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Sai Himself is Gajanan – Ganapati – Bhalchandra

At the beginning of any undertaking, wise persons praise tutelar (beloved) deities and invoke their grace for its completion without impediments. They do the invocation to avert all impediments and for the fulfilment of their desires. I do obeisance to all.

First of all, I worship Ganapati, Vakratund, Heramb image, Lord of the fourteen schools of knowledge [six miscellaneous Vedas (inclusive of two which are lost), Code of moral conduct, Puranas, Mimansa, Commentaries etc.], auspicious figure who is Elephant-visaged.

Fourteen universes (*Bhulok* i.e. earth, *Bhuvarlok* i.e. region between the sun and the earth, *Svarlok* i.e. region between the sun and the polar star, *Mahalok* i.e. sphere of sun and luminaries, *Tapolok* i.e. heaven of the *Tapasvis*, *Janalok* i.e. of sons of Brahma, *Satylok* i.e. heaven of Brahma and *Rishis*, and *Saptapatal* i.e. seven hells, known as *Atal*, *Vital*, *Mutal*, *Talatal*, *Mahatal*, *Rasatal*, *Patal*) are contained in Your belly; that is why You are known as immense-bodied, holding the lustrous axe in Your hands with a desire to cut the difficulties of the devotees.

Oh, Lord Gananatha, Gajanan, the destroyer of obstacles and assuager of pain, grant me the grace to complete my vows. I prostrate (with all the eight limbs of the body touching the ground indicating perfect surrender) myself before You.

You are the helper of the devotees. Impediments roll down and are subdued at Your feet. If You directly face them, all deficiencies will vanish.

You are the ship in the ocean of life, the flame of light in the darkness of ignorance. Look after me joyfully with prosperity and perfection (Riddhi and Siddhi - names of two female attendants of Ganesh, who confer psychic and spiritual powers).

Hail, hail to thee whose vehicle is the mouse, destroyer of the forest of impediments. You are the son of Girija (Parvati - consort of Shiva) who has an auspicious visage. I do obeisance to You.

May I attain the completion of this work without difficulties. Therefore, I have followed this custom of offering obeisance to the beloved deities with respect, for the attainment of all good and auspiciousness.

Sai Himself is Gajanan Ganapati; Sai Himself has the axe (He is Parashuram, a celebrated hero and demi-God, one of the incarnations of Vishnu) in His hand. Completely annihilate my difficulties. I now begin my sacred work.

Sai Himself is Bhalachandra, Himself is Gajanan, with a single tusk and elephant-like ears. He is the formidable one with a broken tusk, the destroyer of the forest of difficulties.

Oh, the holiest of holies, with an immense body, Ganapati ! there is no difference between You and Sai. Please take me to Your abode, where You reside in contentment.

- **Shri Sai Satcharita**

Translated in English by **Zarine**



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Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra

Lord Shiva is one of the Hindu Trinity that comprises the creator Brahma, the protector Mahavishnu, and the Godhead Shiva Whose primary responsibility is maintaining the life cycle. Shiva is 'Shakti', Shiva is the power, Shiva is the destroyer, the most powerful God of the Hindu pantheon. Known by many names – Mahadeva, Maha Mrityunjaya, Mahayogi, Pashupati, Nataraja, Bhairava, Vishwanath, Bhava, Bhole Nath – Lord Shiva is perhaps the most complex of Hindu Deities. He is forever in deep meditation, totally absorbed in contemplation in His abode, Kailash mountain in the great Himalayas.

Shiva is an ascetic and several religious stories and dramas portray that all attempts to distract Him from that principal pursuit through temptations always ended up with disaster for those initiating such an effort. Thus Kama, the Lord of desires, Who tried such a distraction was burned alive through the fire when Shiva opened His third eye.

