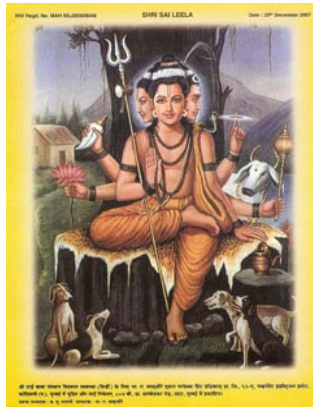


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Tochi Datta Deva too Shirdi rahooni paavasi...
You are the Datta Deity, Who lives in Shirdi and blesses
us...

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E-mail : saidadar@bom3.vsnl.net.in ● **Shirdi Office** : At Post Shirdi - 423 109, Tal. Rahata, Dist. Ahmednagar. Tel. : (02423) 258500 Fax : (02423) 258770 E-mail : saibaba_anr@sancharnet.in ● **Annual Subscription : Rs. 50/-** ● **Subscription for Life : Rs. 1000/-** | **Annual Subscription for Foreign Subscribers : Rs. 1000/-** (All the Subscriptions are Inclusive of Postage) ● **General Issue : Rs. 8/-** | **Shri Sai Punyatithi Special Issue : Rs. 15/-** | Published by B. R. Wakchaure, on behalf of Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi) at Sai Niketan, 804-B, Dr. Ambedkar Road, Dadar, Mumbai - 400 014 and printed by him at Perfect Print Product Pvt. Ltd., 139 Metallica Industries Premises, Govt. Industrial Estate, Kandivali (W), Mumbai - 400 067. The Editor does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in the articles published. All objections, disputes, differences, claims and proceedings are subject to Mumbai jurisdiction.

Back

***O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,***

Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

O Baba ! The year 1910 is written in gold on the heart of each of Your devotees, for that was the year that Govind R. Dabholkar alias Hemadpant visited Shirdi. On seeing You grinding wheat, his curiosity was aroused, and he wished with all his heart to write Your biography. When he did bow before You to seek Your permission through Shama, You were moved, and blessed him by giving him Your *Udi (Vibhuti)* and placing Your boon-bestowing hand on his head with these words... “Make a collection of stories and experiences; keep notes and memos; I’ll help you. You are only an outward instrument. I should write myself my autobiography and satisfy the wishes of my devotees... When your ego is completely annihilated and there is left no trace of it, myself shall enter into you and shall write myself.” (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter 2)

And Baba ! Rest is history, - history of the God Who descended on earth, - history of the God Who walked on the soil of Shirdi for 60 years. Nay, Baba ! Nay, it is the history of the God Who is still, and ever will be with His devotees wherever they be. O my *Sadguru* ! Yes, it is Your history, which Hemadpant inscribes, after Your ‘entry into him’, in Shri Sai Satcharita. Your ‘entry into him’ made him experience an epiphany, a spiritual flash that You are an ‘incarnation of Lord Dattatreya’ (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter 1)

O Sai ! Dattatreya descended into the realm of the world as progeny of Atri and Anusuya, a sage couple of the Vedic age. Seer Atri was one of such seers who had ‘seen’ and experienced the *Brahma-gnyan*, the eternal wisdom; and Anusuya became famous for her devotion to her husband. She was the embodiment of chastity.

One story tells that once a Brahmin named Kaushik was staying in a town called Pratishthan. He used to go to a whore in spite of being a Brahmin and having a devoted wife Nalayani. Later, he suffered from leprosy and was thrown out by the whore. Then, he came back to his wife who accepted him still. However, he still did not care for the wife, and was thinking about the whore all the time. One day he asked his wife to take him to that whore. In that town, the sage Mandavya had been spiked instead of a real thief; and he was lying on the spike in the forest. While walking through the deep forest in the night, Kaushik happened to hit his leg by mistake to Mandavya sage who cursed him to death before the sunrise. To stop the curse, Kaushik’s devoted wife, with her powers of austerity, restrained the sun from rising, upon which all the activities ceased, and created havoc. The Gods, alarmed by this, went to Lord Brahma for counsel. Lord Brahma said, “Majesty is subdued by majesty indeed, and austerities also by austerities, O ye immortals ! Hearken, therefore, to my advice. Through the might of the faithful wife, the sun does not rise; and from its not rising, loss befalls mortals and you. Hence do ye, through desire that sun should rise, propitiate Atri’s faithful wife Anusuya who is rich in austerities.” Having been so instructed, the Gods sought the help of the wife of the sage Atri. When they submitted their desires, she replied, “The might of a faithful wife may not be lost in any wise. Hence, while honouring that good lady, I will liberate the day”, and requested Kaushik’s wife to let the sun rise. At Anusuya’s exhortation, Nalayani relented; the sun rose, and Kaushik died; but he was restored to life by the virtuous Anusuya.

Then, there fell a shower of flowers, accompanied with the strains of heavenly instruments and other musical instruments. And, the Gods were delighted and said to Anusuya, “In as much thou hast accomplished a great job for the Gods, the Gods will be pleased to grant thee a boon, O ascetic lady ! Therefore, choose a boon, O blessed lady !” Anusuya spoke, “If ye Gods headed by Brahma, being favourable, will grant me a boon, and if ye deem me worthy of a boon, then let Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva become sons to me, and let me in company with my husband attain religious devotion, to the end that I may be delivered from affliction.” “Be it so !” exclaimed Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and the other Gods to her; and they departed, duly honoring the ascetic lady.

Another story tells that such was the spiritual power of Anusuya, which induced jealousy and envy in others. Once, sage Narada poisoned the minds of the three Goddesses Saraswati, Laxmi and Parvati by telling them that Anusuya was much greater than them. Incensed by this, they requested their husbands to go and violate Anusuya’s ‘*Pativrata Vrata*’. However, the three Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva decided to prove their jealous and envious wives, how wrong they were.

They transformed themselves into mendicants, approached the hermitage of sage Atri and begged for alms. At that time sage Atri was away at the river offering his daily oblations. Anusuya came out and offered food to them. They made a strange request; the food be prepared and served to them by Anusuya, in the nude. In the Indian tradition any ‘*Atithi*’ (guest) cannot be turned away, as he is considered to be an aspect of God. Hence, she was placed in a dilemma. She smiled to herself and reflected thus :- ‘I am totally purified by the long

association with the holy sage Atri. What harm can the God of lust ever do to me ? So, I do fear nothing. As they have sought food from my hands, I look upon them as my own children and not as strangers and grown up men !’ Her thoughts – the thoughts of a pious and chaste person – instantly became reality; the elderly guests became babies !

