, the Lord's love for His devotees is much deeper than one's earthly relations. He wants His devoted children to soon get rid of further births and hence waits for the suffering to purge off the bad 'karmas' in His own style. "Every event," as the Theosophist N. Sri Ram wrote, "that occurs becomes a key that turns the consciousness and unlocks a facet of mystery that resides there..." And Great Masters who we worship occasions such event. As Sadguru, they want us to grow spiritually. As the very first Chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita reveals, the distressed heart (symbolised as Arjuna) is comforted in Enlightenment. Misery melts away like the morning dew before the sun! Unknown to the devotee in anguish! His comfort is not a fleeting one! But, a permanent one!

How many devotees are ever aware —
Of Sai's constant motherly care?
...Now, the definition of a devotee? Simple! Reverse the word
GOD! It reads — D O G!

D for DUTY — Performance of which is done, in His constant remembrance and dedication of works to Him;

O for OBEDIENCE — Unquestioning, implicit acceptance of His Law, Will and Command;

G for GRATEFULNESS — to be heartily expressed to His hundred-mercies in our day-to-day life while offering our prayers...

In one word, God and His devotees are two sides of the same coin! Devotion is the 'Part' persevering in seeking the 'Whole'—

Ah, how Sai and His devotee, ever in consonance —
Inseperable are they, like flower and fragrance!

*V. Ganesh,
120/B, Rash Behari Avenue,
Calcutta - 29.*

MIRACLES OF SHIRDI SAI BABA

In June, 1985, both my wife and myself went to U.S.A. to meet our two sons K.C. Kansal & V.C. Kansal who are living there. My younger son V.C. Kansal was having problems after problems. He was not having job satisfaction as his qualifications were higher for the job he was doing. He was a M.Sc. in Chemical Engineering. But the job he was doing was at the most fit for M.Sc. only and therefore his qualification of Chemical Engineering was not of use and he felt disappointed and frustrated on this score. We stayed with him in Paterson (New Jersey) U.S.A. and came to know of his dissatisfaction. Seeing his state-of-mind, we prayed to Sai Baba daily in the night requesting him to grant him a better job so that he might have job satisfaction. We opened our heart to Sai Baba in the prayer and pleaded with him for our son's sake.

Further, he was having an apartment in 100 Hospital Plaza which was too small and my daughter-in-law was very anxious to purchase a good house. We prayed to Sai Baba for this also. We prayed to Sai Baba to help them and remove their difficulties in the purchase of a house as well as for a better job according to my son's qualifications and merit. On 14th December, 1986, we received a TRUNK call from U.S.A. around 11.30 P.M., that he had been interviewed and selected for a better job commensurate with his qualifications, merit and ability. Nearly six months earlier he had also purchased a good house with lawns, 3 bed rooms, very well-furnished, basement and living room with wall to wall carpet and 2 garages.

Although, it took more than a year, his desires ultimately were fulfilled. With folded hands and salutations to Sai Baba, we went to Sai baba temple in New Delhi and thanked Him for all these mercies and kindness for us all.



Sai Baba always listens to the sincere and honest prayers of his devotees and solves them at the proper time. If there is any delay in granting your prayers then keep "Sharddha and Saburi" (Faith and Patience) and do not lose heart.

Baba has said "Cast all your burdens on me and I will bear them". We realised the truth of these words of Sai Baba that he would always fulfil his promise, at any cost.

Thanks to Shirdi Sai Baba for his miracles, Grace and mercies which are constantly being showered even on small, ignorant persons like us.

**JAI SAI BABA
JAI SAI BABA**

*R.R. Kansal,
13, Bank Enclave,
Laxmi Nagar,
Delhi - 110 092.*



BABA DECIDES

I have been reading 'SAI LEELA' magazine regularly and the various experiences detailed therein by Sai devotees from different walks of life have been really heartening and inspiring. Since my experiences with SAI are also remarkable, I have been thinking to pen them down. May be, the time for such an exercise, BABA thought, was now.

At the outset let me confess that I was never an ardent devotee of an deity till the day I visited Shirdi. My idea about SAI BABA was also vague till April, 1979. Before that I was on the mobile inspection team of my employer, a large Bank. During February, 1979 I was promoted and was asked to go back on permanent posting to Madhya Pradesh, to which Circle of the Bank I originally belonged. But the affairs at home in Kerala needed my frequent presence there and I was very badly in need of a transfer to a place near my hometown. Kerala, administratively, lies in the Madras Circle of the Bank. My transfer to Kerala, therefore, required the concurrence of both the circle authorities i.e. Madhya Pradesh and Madras. In normal course, it takes 5 to 10 years for such an inter-Circle transfer to materialise. The Bank has its main office at Bombay, under the control of which I was working before my promotion and subsequent posting to Madhya Pradesh. I, therefore, as a last trial went to Bombay and

persuaded my Department (Inspection) to consider my posting to Kerala. The decision, if any, in that connection was to be taken without the concurrence of the Circles concerned and such powers were vested only with a very higher level i.e. the Dy. Managing Director, who then happened to be on leave for a week when my representation reached his office.

Since I had no other engagement, I was sitting idly in the Department, waiting for the Dy. Managing Director's return from leave, when a senior officer there asked me whether I had ever been to SHIRDI. And said, "better you go there and come back by which time the D.M.D. would be back." The same evening I left by Punjab Mail for Nasik and after an overnight stay there reached Shirdi the next day.

By the very first sight of BABA's Moorthy, I was overwhelmed by the pristine glory and I should say, I was taken in. I participated in various poojas and Abhishekams. Bought few Photos of BABA and a copy of the SAI SATCHARITA. Later, when I decided to return and went to the Bus stand, no bus was available. Thus, I had to stay one more night at SHIRDI. The next day after morning Arati I returned to Bombay.

On reading the 'SAI SATCHARITA' later, I really felt like the very same parrot which was pulled towards BABA with a string attached to its legs and also understood that one can visit and leave SHIRDI only when BABA decides.

My senior officer was only an instrument prompted by BABA to connect the string on to me. And before my return, I was told that the most unusual decision, to transfer me to Kerala with a special mention to post me to a place of my choice in that area had been taken by the Dy. Managing Director without any further queries.

No words can adequately express my joy and I could only bow mentally to BABA for the kindness so explicitly showered on me. Since then I usually visit Shirdi every year, of course, when BABA decides.

My Adorations unto HIM.