Shiva is worshipped as a Lingam to help us contemplate the need to think of Him as the most basic and essentially formless one. Shiva, in temples is usually found as a phallic symbol of the Lingam, which represents the energies necessary for life on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels, that is, the world in which we live and the world which constitutes the whole of the universe. He is believed to be at the core of the centrifugal force of the universe, because of His responsibility for death and destruction. After all, Shiva is one of the most fascinating of Hindu Gods.

According to the Markandeya Puran :-

There was a childless sage called Mrikandu. He and his wife Marudvati propitiated Lord Shiva through severe penance. Lord Shiva was pleased with them and blessed them with a boon, saying -“You could either have a divine son who would live only for sixteen years or a bad son who would live for one hundred years. Choose what you want !”

They chose the child with spiritual virtue, and in time Marudvati gave birth to a boy whom they named Markandeya. When Markandeya was eight years of age, he knew all the holy scriptures, and all that is to be known for self-realization by the direct instruction of his sagely father. The father also asked his son to do the worship of Lord Shiva regularly.

The parents decided not to tell their son that he would have a short life. But, as he approached his 16th birthday, their growing sadness betrayed them. And, when the son asked them to explain their downcast mood, they disclosed, what Lord Shiva had revealed.

Markandeya - already an accomplished Yogi – rededicated himself to his practice of worshipping Lord Shiva.

On the day of his 16th birthday, Markandeya took refuge in a Shiva temple, and started meditation sitting adjacent to a Shiva Lingam (a symbol of divine consciousness). When the messengers of Yama, the Lord of death, arrived to take him away, the breath of Markandeya was disturbed as they began pulling his soul out of his body. With the great devotion, Markandeya embraced the holy Shiva Lingam, and burst into a great Mantra known as the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra :

Om Hoong joong Sahe Om Bhoorbhava swah Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pusti Vardhanam. Urva rukamiva Bandhanan Mrityor muksheeya Ma amritat

[We worship the Three-eyed one (Lord Shiva) Who is naturally fragrant, immensely merciful and Who is the protector of the devotees. Worshipping Him may we be liberated from death for the sake of immortality just as the ripe cucumber easily separates itself from the binding stalk i.e. By Your grace, let me be in the state of salvation (Moksha) and be saved from the clutches of fearful death.]

The messengers found Markandeya so absorbed in his recitation of the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra that they could not complete their mission.

Returning to their Lord, the messengers described their dilemma. So Yama took it upon himself to accomplish the task. On His arrival at the temple, He urged Markandeya to follow the natural laws of life and death, and to come willingly; but Markandeya tightened the grip of his around the Shiva Lingam and surrendered himself to its protection. Now, Yama threw His noose to the nose of Markandeya to gather him in; but the noose encircled the *Lingam* as well. Lord Shiva – dwelling in the image - split the *Lingam* open and emerged in a rage. Yama had encroached upon His authority by throwing His noose too far, as He had no jurisdiction to encircle Shiva Himself. Shiva killed Yama with a blow from His foot as the other Gods looked on in dismay. They implored Shiva to bring Yama back to life lest His death should upset the order of the universe. Shiva complied with their wish, blessing Markandeya to become the ever living master of the Himalayas.

Lord Shiva exclaimed,

Lo ! The Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra has protected Markandeya.

This great Mantra – dedicated to Shiva as Mrityunjaya – is found in the Rig Veda (Mandala VII, Hymn 59), where it is attributed to the sage Vasishtha. The hymn in which it is found begins with eleven stanzas honouring the forces of nature (the Maruts) said to be the children of Rudra/Shiva. The Maruts control the energies of storms, winds, cyclones and clouds (and thus the nurturing light of the sky). They possess destructive energy; but they are also the protectors of the household. When they act in harmony, they create an environment of peace and prosperity.

Vasishtha pays homage to these forces and then continues with the final stanza, a Mantra revered throughout the scriptures. It is called the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, the great death - conquering Mantra. It is a Mantra that has many names and forms. It is called the Rudra Mantra - referring to the furious aspect of Shiva, the Tryambakam Mantra - alluding to Shiva's three eyes, and it is sometimes known as the Mrita Sanjivani Mantra; because it is component of the 'life - restoring' practice given to the primordial sage Shukra after he had completed an exhausting period of austerity. The Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is hailed by the sages as the heart of the Veda. Along with Gayatri Mantra it holds the highest place among the many Mantras used for contemplation and meditation.