Sage Atri, on his return to the hermitage, saw his wife Anusuya fondling three babies. Anusuya said, “These children are the gift of God to us who have been childless so far”. Sage Atri was overjoyed and named them **Datta**, which means ‘given’. At this, the three Gods reverted to their real forms and disclosed the truth. They extolled the power of chastity and purity of Anusuya, which vanquished the combined and colossal powers of all the three of them. Sage Atri and Anusuya prayed that they should remain as their sons. They consented and the three Gods merged into one body. This is how Lord Dattatreya incarnated.

O my Lord Sainath ! I bow to Lord Dattatreya, Whose *Avatar* art Thou :

**My salutations to Dattatreya,
Who in the beginning is Brahma the Creator,
Who in the middle is Vishnu the Preserver,
Who in the end is Shiva the Destroyer,
And the Lord Who represents the Trinity.**

O Baba ! I now hearken unto Your words, which You uttered one day, while the devotees were returning from Your *Dwarkamai-Masjid* to their lodgings after the *Aarati* at noon :

“Be wherever you live, do whatever you choose, remember this well that, all what you do is known to me. I am the Inner Ruler of all and seated in their hearts. I envelope all the creatures, the movable and immovable world. I am the Controller - the Wire-puller of the show of this Universe. I am the Mother - origin of all beings - the Harmony of three *Gunas*, the Propeller of all senses, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Nothing will harm him, who turns his attention towards me...” (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter 3)

O Sai ! My humble prostrations unto Thee.

O Baba ! You have indicated, through many events narrated in the various Chapters of Shri Sai Satcharita, that You are the incarnation of Lord Dattatreya. Here, it shall be delightful to recall the story of the gentleman from Goa, who was a Datta devotee, and made a pilgrimage to Shirdi to have Your *Darshan*. You demanded the *Dakshina* of Rs.15/- from him, which he owed to Lord Dattatreya. In fact, this gentleman had once gone to Goa in search of a job for himself, and had taken a vow to Lord Dattatreya that if He blessed him with an employment, he would offer Him his first month’s salary. Although by the grace of His Lord he got an appointment with a salary of Rs.15/- per month, yet he did forget to keep his word. O Baba ! You just reminded him of his vow, and recovered Rs. 15/- from him. It was, in fact, not *Dakshina* as one may think it to be, but a realization of an old debt and fulfillment of long forgotten vow. O Sai ! You, being the incarnation of Dattatreya, were the rightful claimant of that amount of money. (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter 36) O Baba ! Thou art, in reality, the Datta *Tattwa*, who reminds the forgetful of his vow :

**O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...**

O Sai ! Nor less fascinating is the story of one of Your ardent devotees Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who had an equal devotion for Lord Dattatreya. Whenever he was on his way to Shirdi, it was his usual practice to first make, even in his eagerness to reach You as early as possible, a visit to the *Datta* temple at Kopargaon. O Baba ! It so happened once that he arrived at Shirdi along with his co- son in law, skipping his salutations to Lord Dattatreya at Kopargaon, despite the fact that his co-son in law too was an ardent Datta devotee. O Sai ! On his reaching Shirdi, You cautioned Nana against repeating the mistake in future- certainly, to make him realize that the Datta temple was actually the turning point where Your devotee could have Your preliminary *darshan*. (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter: 38) O Baba ! Thou art, in reality, the Datta *Tattwa*, who reminds a forgetful devotee of his routine:

**O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...**

O Sai ! It is said that when Dattatreya put his hand on someone’s head, even that of an idiot, then that person instantly acquired the knowledge of the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*. One day his hand inadvertently touched the head of a milkmaid who used to come to his residence. On her way home, she was taunted by some pundits, ‘O milkmaid ! What do you learn there ?’ She replied, ‘I learn *brahma-gnyan*.’ They asked, ‘What is *brahma-gnyan*’. She replied, ‘It is the same as separating pieces of stone from rice with the help of a winnowing basket. You throw away the stones and keep the rice to use.’ The pundits were taken aback by the milkmaid’s reply. She answered all their questions with understanding.

O Baba ! Isn't this story analogous to the one related with Kaka Saheb Dixit's maidservant. (*Shri Sai Satcharita*, Chapter: 20) Das Ganu once started to write a Marathi commentary on the *Ishavasya Upanishad*. It was really a difficult task to translate it in a vernacular language, and brief out its exact meaning. Das Ganu translated it in Marathi 'Ovi' metre, verse by verse, but as he did not comprehend the gist or essence of the Upanishad, he was not satisfied with his performance. He, therefore, consulted some scholars. But they failed to satisfy Das Ganu. O Sai ! When nobody could satisfy Das Ganu, he resolved to consult You. Then, O Baba ! You blessed him and said, "You need not be anxious, there is no difficulty about the matter; the maidservant of Kaka Saheb Dixit will solve your doubts at Vile Parle (a suburb of Mumbai). The devotees, who were present there and heard that, thought that You were just joking. They whispered, "How could an illiterate maidservant solve the difficulties of this nature", but Das Ganu thought otherwise. He was sure, that whatever You spoke, must come true. Your words were the decree of the Brahma (Almighty) as...

O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

O Sai ! Armed with full faith in Your words, Das Ganu left Shirdi and came to Vile Parle, and stayed with Kakasaheb Dixit. There the next morning, while Das Ganu was still half-awaken'd, he heard a girl singing a song in clear and melodious tones. The subject matter of the song was a crimson colored Sari, how nice it was, how fine was its embroidery, how beautiful were its ends and borders etc. He loved the song so much that he came out, and found that it was being sung by the maidservant of Kaka Saheb. The maid was cleaning utensils, and had only a torn rag on her person. On seeing her impoverished condition, and her jovial temperament, Das Ganu felt pity for her. Next day he gifted her a sari. Like a starving person getting luckily good dishes to eat, her joy knew no bounds. Next day she wore the new Sari, and out of great joy and merriment, whirled, danced round and played 'Fugadi' with other girls and excelled them all. The day after she kept the new Sari in her box at home and came with the old and torn rags, but she looked as merry as she did the previous day. On seeing this, Das Ganu's pity was turned into amazement. He thought that the girl being poor had to wear a torn rag, but now she had a new Sari which she kept in reserve and putting on the old rag, strutted herself, showing no trace of sorrow or dejection. Thus he realized that all our feelings of pain and pleasure depend upon the attitude of our mind. On thinking deeply over this incident, he realized that a man ought to enjoy whatever God has bestowed on him in the firm conviction that He besets every thing, from behind and before, and on all sides and that whatever is bestowed on him by God must be for his good. In this particular case, the impoverished condition of the poor girl, her torn rag and the new Sari, the donor, the dance and the acceptance were all parts of the Lord and pervaded by Him. Hence, Das Ganu got a practical demonstration of the lesson of the Upanishad - the lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens is ordained by God, and is ultimately good for us. O Baba ! To those who say that it wasn't necessary to send away Das Ganu to Vile Parle and that, You could have Yourself taught him, the simple answer is:

O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

O Sai ! Lord Dattatreya had twenty four teachers from Nature. "Many are my preceptors," he told King Yadu, "selected by my keen sense, from whom acquiring wisdom freely, I wander in the world." Aye, Baba ! Aye, once he saw an eagle flying with a piece of meat in its beak. Then another eagle snatched the piece of meat, and the eagle that lost the piece of meat was left free. But the other eagles started fighting over that piece of meat. O my Sadguru ! Datta realized from this experience that where there was accumulation, there was insecurity. Where there was no accumulation, nobody cared. There were no robberies in a beggar's house.