*Radhakrishnan Punnakkal,
Cheruvaykara, P.O. Biyyam,
PONNANI, Kerala.*



HOW I WAS BLESSED WITH THE GRACE OF SAINATH

Before the year 1975 I didn't know anything about Saibaba of Shirdi. While I was a lecturer in a degree college in early 1975, one of my friends who was very close to me had plucked in M.A. Examins. He, being frustrated due to many personal troubles including his results in the said examinations, met a gentleman who was known to be an astrologer, a Tantrika and a Sadhaka. Due to the magic-touch of the gentleman my friend had seen the face of success in various matters including his miraculous pass in the examination in which he had failed earlier after the expiry of six months from the date of the publication of the result earlier. Before this his personal experience, my friend did not believe in such type of religious or spiritual phenomenon but now gradually became a devotee of the gentleman.

Curiously my friend reported to me this miraculous incident. He also told me that the gentleman, after hearing about me, said, "I am very much eager to meet him and I have got some work with him". After hearing this, I was very eager to meet him, but due to some personal difficulties I didn't have time to do so. After a few days I had to face two or three serious problems which, I now believe, were created by the gentleman in order to attract me towards him. As these problems were insoluble by an ordinary man, I rushed towards him for the obvious reasons. After seeing me he had recognised and admitted that all the problems were created in order to attract me to him. At that time I noticed that the gentleman was of black complexion and had piercing vision and was wearing a garland of Tulsi with a locket on which I saw the picture of Saibaba for the first time. On being asked about the picture, he replied that the picture was of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi who had given him darshan several times and continued to do so. He was found very much confident in saying that he could do everything depending on the grace of Sainath. He had narrated many miraculous incidents which evidenced his spiritual contact with Saibaba as well as his deep devotion to Him.

In the course of my close connection with this gentleman for four years I had seen many miraculous incidents occurring in my presence. He said, "I am directed by Sai Baba to come over here in order to meet you and to convey to you the message of Him." It is needless to say that I became very much a devotee of the gentleman gradually. One night I had seen in a dream the vision of Sai Baba sitting by my side and fondling me with deep affection, and at that time

I was very much moved with the touch. What I had seen I am unable to describe here, but it is true that it was a thrilling experience in my life. As I was in a trouble at that time and sought Baba's help, Baba told me in a dream to have 'patience' and 'faith' in Him. Keeping Baba's advice in view I promised to act accordingly.

Since then I have tried many times to keep my promise to my Lord. He had put me in many hard situations in order to test whether I would strictly obey His advice with patience and faith. Sometimes I was successful in this test and sometimes failed. When I failed, I was spiritually rescued by way of giving courage and advised to have complete faith in Saibaba by that gentleman whom I considered as my Master afterwards. After making me realise the glimpse of the mystic and spiritual power of Sai Baba and injecting the seed of devotion in me to Him, my Master in the form of that gentleman expired in the month of May, 1979. When I learnt that he might leave his mortal body, I wished to have a photograph of him for the purpose of worship. On hearing my request he told, "If you really want to worship, keep this photograph with you and worship it during the whole life." Saying this he gave me a photograph of Sri Sai Baba sitting on a stone and blessing with a raised hand. He said, "I shall be satisfied if you worship this photograph. Always remember that I am identical with Sai Baba." He affectionately used to address Sai Baba as 'Buro' (a Bengali word meaning 'Old man'). From this incident I felt certain that Sai Baba had come to grace me in the guise of this gentleman, my Master.

After the expiry of my Master, I used to pass my days depending completely on the grace of Sai Baba who had shown His love and affection to me in various ways. Through His grace I have got all the necessary things, major and minor. In other words, He had made me what I am today. Till this day whenever I feel disturbed and I seek help of Baba, He directs me sometimes appearing in dream and sometimes staying in my heart.

After sometime I had an enquiry in mind about the place "Shirdi", the place of Baba's Leela/Samadhi and thought that there might be an Ashram, Mandir etc. of Baba. When I was pondering over this, suddenly I came across a book narrating the mystic power of Sai Baba and His life in a bookfair held in the city very near my university. After going through the incidents described in this book I



came to know more about the life and spiritual power of Sai Baba. From this book it was known to me that it was published by Shirdi Sai Sansthan situated in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra State. Reading this I could not resist my temptation to write a letter to the Manager of Sai Sansthan seeking information regarding Ashram, Mandir, Dharmasala, literature on the grace of Sai Baba etc. and it is a matter of great pleasure that it was replied to immediately. Being aware of these I was determined to pay a visit to Shirdi, the heaven to me and to have a darshan of Sai Baba, my Lord.

In 1983 I had an opportunity to attend Indian Philosophical Congress held at Jabalpur University and from this place I went to Shirdi after taking proper guidance from the delegates who had come from Bombay University. Staying for three days consecutively in the Ashram-dormitory I had satisfied my spiritual hunger by way of having darshan of Sai Baba at Samadhi Mandir, Dwarakamai etc. The sentence: (i.e. through patience and faith Sai Baba gets satisfied) written at the Samadhi Mandir reminded me the same words uttered by Sai Baba previously in a dream.

After having both the theoretical and practical experience as to the essence of this sentence, now I believe that if one adopts these two qualities, one will certainly obtain the grace of Sainath. By virtue of His grace I have been going to Shirdi every year since 1983 and getting my spiritual and material hunger quenched. If He draws with His Grace, who can stay back? When He guides His devotees properly, how can they go off the way?

My Grateful homages unto Him.

*Dr. Raghunath Ghosh,
Dept. of Philosophy,
University of North Bengal,
Dt. Darjeeling – 734 430,
(West Bengal).*



A PEEP INTO THE SELF

THE BODY — CONSCIOUSNESS

In my last article on this subject, I have stated how life is to be designed and led in such a way that it is gradually and systematically oriented towards the divine goal. The dana, yatra, tapas, fasting and rigours are external disciplines or exercises which slowly turn the face of one's existence towards the divinity i.e. the innerself. The Himalayas, the Ganges and the temples do not manifest God, but they sublimate elevate, and elate the consciousness in such a way that the mind becomes open for the reception of the higher principle and transcends the mortal, the physical appearances of untruth and ignorance. We cannot, therefore, underrate the outer rigours, rituals cursorily. However, we should not give them undue importance or value. *They are useful in training, restraining and disciplining the first layer of consciousness, which is the body consciousness.* The man moves round the world and experiences its materialistic existence and impact through sense organs, which are part and parcel of body. Hence the body is the first vehicle of Sadhana. If the body is unclean and not purified by constant Sadhana, it cannot open its doors for the entry of the divine. If we have no body, we have no basis for erecting the edifice of spiritual Sadhana. It is said that even the Devas cannot have liberation till they assume human body and practise Sadhana through it to reach the level of bodiless consciousness. Thus the human body and all the Sadhanas which are designed in correlation with it cannot be over-emphasised.