The Maha Mrityunjaya is a Mantra that is said to rejuvenate, bestow health, wealth, a long life, peace, prosperity and contentment. The Mantra is a centuries old technique of connecting one to pure consciousness and bliss. The Mantra emits divine positive vibrations and creates a divine armour (Kavacha) around the one who chants. By chanting this Mantra, divine vibrations are generated which ward off

all the negative and evil forces. It is a vibration that pulsates through every cell, every molecule of our body and tears away the veil of ignorance. It ignites a fire within us that consumes all our negativity and purifies our entire system. It is also said to have a powerful healing of diseases declared incurable even by doctors. It is a Mantra to conquer death and connects us to our own inner divinity.

Maha Mrityunjaya evokes the Shiva within and removes the fear of death, liberating one from the cycle of death and rebirth.

– **Dr. Subodh Agarwal**

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II Shri Siddhivinayaka II



II Shri Siddhivinayaka II

Swasti Shri Gananayakam Gajamukham Moreshwaram
Siddhidam I

Ballalam Murudam Vinayaka Madham Chintamanihi
Sthevaram II

Lenyadrim Girijatmajam Suvaradam Vighneshwara Ojharam
I

Gramo Ranjanasamsthito Ganapatihi Kuryat Sada Mangalam
II

Tooch Sukhakarta, Tooch Dukhakarta, Avaghya Deenanchya
Natha...

Bappa Moraya Re, Bappa Moraya Re,
Charani Thevito Matha...

You alone bestow happiness, You alone remove sorrows, You are
the Lord of all the needy, Salutations to You O Lord, Salutations to
You O Lord ! (I am) Placing my head at (Your holy) Feet...

Salutations Ganapati Bappa...! The sweet coincidence of the first
issue of the year and Ganesh *Jayanti* will bring you in this article
the glory and information of the abode of faith of lakhs of devotees
of Shri Siddhivinayaka of Prabhadevi in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The popularity of Siddhivinayaka, as a boon granting
Diety, answering prayers, is spreading far and wide. The serpentine
queue for the Darshan of this Siddhivinayaka, the fulfiller of
wishes of devotees from all sections and seated in the temple of
their hearts, is getting longer and longer each day.

History of the temple

In existence since 200 years, this temple of Shri Siddhivinayaka
was renovated on November 19, 1801 by a very rich devotee of the
Agri community Shri Laxman Vithu Patil. The idol was
consecrated by him. Today this idol has found abode in the minds
of innumerable Ganesh devotees.

The original temple was very small. There was a small pond in
front of the temple then. There were steps to go down to the
pond. Later the pond was covered with earth in 1945.

Festivals

Maghi Ganeshotsav is celebrated here on a grand scale. Six days
prior to the festival the idol of the Lord is smeared with Sindoor.
During this period the silver replica of the Lord's idol is kept for
Darshan. A grand procession of the Lord is taken out amidst
singing and drums through the neighbourhood on Ganesh
Jayanti (birthday).

Shri's Idol

Till 1945 the idol of Shri Siddhivinayaka was merely of stone.
Later, it was coloured vermillion. This idol has a right facing
trunk, is 2 ½ feet tall and 2 feet wide. The crown is of pure gold,
with blood red Tilak, flanked by the idols of Goddesses Riddhi
and Siddhi, the bestowers of prosperity, abundance, happiness
and wealth. The Lord's upper right hand holds a lotus and left
hand a mace, and the lower right hand holds a meditation
necklace and left hand a bowl of Modaks (Lord Ganesha's
favourite sweet dish). A snake like Janave (sacred thread) around
Shri's neck and a third eye like Shri Shankara's eye is carved on
the forehead.