In twenty-four different situations, Dattatreya gained knowledge from earth, air/breeze, sky, fire, the sun, pigeon, python, sea, moth, elephant, ant, fish, Pingala the courtesan, arrow-maker, infant/playful boy, the moon, honeybee, deer, bird of prey, maiden, serpent, spider, caterpillar and water. They are his twenty-four preceptors. O Baba ! You are an incarnation of Lord Dattatreya:

O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

Lord Dattatreya appears with a *Jhola* (a bag) hung on his shoulder, and so do You, O Sai ! He has all the powers of God viz. creation, preservation, and destruction, and so have You, O Baba ! He lives as a *Fakir* (a beggar), and so do You, my Lord ! He goes for *Bhiksha* or alms, and so do You, O *Brahmaanda Naayaka* ! The spiritual meaning of this *Bhiksha* or alms-begging by You is that You are asking Your devotees, "Give Me all your sins". You ask for the sins of the devotees's past and present lives. You collect, and swallow, and digest these sins:

O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

O Sai ! You required no special place, nor any special time for giving instructions to Your devotees. Whenever any occasion demanded, You taught them freely. Once it so happened that one of Your devotees reviled his brother behind his back in the presence of so many of Your devotees. O Sai ! You have your own method of correcting the scandal-mongers. When You met the slanderer, You pointed out to him a pig that was eating filth near the fence and said to him - "Behold how, with what relish it is gorging dung. Your conduct is similar. You go on reviling your own brethren to your heart's content. After performing many deeds of merit, you are born a man, and if you act like this, will Shirdi help you in any way ?" (*Shri Sai Satcharita*, Chapters: 18-19) O Baba ! Needless to say, that the devotee took the lesson to his heart, and went away:-

O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

O Baba ! On another occasion, one day at noon, You came near the house of one of Your devotees Radha-Krishna-Mai and said, "Bring Me a ladder." The ladder was immediately brought, and set against the house as directed by You. You climbed up on the roof of the nearby house, passed the roof of Radha-Krishna-Mai's house and then got down from the other corner. What object You had, none could know ! Radha-Krishna-Mai was, at that time, suffering from fever. It may be to drive off that fever, that You may have gone there. Immediately after getting down, You paid Rupees two to the person who brought the ladder. Somebody asked You, "why did You pay so much for this ?" And promptly came Your reply, O Baba ! "Labor should always be engaged on wages, and handsome remuneration should promptly be paid. (*Shri Sai Satcharita*, Chapters: 18-19)

O Sai !
Thou art the Datta Tattwa,
Who teacheth us to learn from everything...

Jaya Deva Jaya Deva Datta Avadhutaa,
O Sayee Avadhutaa Jodooni kara tava
charanee ttevito maathaa,
Jaya Deva Jaya Dev

Hail Lord ! Datta Avadhuta ! (a divine Incarnation) O Sai Avadhuta ! With my folded hands, I place my head at your feet. Hail Lord ! Hail Lord !

Avataraseen too yaetaan dharmaante glanee, Naastheekaanaahee too laavisi nijabhajanee Daavisi naanaa leela asankhya roopaanee, Harisee dheenanche too sankata dinarajanee Jaya Deva Jaya Deva...

You take Avatar (Incarnation) when Dharma (purity and righteousness) declines; Even the non-believers develop faith in you. Showing many types of Leelas (Graces) in your innumerable forms; you remove the miseries of your devotees, day and night. Hail Lord...

Yavana swaroopee aikhyaa darshana twaan dhidhale, Samsaya nirsuniyaan thatdwaitaa ghaalavile Gopichandaa mandaa twaanchee uddharile, Momina vamsee janmuni lokaan taariyale Jaya Deva Jaya Deva...

You gave Darshan (divine vision) to someone in the guise of Moslem. By removing all doubts, you set him on the path leading towards the unity with the Self. Even Raja Gopichanda and the river Mandakini (Ganges) were purified by you. Born of a Moslem family of weavers you had brought salvation to all the people. Hail Lord Sai...

Bhed na tathwee hindoo yavananchaa kaanhee Daawayaansee jzaalaa punarapi naradehee Paahasin premaane too Hindu yavanaanhee, Daavisi aatmatwaane vyaapaka haa sayee Jaya Deva Jaya Deva...

You do not distinguish between Hindus and Moslems. In the present human form taken by you, you give the same look of love both to the Hindus and Moslems and establish the universality of your love. Hail Lord Sai...

Devaa Sayeenaathaa twatpadanata vhaahe, paramaayaamohita janamochana jhanin vhaave Twakripayaa sakalaanche sankata niraasaawe, deshila tari de twadhyash krishnaane gaave Jaya Deva Jaya Deva...

O the Lord Sainatha, I would always like to be at your feet, Liberate the mankind stepped in worldly illusions and remove their difficulties by your grace. If you desire to give me anything, then give me the ability to sing your prayers. Hail Lord...

– Dr. Subodh Agarwal

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Back

Sadguru Sai Baba's Boundless Glory

Quran - Namaaz; Pooja - Archana - Granthawaachan : The aim of all paths of worship is same

One must consider the feelings that the then Muslim devotees had in their mind. It will be appreciated that as Muslims experienced Baba as their '*Parvardigar*', while He was also the '*Aaradhya Daivat*' of Hindus.

Narasimha Swami has compiled the experiences narrated by Hindu and Muslim devotees in his compendium '*Sai Baba & His Devotees' Experiences*'.

Shirdi's Abdullajaan writes - "There I heard that an *Avalia* named Sai Baba is showering money over *Fakirs*. As I entered the *Sabha-mandap* door my eyes came into contact with His eyes. And, it was at that very moment I realized that 'He is my *Guru* !' Therefore, I resolved to stay there permanently... As I stayed near Baba, there was a positive change in my mental set-up. When I first came to Shirdi, I considered the Hindus to be my enemies. But, this feeling of enmity started diminishing slowly and vanished completely – so much so that I started likening Hindus to be my brothers."