The Sadhana is required to be practised on all the four layers of consciousness (1) the body (2) the mind (3) the intellect, and (4) the spirit or self. This is because we exist on all these four planes or levels simultaneously. We cannot, therefore, neglect one level and pass on to the other. On the contrary, we have to plan our Sadhana for self-realisation gradually from the plane of body to the plane of mind and subsequently to the plane of intellect and atman by traversing step by step in the desired direction. The other method would be to control and train body and mind first and thereafter progress towards the more subtle layers of intellect (knowledge) and self (atmic divinity). I am writing this with repetitive stress so that any reader, however, elementary in the understanding of the principles of Sadhana could follow exactly the meaning of the author.



The various inner systems in the body which have the receptibility of the divine element are either insensitive or deadened on account of the karmas of the past, frivolity or unsteadiness of the present and the anxiety or worries of the future. The body cannot be kept stable and fixed in one place by every jiva because of these shortcomings which are the heritages of his past life or the lack of merits in the past birth. Some people have the advantage of having a quiet mind amenable or pliable body mechanism. This is the grace of the saints or gurus he has earned or the merit he has accumulated in bygone lives. As this is a subtle and unscrutable experience, the jiva cannot interpret it in the proper background or in proper spirit of understanding. The body has its sensitive centres at the bottom of the spine, at the navel, at the heart, at the neck, at the middle point of the eye brows and at the crest of the head. These points are to be activated and sensitised by constant Sadhana of the body and mind. All Sadhanas aim first at the purification of the body and activation of the sensitive points (centres) of the body mechanism.

The first effort of an aspirant would be to keep the body and the spinal cord steady and erect at the right angles with the earth's magnetic field. For this concentration of mind is absolutely essential. The dawn with its sunrise and the dusk with its fall of sun are extremely, favourable period, when the universal planetary magnetic field is favourable and conducive to the elevation of consciousness. It is, therefore, inevitable that Sadhana of whatever kind you choose, is to be practised when the sky principle (akash tatwa) is quite favourable.

The first layer of consciousness which is "body consciousness" demands more detailed examination and exposition and as such I would dwell upon it in my next article in further details before passing on to the remaining fields of emotional, sentimental, intellectual and atmic layers of human consciousness.

*Shri Chakor Ajgaonkar, M.A.,
Dy. Secretary to Govt. Education Deptt.,
Y-11/170, Govt. Colony, Bandra, (E),
Bombay 400 051.*



श्री साईलीला

अक्टूबर १९८७

हिन्दी विभाग

अनुक्रमणिका

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पूकार

भक्तों की पूकार सून
शिर्डी वाले साईबाबा
कर सभी के हृदयों में परिवर्तन
ऊंच नीच का भेद मिटा दे
सभी के हृदयों से
कर बाबा ऐसा चमत्कार
भर दे हम सभी के
मन में प्रेम की भावना
हमें किसी से बैर न हो
हमारे दिल में सभी के लिये प्रेम हो
भर दे हम सभी में ऐसी भावना
भक्तों की पूकार सून
शिर्डीवाले साईबाबा

— कन्हैया मल्होत्रा
सी १/२, सी.सी.आई,
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९२. यह घटना प्रातःकाल घटित हुई। अपराह्न में विठ्ठल भगवान के शिरडी में आनन्दकारी आविर्भाव के और भी प्रमाण प्रस्तुत हुए।
९३. विठ्ठल के कुछ चित्र बेचने के उद्देश्य से बाहर का एक आदमी शिरडी आया।
९४. दीक्षित बड़ा आश्चर्य हुआ कि वे चित्र उनके द्वारा प्रातःकाल ध्यानावस्था में देखी गई विठ्ठल की प्रतिमा की प्रतिकृति थे और उन्हें बाबा के शब्दों का स्मरण हो आया।
९५. काकासाहेब ने बड़े शौक से इन चित्रों में से एक खरीद लिया और अपने नित्यपूजन हेतु उसे (अपने पूजाघर में) प्रतिष्ठित कर दिया।
९६. अब आप एक दूसरी विस्मयजनक कथा सुनिए (पढ़िए), जो आपको कानों को सुखद लगेगी और हृदय को आह्लादित करेगी; वह विठ्ठल के पूजन के प्रति साई की श्रद्धा को प्रदर्शित करती है।
९७. भगवन्तराव क्षीरसागर के पिता विठ्ठल के बड़े भक्त थे और वे प्रायः (उनके) दर्शनार्थ पंढरपुर जाया करते थे।
९८. अपने पिता के निधन के उपरान्त उन्होंने अपने घर में विठ्ठल की प्रतिमा का पूजन करने; भोग लगाने.... आदि का अभ्यास बन्द कर दिया। इसी प्रकार उन्होंने अपने पूर्वजों की दिवंगत आत्माओं की वार्षिक श्राद्ध करना भी बन्द कर दिया।
- ९९- भगवन्तराव ने पंढरपुर की वार्षिक तीर्थयात्रा भी बन्द कर दी।
१०१. किन्तु जब वे शिरडी गए तब बाबा को उनके पिता का स्मरण हो आया और वे चिल्लाकर बोले, "यहाँ पर मेरे घनिष्ठ मित्र का पुत्र (विद्यमान) है, जो न मुझे और न ही विठ्ठल को दैनिक नैवेद्य अर्पित करता है और (इस प्रकार)

हमें भूखों मारता है। अतएव, मैं इसे जबरदस्ती शिरडी ले आया हूँ, जिससे मैं उसे याद दिला सकूँ और (उससे) दैनिक पूजन पुनः आरंभ करवा सकूँ।”

१०२. एक शुभ दिन दासगणू की इच्छा हुई कि वे पवित्र प्रयाग में (संगम में) डुबकी लगावें और (इस हेतु) वे बाबा के पास उनकी अनुमति लेने के लिए आए।
१०३. (उनकी प्रार्थना पर) बाबा ने उत्तर दिया, “इतनी दूर जाने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। इसे (शिरडी को) ही अपना प्रयाग समझो।
१०४. आश्चर्य! महान आश्चर्य!! देखते ही देखते, जैसे ही दासगणू ने अपरा सिर बाबा के श्रीचरणों में नवाया, वैसे ही उनके दोनों पैरों के अंगूठों से जल निःसृत होने लगा, जो गंगा और यमुना का वास्तविक जल था।
१०५. यह चमत्कार देखकर दासगणू भावविभोर हो गए और उनके नेत्रों से आनन्द तथा बाबा के अनुग्रह के प्रति आभार के अश्रु प्रवाहित होने लगे।
१०६. उनके हृदय से प्रेम छलकने लगा और ऐसे गीत की काव्य-प्रेरणा के रूप में उमड़ने लगा, जिसमें साई की रहस्यमयी शक्ति और अकल्पनीयलीलाओं का वर्णन किया गया है।
१०७. श्रोताओं (पाठकों) की जिज्ञासा शान्त करने के लिए मैं यहाँ पर दासगणू के मधुर एवं भव्य गीत को उद्धृत करूँगा, जिससे उनकी इच्छा की पूर्ति हो सके।