From 1936, the worship-rites and all allied arrangements were
done by Shri Govind Chintaman Phatak under the directions of
Jambhekar Maharaj. He later retired due to old age on December
31st 1973. After this a trust was established for the management
of the temple, and official trustees including government
officials began managing the temple.
They appointed priests and employees from January 1, 1974 for
proper management and conduct of worship as per Vedic rites.

Daily Programme

Shri's Panchopchar worship is conducted during
Brahmamuhoorta (pre-dawn hours). After the Kakad Arati, the
Shodshopachar worship with Panchamrit bathing is done after
praying for the happiness and prosperity of all devotees. During
this offerings (Abhishek) of Purushasookta, Atharvasheersha,
Ganapatisookta, Shrisookta and Roodrasookta are done. Arati is
done early morning at 5.30 and evening at 7.30. In the afternoon
boiled Modaks are offered to the Lord as Naivedya.

The temple's structure

The present structure of Shri Siddhivinayaka temple is five
storeyed. Alongwith the temple's Navaprasad structure, the
sacred rites for installing the Kalash (dome) was performed on
Monday, June 13, 1994 (Jyeshtha Shuddha Chaturthi, Shaks
1916) by Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya of Dakshinamnaya
Shri Sharadapeetha Shringeri Shri Shri 1008 Bharatiyaateertha
Mahaswamiji. The temple's dome is 15 kgs. in weight, 12 feet in
height and plated in gold. 3 domes of 5 feet and 33 domes of 3 ½
feet total 36 domes in all in the temple. The sanctom sanctorium
(Gabhara) of the temple being quite wide has five doors in all.
The decoration (Makhar) of the Lord is eight cornered. Fine and
excellent arrangement has been made to get a view of the Lord
from outside too.

Lord Ganesha being the God of knowledge, a library with 8500
books in all, on various subjects, and a reading room has been
erected in the temple complex.

There is a temple of the South-facing idol of Lord Hanuman in
the temple premises. This ancient idol is smeared with Sindoor
(red vermillion). Devotees come here in large numbers every
Saturday

Unique Darshan of Ganesha in Dattatreya form in Ganesh Temple

The Shri Kshetra Bhusvananda, a replica of Shri Mayureshwara
temple of Morgaon, carved in pure white marble in Bhopar village,
located in the Eastern region of Dombivli in Kalyan taluka of

On Ganesh Chaturthi in the month of Bhadrapad the traditional idol of Shri Siddhivinayaka is worshipped for seven days. On seventh day this idol is taken out in a procession in a chariot and immersed.

The Mahapooja of Vinayaki Chaturthi is conducted under the guidance of the temple's chief priests. Devotees converge to the temple in large numbers from the prior evening itself have the Darshan of the Lord next day on Angarak Sankashta Chaturthi. Nearly 10 to 15 lakh devotees take Darshan on this blessed day.

Shri Ramanavami, Hanuman Jayanti and Gokulashtami are celebrated with great pomp in the temple. Maharudra and Laghurudra worship is conducted on the idols of Shri Shankara and Shri Hanuman in the month of Shravan.

Social Work

An independent bye-laws of the Shri Siddhivinayaka Trust was prepared on October 11, 1980, keeping the growing scope of work of the temple in mind. For the progress of the social welfare work of social organizations, it was decided to appoint a president, treasurer, nine trustees and one chief executive officer for three years.

For the promotion of social welfare work, a good amount of financial assistance from the temple funds are provided to social organizations. Similarly, valuable financial assistance is provided from the temple fund to establish educational institutes for the propagation of knowledge, to assist patients from all castes and religions for treatment of special kind of illness, with Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 25000/- and for the rehabilitation of victims of natural calamities and unforeseen social problems.

All information about the temple can be sourced from the temple's website : www.siddhivinayak.org.

Om gum Ganapataye Namoh Namaha.
Shri Siddhivinayaka Namoh Namaha.
Ashtavinayaka Namoh Namaha.
Ganapati Bappa Moraya.