Abdullajaan was once making preparations to go to sleep near Akun Baba's tomb. He prayed that, "With your blessings, I have been fortunate enough to be under the shade of Baba's umbrella. Now take me under the umbrella of your blessings." At that time, Baba was not *Dehadhari*. However, He appeared in the dream of Abdullajaan. He seemed to be sitting on a chair near his bed. Abdullajaan writes - "I woke up. And I felt that I am still under the umbrella of Baba's blessings. Because, at that time, I had prayed to Akun Baba and not to Sai Baba."

Another staunch Muslim devotee from Nagpur named Abdullakhan had come to Baba. He once angrily said to Him - "I have observed the type of practices you follow here. You are trampling on the basic principles of Islam. Therefore, you must be beheaded." Baba heard this, gave him a glance and smiled. The next moment – as if by magic – there was a transformation in Abdullakhan. He apologized to Baba and Baba smiled once again.

Rajaballi Mohammed Khan writes - "Baba is a saint whose powers are very wide. As per Muslim religion, a saint never dies. He merely moves from one sphere to another."

Adam Dalal from Bandra, Mumbai writes - "I am a devotee of Sai Baba since long. He was very compassionate and large hearted. On many occasions He has come to my help. Who would have come to my rescue besides Him ? He has blessed me with His *Darshan* – once as a *Brahmin* and once as a *Marwadi*."

Anwarkhan writes - "Baba told me to recite 101 times the *Mantra* from Quran's first chapter."

Shirdi's Abdul Baba says - "I used to recite Quran sitting next to Sai Baba. Sometimes Baba opened a page from Quran at random and told me to commence recitation from that page. On some occasions He used to recite Quran rapidly from memory. He is the *Parwardigar*. Every word uttered by Him is sacred. I have jotted down His utterances in my notebook. His guidance through His remarks was accurate. I use them to resolve problems of others also and it is useful. Baba sometimes uttered sacred couplets from Quran."

Imambhai Chhotekhan of Vijapur writes in this regard... "Baba knew language spoken by Arabs. He used to teach Quran to Abdulla. I have also seen Baba performing *Namaaz* sitting near *Dhuni*. Others kneel on their knees and bend their bodies while performing *Namaaz*. However, Baba did not do so."

But, Dasganu Maharaj's observations differ in this respect. He says - "Many Muslims observe *Namaaz* as many as five times a day. Leave aside five times, I have not heard Baba performing *Namaaz* even once in a day. However, He sometimes gave *Fatya* or on rare occasions He recited couplets from Quran."

Baba respected recitation of Quran and the practice of observing *Namaaz*. He similarly held in high regard the prayers and holy books of Hindus. In the *Masjid*, occasionally, there used to be reading of Satyanarayan *Pooja Pothe*, Ram-vijay, Dnyaneshwari, and Vishnu-Sahasra-Naam. Further, with Baba's permission, the devotees sat in the *Masjid* and read various holy books. Baba also followed the principles stated in various great religious books such as Dnyaneshwari, Eknathi Bhagwat, Tukarama's *Gaatha* etc. and also forced His disciples to follow suit.

Baba directed Kakasaheb Dixit to read Bhavartha Ramayan and Eknathi Bhagwat and Bapusaheb Jog to read Dnyaneshwari and Bhagwat every day. Baba Himself got some of His devotees to read him tomes like Gurucharitra, Vishnu-Sahastra-Naam, Bhagvad Geeta etc.

If any devotees visiting Him needed clarification on religious and personal matters, Baba advised him saying - “Go to Dixit or Bapusaheb !” After the devotee did as guided, he would automatically get the required clarification on hearing the recitation of holy books which was going on there.

Over the years, Baba placed several books in the hands of Madhavrao Deshpande and told him, “Keep these ! They will be of lot of use later on.”

Mainatai Kuvlekar (daughter of Nanasaheb Chandorkar) has written that “Many times Baba recited *Shlokas* from Bhagvad Geeta. Many devotees followed practice of buying religious books and getting them blessed by Baba. It was observed that later on, after reading the books, the devotees benefited immensely from *Parmarthik* point of view.”

It was Megha who first performed the three daily *Aaratis* of Baba. After, Megha’s demise the task was handed over to Bapusaheb Jog by Baba Himself.

Some devotees have written that “At the time of the *Aaratis* of *Gurudev* Datta, Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram, Baba’s eyes used to twinkle and He nodded His head.”

The present day *Aaratis* – which are being sung from that time – repeatedly refer Baba as ‘Datta-Digambar’. There is *Aarati* “*Jaydev Jaydev Datta Avadhoota Ho Sai Avadhoota*” which was penned considering Baba as ‘Datta’. It clearly says - “You have appeared as a Muslim to unite people. You have taken birth in Momin *Vansh* to rescue people.”

(Serially)



Back

Experiences of Sai Maharaj

The following experiences were sent to Shri Annasaheb Dabholkar by Shri Vinayak Sitaram Mulherkar for publishing in the Sai Leela.

I was working as a Head Clerk in the Thane Forest Division and my office was in Bandra. I used to travel from Lower Parel to Bandra by the daily passenger train. Many of my friends in Bandra used to visit Shirdi for Baba's *Darshan*. They used to bring 'Udi', 'Prasad' and other articles, and occasionally gave *Udi* and *Prasad* to me. Some would put *Udi* on my forehead. Even though I accepted the same, Due to my inadequate knowledge and viewpoint I would say I do not believe in such things. Unless Baba inspires me, I will not visit Shirdi.

Many days passed in the same circumstances. Many devotees would visit Shirdi and describe Baba's inexplicable *Leelas*. Consequently people from Mumbai, Bandra, Vasai, Virar, Agashi, Dahanu, and Umbergaon also started visiting Shirdi for *Darshan*. But, I stuck to my resolve of not going unless Baba inspired me.

After some days, it so happened that one Thursday (the day I used to fast), I finished my regular routine and went to sleep. I awoke with the feeling that I should visit Baba today. Earlier at dawn, I got a divine vision which I cannot express. I took my morning tea, left for office at 8 a.m. and took the signatures of the boss on some important papers. When I asked him for leave, he promptly gave it to me saying - "Okay, I shall give you leave for 3-4 days since you are going for a good cause." He also added, "I too have to visit a relative in Nasik; so we can leave together in the same train." I came home around 11 a.m. and told my wife, "Today Baba has inspired me to go; so I shall be leaving by the afternoon train." She immediately agreed; but was apprehensive about the long distance, unknown place, nobody to go together with, no known person in a faraway place as well as the chilly weather. Though all these points were valid, the inspiration in my mind took precedence; and so I completed the rituals of the Thursday fast and left.