दासगणू का गीत

हे परम सद्गुरु, आपकी शक्ति असीम है और आपकी लीलाएँ अद्भुत हैं; अज्ञानियों को जीवन रूपी सागर के पार उतारने के लिए आप जलयान हैं (टेक)

आप स्वयं वेणी माधव बन गए और आपने अपने चरणों को प्रयाग बना लिया; फिर आपने अपनी पादांगुलियों से गंगा तथा यमुना को प्रकट किया। ... (१)

आप ब्रह्मा, विष्णु एवं महेश हैं, तीनों गुणों के विशुद्ध सारतत्व; इस पृथ्वी पर आप साई समर्थ के रूप में प्रकट हुए हैं। ... (२)

ऊषाकाल में आप ब्रह्मा बन जाते हैं-और आपसे आध्यात्मिक ज्ञान प्रवाहित होता है; और कभी-कभी तमस गुण का सहारा लेकर आप शिव का विकराल रूप धारण कर लेते हैं... (३)

कभी-कभी आप श्रीकृष्ण की भाँति बालसुलभ अठखेलियां करने लगते हैं; और कभी आप भक्तों के मानस-सरोवर में पौराणिक हंस बन जाते हैं। ... (४)

गन्ध (चन्दन के तिलक) के प्रति आपकी रुचि का विचार करते हुए आपको मुसलमान कैसे कहा जा सकता है? और फिर यदि आप हिन्दू हैं, तो आप मस्जिद में कैसे आनन्दपूर्वक निवास करते हैं?... (५)

यदि आप धनी हैं, तो भिक्षाटन क्यों करते हैं?

और फिर आपको फकीर कैसे कहा जा सकता है, जब आप अपनी उदारता से कुबेर को लज्जित करते हैं?... (६)

यदि आपका घर मस्जिद है, तो उसमें (हिन्दुओं की) पवित्र अग्नि क्यों (विद्यमान) है?

जिसके धूनी में निरन्तर जलने से ऊदी (पवित्र भस्म) उत्पन्न होती है। (७)

प्रातःकाल से भक्तगण अपने सहज सरल ढंग से आपका पूजन करते हैं; दोपहर में जब सूर्य सिर के ऊपर आ जाता है, तब आपकी आरती उतारी जाती है.... (८)

भक्तगण आपके चारों ओर इस प्रकार खड़े हो जाते हैं जैसे देवताओं के सेवक; और (प्रतिष्ठा के प्रतीक) चौरी-चँवर को आपके ऊपर डुलाते हैं। ... (९)

तुरही, ढोल, पिपानी, शहनाई (बजती है) और घंटिया प्रतिध्वनित होती हैं; और पेटीधारी चोपदार प्रवेशद्वारों पर आपकी महिमा की उद्घोषणा करते हैं। ... (१०)

आरती के समय अपने दिव्य आसन पर आप भगवान विष्णु (कमलावर) सदृश दिखलायी देते हैं; गोधूलि वेला में जब आप धूनी के समक्ष विराजते हैं, तब आप शंकर (मदन-मर्दन) जैसे प्रतीत होते हैं। .. (११)

त्रिदेवों (ब्रह्मा, विष्णु तथा महेश) की ऐसी लीलाएँ आपने प्रकाशित होती हैं; और हम लोगों द्वारा नित्य अनुभव की जाती हैं, हे साई बाबा!... (१२)

ऐसा होने पर भी मेरा मन (इधर-उधर) व्यर्थ भटकता है;

हे (साई बाबा!) उसे स्थिर का दीजिए, मैं आपसे याचना करता हूँ। ... (१३)

अधमों में महाअधम और महापातकी, मैं आपके श्रीचरणों की शरण ग्रहण करता हूँ;

हे परम गुरु, अपने भक्त दासगण की तेहरी व्यथाओं का निवारण कीजिए। ... (१४)

१०८. लोग अपने घोर पापों से मुक्त होने के लिए गंगाजल का आश्रय लेते हैं, किन्तु गंगा अपने स्वयं के पापों को धो

डालने के लिए सन्तों की शरण लेती है।

१०९. साई के पावन चरणों को छोड़कर गंगा-गोदावरी की तीर्थयात्रा करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। इस पुनीत स्तुति, साई की मधुर जीवन-कथा, को पढ़ना (सुनना) पर्याप्त है।
- ११०- जिस प्रकार सौभाग्य से गोणाई को सन्त नामदेव बालक के रूप में
१११. भीमारथी नदी में उतराते हुए मिल गए, तमाल को कबीर भागीरथी नदी में खोल के अन्दर मिल गए, उसी प्रकार साईनाथ अपने भक्तों के लिए शिरडी ग्राम में नीम के वृक्ष के नीचे सोलह वर्ष की अल्प आयु में प्रकट हुए।
११२. वे जन्मजात सिद्ध (आत्मज्ञानी) थे। स्वप्न में भी (मन में) इन्द्रियसुख सम्बन्धी इच्छाएँ उत्पन्न नहीं होती थीं। उनके द्वारा माया का पर्दा दूर हटा दिया गया था और मुक्ति उनकी मुठ्ठी में थी।
११३. किसी को पता नहीं कि कहाँ, किस पुण्यशील परिवार में और किन मातापिता के बाबा ने जन्म लिया।
११४. उनके अतीत की कथा को कोई नहीं जानता। लोग यह ज्ञात करने के प्रयास में कि उनके मातापिता कौन थे, हतबुद्धि थे।
११५. अपने मातापिता, कुटुम्ब, बन्धु-बान्धव, जाति और वस्तुतः सभी सांसारिक बन्धनों को पीछे छोड़कर वे शिरडी में लोगों के कल्याण के लिए प्रकट हुए।
- ११६- शिरडी के नाना चोपदार की वृद्ध माँ ने श्री साईबाबा की
११७. विलक्षण जीवनकथा का इस प्रकार वर्णन किया है: आरंभ में यह सुन्दर, चित्ताकर्षक, रूपवान बालक नीम के वृक्ष के नीचे ध्यानस्थ आसीन दिखलायी दिया था।
११८. इस सुन्दर बालक द्वारा किए गए कठोर तप ताप एवं शीत में उसकी समचित्तता पर लोग आश्चर्यचकित थे।