Penned by **Vishwarath Nair**
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Thane district is gaining popularity among Ganesha and Dattatreya devotees for very special uniqueness.

Mrs. Sandhyatai Amrute, formerly Shrikhande, whose devotion for Shri Ganesha since childhood has been uninterrupted, unlimited and complete, struck a divine chord with Shri Ganesha through her meditation, prayer and Mantra uttering and remembrance of the Lord's name and with His inspiration and the assistance of innumerable devotees established this temple.

The highly educated Mrs. Sandhyatai, striking a balance between job, family and spiritualism, prayed to Shri Mayureshwara to rid her son of a serious problem, and it was solved in a moment. Instantly, as she had vowed, she renounced the materialistic world, and decided to help the common people, get rid of their sorrows and the needy of their problems through invoking the grace of Shri Ganesha.

Pledging and absorbing the virtues of Dattatreya, sacrifice, renunciation, good conduct, courage and service, the unprecedented manifestation of Shri Ganesha in the beautiful and charming idol of Shri Ganesha Dattaprabhu was installed in the temple.

The well-carved idol of Shri Ganesh Gayatri is also eye-catching. Beside the main temple, sanctified by the actual abode of snakes, a temple dedicated to snakes and Angiras Ashram is also there.

The grandeur and grace of the temple is displayed by the golden dome, plated with one gram gold donated by each devotee.

Mass recitation of Mantras, devotional renderings, remembrance of Lord's name, reading of the scriptures and collection, research and propagation of the wisdom of Lord Ganesha is done regularly. So also cultural camps (Sanskar Shibeers), Yoga classes and socially useful programmes are organized here from time to time.

- Mrs. Surekha Gade

Penned by **Vishwarath Nair**



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Dear 'Shri Sai Leela' Magazine Editor & Board of Trustees,

I have been Baba's devotee since my childhood. By Baba's grace I am what I am today and will be in future. As a devotee it is always my curiosity to know more and more about Baba. There have been quite a bit of literature that has been published recently. Most of it is however based on already known facts about Baba or based on other already published literature (with some variation) about Baba.

I read 'Shri Sai Leela' bi-monthly magazine on web frequently and really enjoy the original authentic reports about Baba reported by some of the people who actually were alive during Baba's time and have witnessed many of His *Leelas*. 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine to me is a real great source for knowing numerous *Leelas* of Baba which are not published elsewhere otherwise.

As I read on the web the magazine was first published in 1923. In these earlier issues tremendous amount of reports about Baba and many other things related to people who were with Him, happenings in Shirdi and vicinity (immediately after Baba's *Samadhi*), etc., were published. These are unfortunately not available to people of my generation born much later.

As such I have a humble request to you to republish these older issues starting from the first issue of 1923 and make them available to all the devotees (for a price of course). That way a wealth of literature about Baba will be available to millions of devotees all over the world. I understand this may be project that will need some planning and proper thinking. I certainly hope the board of trustees and the editor of this magazine will give a serious consideration to this idea and have the wealth of literature available to the devotees soon.

I am located in Atlanta, Georgia, USA and if I can be of any help in distributing the magazines when they are available I will be more than happy to do that. If there is anything otherwise that I can be of help pl. let me know. With lots of respect for the work you folks are doing I remain hopeful that the abovementioned idea will be a reality soon.

Let me know your thoughts.

Let Sai bless us all !

Warm regards,
Shekhar Pandalwar
e-mail : span006@aol.com

The Aim Behind

The Launch of the Magazine 'Shri Sai Leela'

The aim behind the launching of 'Shri Sai Leela' is clear from its very title. Innumerable devotees of Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi are spread all over the world. Baba has given different experiences to different people in different times and continues to do so even after leaving the mortal coil. Even people who have not seen Baba in person, experience His blessings. In short, Shri Sai Baba's experiences by His devotees are innumerable and defy reason. It is not possible to make a collection of all of Sai's *Leelas* in one

place; but the aim of this magazine is to collect as many as possible through the continuous contribution of Sai's devotees. His invaluable sayings and thoughts should act as a beacon of light for Baba's devotees at all times.