I reached Kopergaon Station in the morning. While inquiring about a *Tonga* to take me to Shirdi, I met my old friend Dr. R. R. Chaubal, who had alighted from the same train. Since Shirdi was our destination and meeting Baba our aim, our happiness knew no bounds. When the *Tonga* reached the banks of the Godavari, I met my childhood friend Shri Gajananrao Kanekar, who inquired about the *Tonga* and sent his sepoy to bring us home as his guests. Soon the *Tonga* reached his bungalow and he was very happy to see us. He took down our luggage and pressed us to stay. In the end after partaking some tea and light refreshments we requested him to let us leave as we wished to take Sai's *Darshan* at *Aarati* time; and so we had to reach there soon and so could not prolong our stay.

Presently we left and reached Shirdi about 30-45 minutes before *Aarati* time. We stayed in Kakasaheb Dikshit's *Wada*. We met Kakasaheb and he made all the arrangements for us. In a little while we went for the *Aarati*. I experienced great bliss upon Baba's *Darshan* and an elation which I had never felt before. When I prostrated to touch Baba's feet, I was taken aback when He said, "You needed to be inspired by me to come here isn't it?" The very same thoughts were twirling in my mind. Realizing Baba's omnipotence, I prostrated once again. Baba blessed me with His eyes and with His hands by caressing my body. Then He asked me to get up. Dr. Chaubal too took *Darshan* at that time.

Later, when we both went to take Baba's leave (as we both wished to go to Pune), Baba asked the Doctor, "One of my devotees in Bandra is taking treatment from you. Has his fever subsided and is he feeling better now?" When Baba did not know about Dr. Chaubal being a doctor and practicing in Bandra, yet He asked about His devotee's well-being, Dr. Chaubal was amazed. This strengthened our belief that Baba was an incarnation of God.

First meeting with Baba. It just proves how much Baba cared for His devotees' welfare and that He could read their minds and give appropriate hints that He knew what was in their minds. Though my wife had some valid reservations about my visit to Shirdi, yet there were no hitches in my trip to take Sai's *Darshan*.

Second experience : My wife used to say that since I had made several trips to Shirdi, I should take the family at least once.

So, once I took them along. When we went for *Darshan*, my wife sat amongst the ladies assembled there. When Baba described the daily household routine of family life, my wife realized it was a narration of her own life, and experienced untold happiness which cannot be explained. Baba also advised as to how one should behave. My wife became such an ardent devotee that she always said, "Ask Baba and do what He says." So, once I asked Him about my daughter's wedding. "What you have in mind is the best and the marriage will be fixed there. The girl will live happily ever after." The girl was married to the boy as decided and is living in luxury and happiness. Baba had blessed my wife by putting His hand on her head, and she remembers it vividly.

Sai Leela Year I, Ashvin Shaké 1845 / vol. 8 Translated into English by

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In Sai's Proximity

Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

RAMGEERBUA GOSAVI

Ramgeerbua Gosavi

(Translated from an article in Marathi, first published in Saileela January - February 2005)

Ramgeerbua Gosavi - a Param Bhakta of Shri Sai Baba - was one of those fortune souls who were blessed to live in the times of Sai Baba and experience His *Sagun Avatar*.

Ramgeerbua was originally a resident of Shirdi. His birth must have taken place between the years 1856 and 1860. The house in which he stayed belonged to his maternal grandmother. He grew up in the same house since his childhood. Therefore, throughout his life, he had the privilege of being near Sai Baba.

Ramgeerbua led a *Shuddha Jeevan*. He had no family or children. He lived like *Sanyasi* and roamed as he wished.

Baba had lovingly named him 'Bapugeer'. Most people from Shirdi knew him as Bapugeer.

He came to know about a lot of aspects Sai Baba's life from the residents of Shirdi and also got information confirmed independently. Ramgeerbua shared most of his information with Shri Narisimha Swami. Thus several facets of Baba's life came to light when Narasimha Swami asked Ramgeerbua questions on the subject.

Chandbhai of Dhoopkhed village had himself narrated to Ramgeerbua the story of how Baba helped him in finding his lost mare and how Baba first arrived in Shirdi along with a marriage procession.

Some of the other incidents conveyed by Ramgeerbua are as follows :—

After making His first appearance in Shirdi, Baba disappeared after some time. He then arrived again in Shirdi after a lapse of three years. Bapugeer recounted that according to the villagers, when Baba returned to Shirdi, He had kept His hair long up to His waist. He wore a green *Kafni* and *Topi*. He carried in His hand *Satka*, *Chillum* and a match box.

Readers may recall an incident where Baba had lost a wrestling bout to one Mohiddin. His nephew used to practice black magic at Belapur. He started performing his mumbo-jumbo in Shirdi against the wishes of Baba. Baba had a sight with the magician and left Shirdi in anger. He started saying in a jungle about 2 miles away from Shirdi. The villagers used to visit Him there; but He would abuse them and drive them away. Several times, Baba used to spend days there without food and water.

Baba had started a beautiful garden on the waste land behind the *Masjid*. On occasions, he used to go to meet Khushalchand Marwadi at Rahata. While returning from there on foot, Baba brought with Him saplings of flowers such as *Zendu*, *Jaal*, *Jui* etc. He planted them with His own hands. For watering the garden, Baba used the earthen pots freshly made by Waman Tatya.

Once, Gangageer Maharaj of Puntamba had come to Shirdi. He saw Sai Baba watering the plants and said to Nanasaheb Dengale and others who were present, "He is a jewel ! Though today you seen Him watering the plants, He is no common person," Bapugeerbua had heard this incident from some senior citizens of Shirdi.

At that time, there was brook near the border of Shirdi and there was a *Babhool* tree whose one of the branches had got bent towards the ground. It was Baba's practice to sit under this branch. Later on, He moved and started sitting under a *Nimb* tree in the village. Thereafter, He lived permanently in the *Masjid* till the end.

Once, a Muslim boy climbed on the *Nimb* tree and fell down. Baba sensed this incident while sitting in the *Masjid* and shouted loudly, "Are, the thieves will kill that boy !" At that time, Bapugeer was with Baba.

Baba uttered these words and the news of the boy having died came to the *Masjid*.

Once, Baba saw in his vision that a bale of hay belonging to Bhagchand Marwadi had caught fire. Baba immediately said to Bhagchand to run and extinguish the fire. After sometime, He Himself also went there, made some gestures with His hands and the fire ceased immediately.

Another interesting episode took place in the year 1903-04. Mainatai – daughter of Nanasaheb Chandorkar – was pregnant and facing severe difficulties in delivering the child. The pains were unbearable. Exactly at that time, Ramgeerbua was sitting on journey towards his native place in Khandesh. It was the practice of citizens of Shirdi to seek permission of Shri Sai Baba while setting foot for any important work. Accordingly, Ramgeerbua arrived in the *Masjid* to seek Baba's *Udi* and blessings for his journey. Baba said "Bapugeer, definitely go to your native place. But before that, go to Jamner and enquire about Nana and his family's well-being." Then Baba asked Madhavrao Deshpande to give Ramgeerbua "*Aarati Sai Baba*" (written by Madhavrao Adkar) and a packet of *Udi*. He added, "Give this *Aarati* and *Udi* to Nanasaheb and then proceed on your journey to your native place."