११९. इस अल्पवयस्क बालक द्वारा इतने हतबुद्धिकर तप का अभ्यास किए जाने के कौतुक ने न केवल ग्रामवासियों में विस्मय को आहूत किया, वरन् आसपास के गाँवों से भी दर्शकों को आकृष्ट किया।
१२०. दिन में वे किसी को (अपने) साथ नहीं रखते थे, न ही रात्रि के अन्धकार का उन्हें (कोई) भय था। सभी आश्चर्यचकित थे कि वे सहसा कहाँ से प्रकट हो गए हैं।
१२१. उनकी आकृति सुन्दर थी, जो प्रत्येक व्यक्ति का मन मोह लेती थी। किसी के पास न जाकर नीम के वृक्ष के नीचे आसीन होकर वे अपने में ही लीन रहते थे।
१२२. लोग हैरान थे कि ऐसा अल्पवयस्क बालक रातदिन खुले में कैसे रहता होगा।
१२३. यद्यपि वे बाह्य रूप से बालक थे, तथापि अपने आचरण में वे बड़े से बड़े महापुरुष को भी मात करते थे; उनकी पूर्ण अनासक्ति लोगों को अभिभूत कर लेती थी।
१२४. एक दिन एक विचित्र घटना घटित हुई। कुछ लोग खंडोबा देवता की आत्मशक्ति द्वारा वशीभूत कर लिए गए और उन्होंने अपने उन्माद में ग्रामवासियों द्वारा पूछे गए प्रश्नों का उत्तर देना आरंभ कर दिया।
१२५. उन (ग्रामवासियों) में से एक ने पूछा, “इस छोटे बालक के भाग्यशाली मातापिता कौन हैं और ये यहाँ कैसे और कहाँ से आए हैं? खंडोबा (देव) कृपया पता लगाएँ?”
१२६. खंडोबा (देवता) ने उत्तर दिया: “एक कुदाली लाइए और जो स्थान मैं आपको प्रदर्शित करूँ वहाँ उससे प्रहार कीजिए। खोदिए और आपको पता चल जाएगा।”

१२७. गाँव की सीमा के निकट बारम्बार खोदने के उपरान्त, उन्हें उसी नीम के वृक्ष के नीचे ईंटों की रचना मिली।
१२८. जैसे ही वे ईंटों के स्तर के अन्त तक पहुँचे और उन्होंने चक्की के (उस) निचले पाट को हटाया, जो प्रवेशद्वार को अवरुद्ध किए था, वैसे ही उन्हें एक भूमिगत कक्ष का गुप्तभेद मिला, जिसमें पीतल के चार दीपक (समई) जल रहे थे।
१२९. गुफा के फर्श पर चतुर्दिक चूर्णप्रस्तर जड़ा हुआ था, जिसमें गोमुखी और काष्ठ का एक सपाट आसन थे और एक सुन्दर रुद्राक्ष माला। खंडोबा बोले: “यह वही स्थान है, जहाँ (इस) बालक ने बारह वर्ष तक तपस्या की है।”
१३०. सब लोग आश्चर्य से स्तब्ध रह गए और उन्होंने बालक पर प्रश्नों की झड़ी लगा दी। किन्तु बालक ने जो बड़ा विनोदी था, उनसे एकदम दूसरी कथा कही।
१३१. वह बोला, “यह मेरे गुरुदेव का स्थान है और मेरी पवित्र विरासत। मुझे एक बार ध्यान से सुनिए और जैसा कुछ भी यह है इसकी रक्षा कीजिए।
१३२. बाबा इस प्रकार बोले, किन्तु श्रोताओं ने कहा कि वे उन्हें जो कुछ बतला रहे हैं वह गढ़ा हुआ है। वे ऐसा कैसे कहते हैं?
१३३. मुझे आश्चर्य हुआ कि लोग बाबा के विषय में ऐसा कैसे सोचते हैं, किन्तु बाद में मैंने यह निष्कर्ष निकाला कि वह उनके नैसर्गिक विनोद का स्फुरण रहा होगा।
१३४. बाबा को परिहास अतिशय प्रिय था। संभवतः वह गुफा उनके स्वयं की निवास-स्थान थी, किन्तु इससे क्या अन्तर पड़ता है, यदि उसे गुरु का वास-स्थान कह दिया गया?

१३५. क्योंकि बाबा ने उसे अपने गुरु का वास-स्थान उद्घोषित कर दिया, अतएव उनके आदेश से (उक्त) भूमिगत कक्ष को ईंटों से बन्द कर दिया गया।
१३६. बाबा के लिए नीम का वृक्ष पीपल अथवा औदुम्बर के समान पवित्र था। वे उससे प्रेम करते थे और उसके प्रति श्रद्धाभाव रखते थे।
१३७. म्हालसापति और शिरडी के अन्य वयोवृद्ध ग्रामवासी इस स्थान को बाबा के गुरु की समाधि मानकर सम्मान करते थे।
१३८. यह प्रसिद्ध था कि बाबा ने इस समाधि के निकट मौन धारण करके बारह वर्ष तपस्या की थी।
१३९. साठेसाहेब(ने), (जो) बाबा के भक्तों में से (एक) थे, समाधि तथा नीम के वृक्ष सहित आसपास की भूमि खरीद ली और (वहाँ) एक भवन का निर्माण किया, जिसको चारों ओर बरामदे थे।
१४०. यही भवन, यह वाड़ा, तीर्थयात्रियों का मूल मिलनस्थल था, जहाँ आने जानेवाले सभी दर्शक निरन्तर एकत्र होते थे।
१४१. जब साठे ने नीम के वृक्ष के चतुर्दिक एक चबूतरा बनवाया और उत्तर-दक्षिण दिशा के अनुरूप ऊपरी मंजिल का निर्माण किया, तब उन्होंने उत्तरी सोपान की संस्थापना के समय इस भूमिगत कक्ष को इंगित किया।
१४२. सोपान के नीचे दक्षिणाभिमुखी एक सुन्दर गवाक्ष (आला) है, जिसके सामने एक चबूतरा है, जहाँ भक्तगण उत्तर की ओर मुँह करके बैठकते हैं।
- १४३- जिससे श्रोतागण (पाठकवृन्द) इसे अतिशयोक्ति न समझें
१४४. अथवा उसकी सत्यता पर सन्देह न करें, मुझे यहाँ पर यह