Just as Shri Ram says in the 'Bhavarth Ramayan' in response to Parvati's query, as to why He treats grass and stone with the same magnanimity, Shri Ram says His life is to redeem His devotees, Sai Baba too lived for the welfare of His devotees, not a step was unwarranted. This collection of His words and thoughts will benefit not only His devotees but the common folk as well.

A small effort has been made to make such a collection under the title 'Experiences of Maharaj' and 'Shri Sai Satcharit'. Of these, 'Shri Sai Satcharit' was begun with Sai's blessings when He was alive.

Under 'Experiences of Maharaj', it is envisaged that Sai's devotees will share their experiences with the readers of 'Shri Sai Leela'. Discrepancies, if any will be duly corrected, if brought to our notice.

There is a wide and growing number of Sai devotees all over the world. Some have been listed with us; but there are many who are unknown and we would be happy to add the names of those who inform us of their names and addresses to our ever growing list.

To sum up, 'Shri Sai Leela' is an offering to Goddess Saraswati and it is materialising with the will and blessings of Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, to keep reminding all that His benign presence is the essence of this offering.

– Jyoti Ranjan Raut
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Worli, Mumbai - 400 018.
e-mail : jyotiraut53@rediffmail.com

Pilgrimage

II Shri Kshetra Kunakeshwar II

Famed to be the 'Kashi of Konkan', Shri Kshetra Kunakeshwar, a very ancient temple is located 15.3 kms. to the West of Devgad in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra state, which is 489.8 kms. from Mumbai. A vast coastline, wide land, green forests, pure white sand spread around - nestled in such scenic surroundings and airy pristine environs, this most sacred region (Kshetra) appears to be striving for the unity of the blue, clear, unlimited sky and the massive ocean.

Lord Shankara self-manifested here. Kanaka trees were found in abundance here in earlier days for which the place came to be known as 'Kunakeshwar'. The strong foundation of the temple sculpted in Hemadpanthi style and built in the Dravidian method has enabled it to counter the strong waves of the sea year after year. The artistic carvings in the temple are eye-catching. Several shapes of nature (creations) are depicted here. The delicate carvings on wood indicate the craftsmanship and skill in the construction. The oval shaped top of the sanctum sanctorium of the temple is very high, giving a feeling of the temple reaching out to communicate with the sky. The compound (Chouthara) of the temple is 15 to 20 ft. in height.

This region started gaining popularity before the 11th century. Information on this Shri Kshetra is available in the Mumbai Government's Gazzette (of 1880) in the Ratnagiri-Sawantwadi volume's 14th episode, pages 342/880.

The then political superintendent of Mumbai Province, Major Lee Grant Jacob in July 1850, after a great deal of effort, discovered a Tamrapat (a metallic foil with writing on it). This Tamrapat is known as Nagdev's Tamrapat. This Tamrapat of 1436 was written in Sanskrit. According to details mentioned on the *Tamrapat*, Deva Sharma, a Brahmin came to Indul (presently Hindale village). The king received him with due honours. Later he got a bride and a son with the blessings of Shri Kunakeshwara resident Lord Shankara.

To the South of the temple is the Samadhi of Naro Neelkantha, the trusted and valorous chief in Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's army. He served the Maratha kingdom for 62-63 long years from 1672 to 1735. He was an ardent devotee of Shri Samarth.

The temple area comprises 3/4th of an acre. The temple's sanctum sanctorium, *Mugsal* resting place and meeting hall are the four main different sections.

Temples of *Shri Dev* Bhairav, Shri Dev Mandalik, Shri Dev Narayan, Shri Dev Ganapati, Shri Devi Jogeshwari and others are located here.

In the temple complex, the two doorkeepers Chanda and Munda stand in attention in the North and South. In spite of being located on the sea coast, the well in the temple premises has sweet water which is quite strange.