Ramgeerbua was surprised with this task. He asked Baba, "Baba, I have only two rupees in my pocket. How can I travel in this meager amount to Jamner?" Baba smiled and said, "Everything will be managed!"

After receiving Baba's blessings, Ramgeerbua commenced his journey. Catching the evening train, he reached Manmad by 7.30. From there he arrived in Jalgaon by 3 a.m. By now, he had already spent 1 Rupee and 14 Annas. He had now with him only 2 Annas. It was clear that he will have to walk all the way to Jamner. As he was worrying about this, a sepoy approached him and asked, "Who is Bapugeer of Shirdi?" The introduction over, the sepoy said, "Shri Chandorkar has sent me to bring you. Be quick and sit in the *Tonga*, They are waiting for us."

His worries over, Ramgeerbua became happy. The sepoy was a smart man. He had kept a beard and a mustache. He was dressed immaculately with shoes. He was driving the *Tonga* with efficiency and speed. Around 3.15 a.m. he stopped the *Tonga* at a stream near village Waghur. He watered the horse and said, "Let us eat something and then proceed on our journey."

As his appearance resembled a Muslim. Bua asked him about his caste. He replied, "I am a Hindu *Garewal Kshatriya Putra*. I am a *Rajput*. Nana has given these food articles for you."

With his mind set at rest, Ramgeerbua shared food with him. Early morning they reached Jamner. As soon as they entered the city, Nanasaheb's office could be seen at a distance. The horses rested for a while. Ramgeerbua also went to a roadside to relieve himself. When he returned, there was no sign of the *Tonga* as well as the sepoy. The place was empty. Ramgeerbua was confused. He went to the office. There he came to know that Nanasaheb is at home. He searched for the house to meet Nanasaheb.

Here, as his daughter's health was critical, Nanasaheb had begun holy rites of *Navachandi Havan*, *Saptashati Path* etc. Bapugeerbua placed the *Aarati* and packet of *Udi* on Nana's hands. Tears welled in his eyes seeing this *Leela* of Shri Sai Baba. He called his wife and told her to mix the *Udi* with water and feed to Mainatai. He himself began reciting the *Aarati*. The moment the *Udi* was fed, Mainatai got relieved and delivered the child.

Ramgeerbua asked Nana, "Where is the *Tonga* that you had sent? And, I don't see the sepoy anywhere." Nanasaheb was surprised. He said, "No one knew that you were coming. How can I send a *Tonga*?"

Ramgeerbua narrated all the details to Nanasaheb and to here that Leela, everybody got mere stunned.

(contd.)

– Translated from original Marathi into

English by **Sudhir**



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Shri Sai Baba Punyatithi Utsav - 2007

**“Even if I shed this mortal coil
I shall come running for my devotees”**

The annual Shri Sai Baba *Punyatithi* (89th anniversary of Baba leaving His mortal coil) *Utsav* (festival) was observed in all sanctity and with great enthusiasm from Saturday, October 20, 2007 to Tuesday, October 23, 2007, on behalf of the Shree Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi.

Kakad Aarati of Shri Sai was done at 5.15 a.m. on Saturday, October 20. The *Shobhayatra* (grand procession) of the photo of Shri Sai, the sacred book ‘Shri Sai Satcharita’ and *Veena* accompanied by the music of various instruments and the loud chanting of Sai’s name was taken out. Trustee Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya with the *Veena*, trustee Shri Ashok Khambekar with the sacred book and the Sansthan *Sevak* Shri Pramod Medhi and Shri Balasaheb Joshi with the photo of Sai, participated in the *Shobhayatra*. After the grand procession culminated at Dwarkamai from the *Samadhi Mandir* the *Akhand* (uninterrupted) reading of Shri Sai Satcharita began. The first five chapters were read by trustee Shri Ashok Khambekar, trustee Smt. Urmila Jadhav, Mrs. Saraswati Wakchaure, Shri Laxman Turakane (*Chopdar*) and Shri Hanumant Gade respectively. At 6.30 a.m. Shri Sai was given a holy bath in a pleasant atmosphere. At 7.30 a.m. the worship of Shri Sai’s holy feet was done by trustees Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya and Shri Ramakant Karnik. At 8 a.m. the *Abhishek Pooja* was done. At 8.30 a.m. the sacred wear (*Vastra*) and other offerings made to Shri Sai were auctioned and given away as *Prasad*. The noon *Aarati* was held at 12.30 p.m. *Hari Bhakta Parayan (HBP)* Shri Sharadmaharaj Neralkar of Nanded performed the *Kirtan* from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. *Dhooparati* was done at 6 p.m. A programme of devotional songs on Sai Baba was presented by Shri Bholanath Samel of Mumbai at 7 p.m. on the new stage in the Saranjame garden adjoining the *Samadhi Mandir*. The artistes who participated in this programme were felicitated by trustee Shri Ashok Khambekar on behalf of the Sansthan. At 9.15 p.m. a grand procession with musical accompaniments of Shri Sai’s *Palkhi* (palanquin) was taken out through the village. The *Palkhi* was led by Shrikrishna Band from Bhoiwada, Mumbai, Sanmitra Yuvak Mandal’s Cymbal Band from Shirdi, the *Lezim* Band of Shri Sainath Secondary School girls, *Shehnai -Choughada* musicians and local *Bhajan* (devotional songs) *Mandals*. A spectacular display of fire crackers also marked *Shobhayatra*. After the *Palkhi* reached the temple premises Shri Subhash Jakhadi, Shri Prakash Bhalerao and others presented the traditional ‘Bharud’ programme in front of the *Palkhi*. Since the *Akhand* reading of Shri Sai Satcharita was on, Dwarkamai was kept open the whole night.