- उल्लेख कर देना उचित होगा कि मैंने साईं को यह कहते हुए सुना है कि ईश्वर ऐसे किसी भी व्यक्ति पर अनुग्रह करेगा, जो यहाँ की भूमि (मिट्टी के फर्श) को गुरुवार अथवा शुक्रवार को गोधूलि वेला में लीपेगा और कुछ देर के लिए अगरबत्ती जलाएगा।
१४५. अभी भी ऐसे जीवित हैं, जो इसका साक्ष्य वहन कर सकते हैं।
१४६. बाद में दीक्षित ने विस्तृत आवास प्रदान करने के उद्देश्य से एक वाड़े का निर्माण किया। उसके अल्प काल उपरान्त पत्थर से बना एक और वाड़ा अस्तित्व में आ गया।
१४७. आरंभ से ही दीक्षित आध्यात्मिक गुणों से सम्पन्न व्यक्ति तथा भक्ति के मूर्तरूप जाने जाते थे। इंगलैण्ड में उनके अल्प प्रवास की अवधि में उनकी आध्यात्मिक प्रगति के बीज बोये गये थे।
१४८. श्रोतागण (पाठकवृन्द) यह प्रश्न कर सकते हैं कि दीक्षित की इंगलैण्ड की यात्रा, जो उस समय प्रचलित हिन्दू रूढ़ाचार द्वारा निषिद्ध थी, उनके आध्यात्मिक कल्याण का आरंभ क्यों थी और उनकी काशी, प्रयाग तथा बद्रीकेदार की तीर्थयात्रा क्यों नहीं!
१४९. श्रोतागण (पाठकवृन्द) मुझे अल्प व्यतिक्रम के लिए क्षमा करेंगे और मुझे आपके प्रश्न का उत्तर देने के लिए अनुमति देंगे। आप आश्चर्यचकित होंगे।
१५०. काशी, प्रयाग, बद्रीकेदार, मथुरा, वृन्दावन तथा द्वारका की अपनी तीर्थयात्रा से दीक्षित ने पहले से ही पर्याप्त पुण्य अर्जित कर लिया था।
१५१. इसके अतिरिक्त परम सौभाग्य से उनके पिता यथेष्ट धार्मिक योग्यता के भक्तिनिष्ठ व्यक्ति थे, जो उनके असाधारण सौभाग्य

- १६०- बाद में, उन्होंने सोचा कि वे वाड़ा निर्मित करें, (अतएव)
१६१. अगले वर्ष उन्होंने बाबा की अनुमति लेकर नौ दिसम्बर को शुभ मुहूर्त मानकर उसकी नींव डाली और पहला लट्टा गाड़ा।
१६२. दादासाहेब खापडें वहाँ अकेले आए थे। उन्हें शिरडी से प्रस्थान करने के लिए बाबा की अनुमति लेने में बहुत संकोच हुआ।
१६३. दादासाहेब खापडें वहाँ अकेले आए थे। उन्हें शिरडी से प्रस्थान करने के लिए बाबा की अनुमति लेने में बहुत संकोच हुआ।
१६४. किन्तु दस सितम्बर को बाबा ने खापडें को शिरडी से प्रस्थान करने की तथा दीक्षित को (वाड़े की) नींव डालने की अनुमति देदी।
१६५. यह दिन इसलिए भी स्मरणीय है, कि वह चावड़ी में शयन-आरती (शेज-आरती) के, जो बड़े प्रेम और भक्ति से की जाती है, आरंभ किए जाने को सूचित करता है।
१६६. सन् उन्नीस सौ ग्यारह में रामनवमी के शुभ दिन दीक्षित ने निर्धारित धार्मिक विधि के अनुसार गृह-प्रवेशोत्सव सम्पन्न किया।
१६७. बाद में, श्रीमान बूटी ने अत्यधिक लागत से एक भवन निर्मित किया। किन्तु इस (विपुल) धनराशि का व्यय सदुपयोग सिद्ध हुआ, क्योंकि बाबा का (पवित्र पार्थिव) शरीर अन्तिम विश्रान्ति के लिए वहाँ लिटाया गया।
१६८. अब शिरडी में तीन वाड़े हो गए, जब कि पहले एक भी नहीं था। आरंभ में, साठे का वाड़ा, सबके लिए बहुत उपयोगी था।
१६९. इस वाड़े का एक अन्य महत्व भी है, कि इसी भूभाग पर बाबा ने अपने स्वयं के हाथों से फूलों का बगीचा लगाया था।
१७०. वामन तात्या साईं समर्थ को मिट्टी के घड़े प्रदान करते थे, जिनमें से वे पौधों को सींचते थे। इस प्रकार उन्होंने इस

उजाड़ भूभाग को बगीचे में परिणत कर दिया। इसके बाद साई शिरडी से अन्तर्धान हो गए।

१७१. अगले अध्याय में इस बगीचे की कहानी का संक्षेप में उल्लेख किया जाएगा। श्रोताओं (पाठकों) के साथ हेमाड साई चरणों का नमन करता है।
१७२. बाद में औरंगाबाद के निकट चाँद पाटिल उनसे (साई से) मिले और साई उनके साथ बारात में शिरडी लौट आए।
१७३. इसके उपरान्त वे शिरडी में देवीदास, जानकीदास और गंगागीर की तिकड़ी के सम्पर्क में आए।
१७४. फिर मोहिउद्दीन के साथ उनकी कुश्ती हुई और उसके बाद वे मस्जिद में चले आए। वहाँ डेंगले तथा अन्य भक्तों के साथ उनके सुखद साहचर्य का आरंभ हुआ।
१७५. अगले अध्याय में ऐसी कथाओं का उल्लेख होगा। अब हेमाड साई के प्रति आत्मसमर्पण करता है और इस अध्याय को समाप्त करने के साथ उन्हें साष्टांग प्रणाम करता है।

आपका कल्याण हो। श्री साई समर्थ की श्रद्धास्पद जीवनी का, जिसकी रचना सन्तों तथा सज्जनों से प्रेरित होकर, उनके भक्त हेमाडपन्त ने की, चौथा अध्याय, जिसका शीर्षक 'साई समर्थ का आगमन' है, यहाँ समाप्त होता है।



शिरडी डायरी

१६-१-१९१२

रोज की तरह प्रातः उठा, प्रार्थना किया तथा दैनिक कृत्य परमामृत पाठ से प्रारम्भ किये। यह वेदान्त पर एक अत्यन्त पवित्र मराठी रचना है। उपासनी वाचन करते हैं — मैं, बापू साहब जोग भीष्म श्रवण करते हैं। यह अत्यधिक सुन्दर है तथा मैं जहां कहीं आवश्यक होता है विश्लेषण करता हूं। मैंने साई महाराज के बाहर जाते हुए दर्शन किये किन्तु उनके मसजिद लौटने पर दर्शनार्थ जाने में कुछ देर हो गयी। उन्होंने किसी प्रकार के असंतोष का प्रदर्शन नहीं किया वरन् मुझसे अत्यन्त दयालुतापूर्ण व्यवहार किया और बैठा सेवारत् रहा। मध्याह्न आरती देर से हुई क्योंकि मेघा बीमार हैं और उन्हें जल्दी न आने का आदेश था। अन्ततः उसने ऐसा ही किया और इस बीच हम लोग वापस लौटे तथा अपना भोजन किया तब तक सायं ४ बज गये। दीक्षित ने कुछ रामायण पढ़ा और तब हम लोग मसजिद में साई महाराज के दर्शन हेतु गये। उन्होंने हम लोगों को देर तक बैठने की छूट नहीं दी और स्वयं भी बाहर निकल आये तथा अपना नियमित घूमने का कार्यक्रम शीघ्रता से सम्पन्न कर हमें भी वाड़ा वापस लौट जाने का आदेश दिया। हम लोग यह नहीं समझ सके, किन्तु वाड़ा वापस लौटने पर मालूम हुआ कि दीक्षित का सेवक (नौकर) हरी, जो कल ही अस्वस्थ हो गया था, मर गया है। हम लोग उपासनी, जो औषधियों के विषय में जानते हैं, के यहां गये, किन्तु वह नहीं मिले। व्यक्ति मर चुका था — इसमें सन्देह नहीं था। हम लोगों ने वाड़ा में नियमित आरती की तथा सेज आरती में शामिल हुए। बाद में साई महाराज विशेष रूपसे कृपालु हुए तथा प्रसन्नता और मार्ग-दर्शन के उद्गार व्यक्त किये। उन्होंने राममूर्ति को भी इसी प्रकार अनुग्रहित किया।