The two organizations 'Shri Dev Kunakeshwar Seva Mandal (Mumbai)' and 'Shri Dev Kunakeshwar Mandir Devasthan Trust (Kunakeshwar)', are constantly striving with the co-operation of the villagers, devotees and well-wishers for the development of *Shri Kshetra*.

The festivals of Holi, Rangapanchami, Gokulashtami, Dahikala, Navratrotsav, Dassera, Deepavali, Tulasivivah and Tripurari Pournima are celebrated with a great pomp. A grand fair is held here on Mahashivratri, on the Magh Vadya Chaturthi day. This fair goes on till Amavasya. Devotees from far and wide make it a point to participate in the fair. Alongwith the Goddesses-Gods of the villages come to meet Kunakoba with their mantle.

The shrines of Brahman Dev, Udyan Ganapati in Devgad, Dirbadevi of Jamsande village, Ganapati of Pokharbanva, Shri Devi Bhagavati of Kotkamate village and Shri Rameshwar of Achara village near Devgad, are ancient and enchanting to the mind. Also the ancient, beautiful shrines in Salshi, Kinjawade, Hindale, Talebazar, Naringre, Munage and others are worth seeing.

These shrines of Devgad are renowned for fulfilling the desires of the faithful devotees, who have good thoughts and behaviour. Being declared a tourist centre, Shri Kshetra Kunakeshwar has gained significant importance.

Information collection courtesy : **Shri Kunkeshwara Mandir Devasthan**

**Managing Committee and
Dr. B. V. Athavale**

Penned by **Vishwarath Nair**

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APPA KULKARNI

Keshav Anant alias Appa Kulkarni, a resident of Shirdi village, was a devotee of Baba for a long time. He was a staunch proponent of truth; but he was very egoistic. He had deep faith in Baba; but he was a harassed man - as if the sins of his earlier birth were after him. He was accused of misappropriation in some government matter. The news spread very fast in the village and without verification of the truth, a rumor - that Appa Kulkarni was a cheat and has swindled money - started circulating. There was a talk that a case would be filed against him.

The then district collector officer sent a word to Appa and called him to give his statement. Appa got scared and started saying that - “Now, I cannot return home.”

Before under taking the journey, as per usual practice, he went to bow before Baba. He prostrated before Baba and pleaded, “Baba, You are my father and You are my mother. You know, whether the accusation is true or false. If something happens to me, it will be You Who will be blamed. Please, save me from this peril !”

Hearing the utterances of Appa, Baba took pity on him. He said, “Appa, do not fear. Presently, the district officer is at village Nevase - the same place where Sant Dnyaneshwar wrote his treatise Dnyaneshwari - First there, take Darshan of Mohiniraja and bow down before him ! Then go to the Saheb ! The Mohiniraja will protect you.”

Appa did exactly what he was told. After bowing down before Mohiniraja, he went to the Saheb's office and wrote down his statement. After going through it, the Saheb said, “I am convinced that you have not defalcated money. Therefore, I am releasing you.”

Appa danced with joy. Next day he returned to Shirdi, held on tightly to Baba's feet and said, “Baba, You saved my reputation. I am ever grateful to You.” Baba replied, “Who am I ? This was done by the Parameshwar. He turns impossible into possible, Appa !”

Appa devoted his life to Baba. Baba also brought other devotees closer through Appa. Amongst such devotees, prominent was Nanasaheb Chandorkar - a highly learned and high ranking govt. official.

Around 1892, Nanasaheb - who was then residing at Kalyan – was appointed as secretary to the collector of Ahmednagar. Baba called Appa and told him, “Go, and tell that Nana that I have called him !” Appa delivered Baba's message to Nanasaheb.

How could believe this ? He said, “Why Baba is calling me ? And why are you taking His name ? Tell me clearly what you want !”

Then Appa narrated the incident in detail to Nanasaheb and convinced him that it was really Baba Who had sent the message.

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



Shri Kaal Bhairav (a furious form of Bhagawan Shankara) an awakened shrine in Hindale village.

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