At 5.15 a.m. on Sunday, October 21 *Kakad Aarati* of Shri Sai was done. At 5.45 a.m. the *Akhand* reading concluded. At 6.15 a.m. Shri Sai was given the holy bath. On this very significant day, the photo of Shri Sai, the holy book ‘Shri Sai Satcharita’ and *Veena* was brought back to *Samadhi Mandir* from Dwarkamai in a grand procession amidst sounding various musical instruments and loud chanting of Shri Sai’s name. Trustee Shri Pandurang Abhang with *Veena*, chairman Shri Jayant Sasane with wife Rajashri with the holy book and trustees Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya and Shri Ashok Khambekar with Shri Sai’s photo participated in the *Shobhayatra*. At 8.30 a.m. the clothing and other items offered to Shri Sai were auctioned and given away as *Prasad*. At 9 a.m. the ‘*Bhikshajholi*’ programme was held with great enthusiasm. Trustees Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya, Shri Suresh Wabale, Shri Pandurang Abhang, Shri Ashok Khambekar and executive officer Shri Bhausahab Wakchaure, administrative officer Shri Subhash Jagtap alongwith the 20 Sai devotees - selected to hold the *Bhikshajholi* through a lucky draw, participated in the programme. A special melodious presentation of *Kirtan* by H.B.P. Shri Sharadmaharaj Neralkar was made from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At noon the *Aradhana* rites and worship was done by the chairman Shri Jayant Sasane and Mrs. Rajashri Sasane. The noon *Aarati* was performed at 12.30 p.m. After that the *Prasad* meals programme was organized on the first floor of the *Samadhi Mandir*. *Vastradan* (donating clothing) was done by executive officer Shri Bhausahab Wakchaure alongwith his wife to *Brahmin Suvasinis* (ladies whose husbands are living). At 2 p.m. the descendents of those devotees who served Shri Sai Baba during His lifetime in Shirdi were heartily felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan with a coconut, shawl, and photo of Shri Sai by chairman Shri Jayant Sasane, trustees Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, Shri Ashok Khambekar, Shri Suresh Wabale, Dr. Eknath

Gondkar, Smt. Urmila Jadhav, trustee and chairman of Shirdi Municipal Council Mrs. Sumitratai Kote, Mrs. Rajashri Sasane, chairman of Ahmednagar Zilla Parishad Mrs. Shalini Vikhe Patil, executive officer Shri Bhausahab Wakchaure. A *Seemollanghan* procession was taken out from *Samadhi Mandir* to Khandoba *Mandir*. *Dhooparati* was done at 6 p.m. A programme of devotional songs by Shri Sanjay Kulkarni of Savalivihir was presented from 7 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. A *Bharatnatyam* dance recital was presented by Mrs. Kalpana Mane and her troupe from 9.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. on the new stage in Saranjame garden adjoining the *Samadhi Mandir*. The artistes participating in this programme were felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan by trustee Shri Ashok Khambekar. At 9.15 p.m. a grand procession of Shri Sai's *Rath* (chariot) was taken out through the village. Shrikrishna Band, Sanmitra Yuvak Mandal's Cymbal Band, the *Lezim* Band of Shri Sainath Secondary School girls, *Shehnai - Choughada* musicians, local *Bhajan Mandals* and others registered their attendance in front of the chariot. There was an attractive display of fire crackers during the chariot *Shobhayatra*. A *Bharud* programme was presented by Shri Subhash Jakhadi, Shri Prakash Bhalerao, Shri Kishor Gagare, Shri Sharad Pathare, Shri Baban Thore, Shri Bapu Jakhadi and others in front of the chariot after it entered the temple premises. At 11 p.m. the programme of paying obeisance to Shri Sai by the artistes began. Being a very significant day the *Samadhi Mandir* was kept open for *Darshan* the whole night.

On Monday, October 22 after Shri Sai's holy bath at 6 a.m., trustee Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya with his wife performed worship of Shri Sai's holy feet. The noon *Aarati* of Shri Sai started at 12.30 p.m. Shri Sai's *Dhooparati* was done at 6 p.m. Being Ekadashi on that day *H.B.P.* Shri Sharadmaharaj Neralkar's special *Kirtan* programme began at 7.30 p.m. After the *Kirtan* Shri Sai's *Shejarati* was done at 10 p.m.

On the concluding day of the festival, on Tuesday, October 23 the *Kakad Aarati* was done at 5.15 a.m. Trustees Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya, Shri Ashok Khambekar and Shri Suresh Wabale along with their wives performed the *Rudrabhishek* in *Gurusthan* at 7.30 a.m. At 10.30 p.m. *H.B.P.* Shri Sharadmaharaj Neralkar's *Kirtan* programme on Gopalakala began. As per the annual ritual, the breaking of *Dahihandi* was done after the Gopalakala *Kirtan* in the *Samadhi Mandir* at 12 p.m. After that the noon *Aarati* began at 12.15 p.m. On behalf of the Sansthan, trustees Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya, Shri Ashok Khambekar and Shri Suresh Wabale felicitated *H.B.P.* Shri Sharadmaharaj Neralkar for presenting melodious *Kirtans* on all the four days of the Shri Sai Baba *Punyatithi* festival. Invitee artist Shri R. K. Saxena of Delhi presented a programme of Sai *Bhajans* from 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. on the new stage in the Saranjame garden adjoining the *Samadhi Mandir*. The artistes participating in the programme were felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan by the administrative officer Shri P. P. Deshpande.

The replica of the gateway of Akshardham temple erected at the main entrance by Dwarkamai Mandal of Mumbai was the main attraction of this festival. The moving replica of the annihilation of Mahishasura in Lendibaug, attractive electrical lighting, the floral decorations in the temple and the temple premises by Vasant Krishnadas Maharaj Seva Samiti Trust, Shri Sopanrao Durafe of Mumbai and Shri Ramdas Bangar of Pune drew everybody's attention at the festival.

On Tuesday, October 23, mass village meal was served on behalf of Shri Sai Baba Sansthan and Shirdi villagers.

The Shri Sai Baba *Punyatithi* Utsav was thus conducted in a beautiful ambience with devotional enthusiasm. ...



Back

**Whatever was desired was got fulfilled !
Sri Sai's Strange Grace !!**

- B.Vijaykumar (Hyderabad, A. P.)

Lakhs of devotees from all over the country and the globe come to Shirdi for the *Darshan* of Shri Sai Baba. Many among these devotees are philanthropic. I consider myself very privileged as Baba chose a common person like me to offer Him the golden footwear, golden net and the *Kalash* of the *Samadhi Mandir* and get the adjoining *Gopurams* gold-plated.

Me and my wife, Vanaja came into the fold of Baba around 1989-90. Prior to that I was in service. Whenever I was transferred in my job, I left all my belongings in that place itself and presented myself at the new posting. Only the idol of Baba, received as a gift in our marriage, traveled with us, wherever we went. We did not pay serious attention to this idol. Later in Hyderabad when we purchased a new car, we used to go for Baba's *Darshan*. However without going into the temple, we took *Darshan* from outside itself. In 2004, we started going to the Shri Sai Baba temple in Panchkuta, Hyderabad. Gradually we started doing the *Aarati* every night at 10 o' clock. The idol in the temple was very beautiful. But due to paucity of funds the flooring work was pending. I expressed my desire, to get the flooring of the temple done, to the temple secretary. I expected it to cost Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 lakhs. The temple secretary directly selected white Italian marble for the said work. Two and a half years ago a Marwari householder had purchased such marble for his own house. I got them for Rs. 15 lakhs. With the blessings of Baba this was the first donation made by me in my life. With this flooring the ambience of the temple was transformed and slowly the flow of donations to the temple also began. Further, my wife Vanaja expressed her desire to donate funds for the temple's meditation hall. Accordingly we again gave a donation of Rs. 10 lakhs. After that, a devotee got a centralized air conditioner installed. Even a golden throne for Baba is getting ready in the temple. After donating to this temple my trade also flourished at very rapid pace. I tried to spend all the wealth acquired with the grace of Baba, for Baba's work only.