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मैं प्रातः तड़के उठा और बापू साहब जोग को स्नान के लिये बाहर जाते देखा। इसी बीच मैंने अपनी प्रार्थना समाप्त की। फिर हम लोग काकड़-आरती में गये। मेघा बीमारी के कारण उपस्थित न हो सका। इसलिये बापू साहब जोग ने आरती किया। साई बाबा ने मुखारविन्दु दिखलाते हुए एक मधुर, मुस्कान बिखेर दिया। यह सौभाग्य ही है कि यदि यहां वर्षों रहा जाय तब कहीं ऐसा सुअवसर देखने को मिले। मेरे आनन्द की सीमा न रही और मैं पागलों की तरह ताकता रहा। हमारे लौटने के बाद नारायणराव का पुत्र और भाई भाऊ होशंगाबाद जाने के लिये बैलगाड़ी से कोपरगांव गये तथा मैंने अपना दैनिक कार्यक्रम प्रारम्भ किया। मैंने कुछ पंक्तियां लिखीं और फिर उपासनी और बापू साहब जोग के साथ परमामृत का पाठ किया। मैंने साई महाराज के बाहर जाते और फिर उनके मसजिद वापस लौटने पर दर्शन किये। उन्होंने मूक आदेश दिये किन्तु एक मूर्ख की तरह मैं उन्हें समझ न सका।

वाड़ा वापस आने पर मैंने बिना किसी कारण के ही अपने को अशान्त और खिन्न सा महसूस किया। बलवन्त ने भी दुखी महसूस किया कहा कि वह शिरडी से जाना चाहता है। मैंने कहा कि साईबाबा से पूँछ कर निर्णय लो। भोजन के बाद मैं कुछ देर तक लेटा रहा फिर इच्छा हुई कि दीक्षित की रामायण सुनूँ लेकिन साई बाबा ने उन्हें (दीक्षित) बुला लिया तथा उन्हें जाना पड़ा। किसी प्रकार हम प्रगति न कर सके। खण्डवा के तहसीलदार साहब प्रल्हाद अम्बादास ने आज अपने वापस जाने की स्वीकृति प्राप्त करली। जलगांव के श्री पाटे और उनके साथ एक लिंगायत यहाँ हैं। वे कल वापस जा सकते हैं। हम लोगों ने साई बाबा के उनके शाम को घूमने जाते समय दर्शन किये। वह बहुत ही अच्छी मुद्रा में थे। रात्रि में भीष्म का नियमित भजन और दीक्षित की रामायण हुई। वाड़ा में आरती के समय प्रातः दिये गये (मूक) आदेश मैं समझ गया तब मुझे प्रसन्नता हुई।

१८-१-१९१२

आज बहुत कुछ अंकित करना है। मैं बहुत सुबह उठा प्रार्थना किया और सूर्योदय में अभी एक घण्टे का विलम्ब देखकर, मैं लेट गया तथा सूर्योदय देखने के समय जाग गया। मैं स्वयं, उपासनी, बापू साहब जोग और भीष्म ने परमामृत का पाठ किया। तहसीलदार साहब-प्रल्हाद अम्बादास, श्री पाटे और उनका साथी (लिंगायत) अपने-अपने स्थानों को वापस गये। आखिर के दोनों लोगों ने तो यात्रा प्रारम्भ करने के समय पर ही अनुमति प्राप्त की। मैंने साई बाबा के बाहर जाते और फिर मसजिद वापस आने पर दर्शन किये। उन्होंने मेरे साथ बड़ी ही दयालुता का व्यवहार किया और जब मैं सेवा कर रहा था तो उन्होंने दो-तीन कहानियां सुनायीं। उन्होंने कहा बहुत से लोग उनका धन लेने आते हैं। उन्होंने केवल उनके नाम अंकित कर लिये और उनका पीछा किया। वह जैसे ही अपने भोजन के लिये रूके, उन्होंने उनको मार डाला और अपना धन वापस ले आए। एक अन्य कथानक था कि एक अन्धा व्यक्ति था। वह यहीं ताकिया के समीप रहता था। एक आदमी उसकी औरत को बरगला ले गया और बाद में अन्धे व्यक्ति को मार डाला। चावड़ी में चार सौ व्यक्ति इकट्ठे हुए और उसे मृत्यु दण्ड दिया। उन्होंने उसका सिर अलग करने का हुक्म दिया। इस आज्ञा का पालन गांव के जल्लाद द्वारा पूरा किया गया जो उसने किसी स्वार्थपश किया न कि एक कर्तव्य की पूर्ति के रूप में। इसलिये हत्यारा उस जल्लाद के पुत्र के रूप में पैदा हुआ। उन्होंने तब दूसरी कथा प्रारम्भ की। इसी बीच एक अजनबी फकीर आया और साई बाबा के पैर छू लिये। साई बाबा बहुत ज्यादा क्रोधित हुए अथवा ऐसा भाव प्रदर्शित किया और उस फकीर, जिसने इस प्रकार बिना अपना धैर्य खोये अनुलम्बना की मुस्तैदी दिखलायी थी, को झटक दिया। आखिर वह बाहर चला गया और चहारदिवारी के पास बाहर की तरफ खड़ा रहा। साई बाबा क्रोधित थे तथा उन्होंने आरती के बर्तनों और भक्तों द्वारा लाई गयी भोजन की थालियों को दूर फेंक दिया। उन्होंने राम मारुति बाबा को उठा लिया जिसने

बाद में घोषित किया कि उसने अत्यन्त प्रसन्नता महसूस किया है जैसे कि उसे सर्वोच्च स्थान (स्वर्ग) में भेज दिया गया हो। भाग्या तथा एक ग्रामीण भी साई महाराज द्वारा प्रताड़ित हुए। सीताराम आरती लाया और हम लोगों ने नियमित आरती, यद्यपि कुछ जल्दबाजी में सम्पन्न किया। म्हालसापति के पुत्र मार्तण्ड ने अत्यन्त समयोचित दूरदर्शिता का परिचय दिया और किसी प्रकार की गलतफहमी न हो सके जैसे ही आरती प्रारम्भ हुई तथा उसे किस प्रकार समाप्त किया जाय आदि-आदि समस्त प्रक्रिया को निर्देशित किया। उसने ऐसा तब किया जब साई बाबा अपने निर्धारित स्थान से बाहर चले गये थे। समाप्ति के पहले ही साई बाबा ने अपनी गद्दी ग्रहण की और सभी कार्य यथाक्रम सम्पादित हुए। केवल "ऊदी" का वितरण हर-एक को अलग-अलग न होकर एक मुस्त कर दिया गया। वह सचमूच क्रुद्ध नहीं थे - सब कुछ लीला मात्र था। इस समस्त प्रकरण में हमें देर हो गयी क्योंकि आज तात्या पाटिल ने अपने पिता के देहावसान के उपलक्ष में अन्तिम कृत्यों के समापनार्थ में एक भोज दिया था। इस तरह हम लोगों का भोजन सायं ४.३० बजे तक पूरा नहीं हो सका। यह थोड़ा और विलम्ब से होता क्योंकि अब अन्य किसी काम के लिये समय नहीं रह गया था अतः हम लोग साई महाराज के बाहर घूमने जाते समय दर्शनार्थ गये। उन्होंने यह सब कुछ नियमित रूप से किया तथा हम लोगों ने उनको नमन् किया। वाड़ा में नियमित आरती हुई। मेघा बीमारी के कारण खड़ा हो सकने में असमर्थ था तथा रात्रि में साई बाबा द्वारा उसकी मृत्यु की भविष्यवाणी कर दी गयी। तब हम लोग चावड़ी के जलूस में सम्मिलित हुए क्योंकि यह उसी की संध्या थी। मैंने नियमित ढंग से मोछल पकड़ा और हर बात सुगमता से पूरी हुई। सीताराम ने आरती किया। रात्रि में भीष्म के भजन और दीक्षित की रामायण हुई।

नोट:- मैं ऊपर यह लिखना भूल गया कि आज जब साई बाबा ने कठोर शब्दों की झड़ी लगाई थी तभी उन्होंने कहा था कि उन्होंने मेरे पुत्र बलवन्त को बचाया था और तब यह वाक्य भी दुहराये- 'फकीर दादा साहब (अर्थात् मुझे) मारना चाहता है लेकिन मैं उसे ऐसा नहीं करने दूंगा।' उन्होंने एक और नाम लिया था लेकिन अब वह मुझे स्मरण नहीं आता है।

१९-१-१९१२

आज का दिन बड़ा मनहूस था। मैं बहुत जल्दी ही जाग गया था और अपनी प्रार्थना पूरी कर ऐसा पाया कि अभी सूर्योदय में लगभग एक घण्टे की देरी है, अतः मैं लेट गया और बापू साहब जोग द्वारा काकड़-आरती के लिये जगाया गया। दीक्षित काका ने मुझसे बतलाया कि मेघा प्रातः लगभग ४ बजे दिवंगत हो गया। काकड़-आरती हुई। लेकिन साई महाराज ने अपना मुखड़ा स्पष्ट नहीं दिखलाया और न अपनी आँखें ही खोलीं। उन्होंने छटा बिखेरने वाली नजरें भी नहीं घुमाईं। हम लोग जब लौटते तब मेघा के अन्तिम संस्कार की व्यवस्थाएं पूरी की गयीं। जैसे ही

शव बाहर लाया गया साई बाबा आये और जोर-जोर से उसकी मृत्यु पर शोक प्रकट करते हुए रोने लगे। उनका रूदन (रोना) इतना हृदय विदारक था जिसे सुनकर हर एक की आंखों से अश्रुधारा बह चली। तब वह शव-यात्रा से साथ गांव के नजदीक बनी सड़क के मोड़ तक गये और फिर अपने नियमित मार्ग पर चल पड़े। मेघा का पार्थिव-शरीर वट-वृक्ष (वाड़ा) के नीचे ले जाया गया तथा अग्नि को समर्पित कर दिया गया। साई बाबा उस (मेघा) की मृत्यु पर शोक प्रकट करते हुए उतनी दूरी से भी बहुत साफ-साफ दुष्टिगोचर हो रहे थे और वह इस प्रकार हाथ घुमाते दिखलाई पड़ रहे थे जैसे कि आरती करते हुए अलविदा कर रहे हों। सूखा ईंधन काफी था अतः लपटें ऊंचाई तक उठने लगीं। दीक्षित काका, में स्वयं, बापू साहब जोग, उपासनी, दादा केळकर और यहां उपस्थित अन्य लोगों ने मेघा के भाग्य को सराहा कि उसके पार्थिव शरीर को साई बाबा द्वारा देखा तथा मस्तक, हृदय, कन्धो और पैरों का स्पर्श किया गया था। अन्तिम संस्कार सम्पन्न करने के पश्चात् हम लोगों को प्रार्थना करनी चाहिए थी किन्तु बापू साहब जोग के आजाने पर मैं बैठ कर उनके साथ बातें करता रहा। जब मैं बाद में साई बाबा के दर्शनार्थ गया, उन्होंने मुझसे पूछा कि मैंने दोपहर बाद का समय किस प्रकार बिताया? मैं यह स्वीकार करके बहुत ही दुखी था कि मैंने उस समय को बात-चीत में व्यतीत किया। यह मेरे लिये एक शिक्षा थी। मुझे याद है कि साई बाबा ने किस प्रकार उसकी मृत्यु के तीन दिन पहले बतला दिया था, "यह मेघा की अन्तिम आरती है।" और किस प्रकार मेघा ने महसूस किया था कि- उसने अपनी सेवा समाप्त कर दी है और अब जा रहा है, किस प्रकार उसने यह सोच कर अश्रुपात किया था कि अब वह साठे, जिन्हें अपना गुरु मानता है, की नहीं देख सकेगा, और वह किस प्रकार साई बाबा की गायों, जिनका रख-रखाव करता था, छूट जायेंगी। उसने कभी और कोई इच्छा नहीं व्यक्त किया। हम सभी ने उसके महानतम् भक्तिपूर्ण जीवन की सराहना की और मैं दुखी था कि मैंने प्रार्थना न करके फिजूल की बातों में मशगूल रहा। भीष्म और मेरा पुत्र — बलवन्त अस्वस्थ है, इसलिये भजन नहीं हुए। दीक्षित काका ने रात्रि में रामायण पढ़ी। गुप्ते, उनके भाई तथा उनके परिवार ने आज प्रातः बम्बई के लिये प्रस्थान किया।



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