On October 8th, I came to Shirdi for Sai Baba's *Darshan* with friends and then slowly the regular trips to Shirdi began. From 2006, I began coming to Shirdi every month. Later I began coming twice a month, then thrice a month and now I come four times a month for Baba's *Darshan*. Now I have firmly realized that there is nothing other than Baba. In 2005, when the worship in the temple of my house was on, one out of the 20 to 25 bells began chiming without any wind or whiff of air. I considered it to be Baba's miracle. I had purchased a Hindi book titled, "You only gave me the pain, You only will give me the balm." When one opened this book, a fragrance would pervade. Once while doing worship in my house on Ramnavami, the flame of the lamp was extinguished by my wife and it was lighted again automatically. We were all overcome with emotion at these miracles of Baba. Since Sai Baba had given us everything, we never asked for anything from Baba. Our only prayer is to keep everybody happy.

After coming to Shirdi for *Darshan*, we made many new acquaintances. I got to know Shri Shrinivas, who looked after the old-age *Ashram* of Dwarkamai Seva Trust in Shirdi. Shri Shrinivas later introduced me to the trustee of the Sansthan Dr. Eknath Gondkar. Once Dr. Gondkar invited us to his house for break-fast. There we expressed to Dr. Gondkar our desire to give a permanent thing for Baba. I asked if we would be permitted to do so. On that Dr. Gondkar asked us to place our proposed desire ! He said, he would place it at the meeting of the Board of Trustees. I desired to present a golden *Padukas* (footwears) for which I was ordinarily prepared to spend Rs. 3.5 lakhs. Accordingly I applied for a proper permission to be allowed to donate the golden *Padukas*. The Board of Trustees approved the same. I am grateful to the chairman of the Sansthan Shri Jayant Sasane, the vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe, the Sansthan's Board of Trustees and executive officer Shri Bhausahab Wakchaure. The Board of Trustees granted the permission; but stated that 3.5 kgs of gold would be required for the purpose. I was only prepared for Rs. 3.5 lakhs. "Baba had given the permission and now Baba alone would arrange it," with these sentiments I went to Hyderabad. I was in the business of buying and selling land. I wanted to sell 16 acres of land. I had mentally decided that whatever money I get over and above my desired amount, I will donate it entirely for Baba's *Padukas*. With Baba's blessings a customer also came, He paid much more than I expected. After concluding the deal he gave me 50% of the amount due in cash and for the balance he requested me to accept 3 kgs of gold biscuit. In my business I was never offered gold in lieu of cash. Considering it Baba's miracle, I came to Shirdi that very night. I offered 3 kgs gold to Baba, as it was not mine. I told those concerned to begin work of the *Padukas* immediately. In a week's time I got further cash equivalent to the cost of half kg. gold, which I deposited with the Sansthan. Baba's *Padukas* were ready and ritually installed with *Pooja-archana* in the temple. It is indeed my great fortune to be given this opportunity.

After the dedication of Sai Baba's *Padukas* my business also increased a great deal. I got known all over the country. In one deal I got more money than I needed from the party of Chennai. A thought came to my mind to

donate something to the temple in the name of my father. Accordingly, when I came on Diwali for Laxmi-pooja, the priest of the temple said it would be nice if there was a netted cover for the water placed for Baba. With the blessings of Baba, I immediately offered a 3.5 kgs gold netted cover to the temple.

One day, the caretaker of the old-age *Ashram* Shri Shrinivas took us for breakfast to the Dwarkamai eating house in front of Dwarkamai, from where we saw the temple top (*Kalash*). The *Kalash* of Tirupati instantly flashed before my eyes and I got a desire to have the same for Sai Baba's temple. It was Baba Who put this desire in my mind and indicated to begin the work soon. I expressed this desire to the temple trustee Dr. Eknath Gondkar and presented my application for the same. I was given an estimated requirement of 3 kgs. of gold for this work, and I consented. Only the labour charges was more for this work. I met the executive officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure. He gave permission immediately. In the first phase I deposited a gold biscuit of 1 kg. with the Sansthan. Once again I received gold in lieu of cash in a deal. I began accepting that Baba was giving me this gold for His work only. Even this gold I deposited with those concerned. The work on the *Kalash* was completed on *Gurupournima Utsav* day and ritually consecrated too. My aged mother came to this programme, climbed the temple steps and reached the venue of the *Kalash* worship programme. In fact Baba only gave her the strength. Today when I see the *Kalash*, I fail to express in words the immense joy and fulfillment I experience.

Baba has mentioned the significance of donating food (*Annadan*) in Shri Sai Satcharita. Accordingly we did *Annadan* on Gurupournima day for 25000 people in Shirdi. On August 30, 2007, we entered our new home. To mark the occasion we did Annadan to serve 25000 people in the Sai Baba temple at Vanasthalipuram also. There is a desire to offer much more services to Baba. I intend to donate a cowshed (*Goshala*) in Shirdi; so that the fuel for the *Dhuni* would be available from this *Goshala*. But, it is equally true that this work is not possible without the wish of Baba.

It is accrued blessings of our previous births that Baba gave us this opportunity to serve Him. There are lakhs of hands that come to Shirdi and give. I consider it my great fortune to be selected by Baba for the above work. In the true sense, all this credit goes to Baba, as I served Baba only with the surplus I received. This I humbly admit here. While serving Baba in Shirdi, the Sansthan's chairman Shri Jayant Sasane, vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe, trustees Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and Dr. Eknath Gondkar, all other trustees, executive officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure and employees of all departments in the Sansthan, showered us with lots of love. We can never forget their love and the reverential hospitality they showed us at all times.

Penned in Marathi by **Mohan Yadav**

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Attention Devout Devotees

Devout devotees are hereby informed that some selfish individuals are forming fake organizations to indicate that these are branches of the official Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi. It has come to our notice that these organizations are collecting donations from devout devotees by misrepresenting their organizations as that of the Shirdi Sansthan.

Barring only one branch in Mumbai, the Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi does not have any other branches anywhere. Hence, all devotees should beware of the lies and false representations of such misrepresenting individuals and organizations.

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