



JULY-AUGUST 201

1Estd. Year 1923

Year 9 Issue 4

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Main

Experiences of Sai Maharaj

(Contd. from May-June, 2011 issue)

(46)

EXPERIENCES OF SHANTARAM BALWANT NACHANE OF DAHANU

3. Haribhau Phanse is freed in the appeal...

Before visiting Shirdi, we had been to Mumbai. There, in the neighbouring Mohan Building, Haribhau Phanse was visiting Shri Chaubal. He had been sentenced for six months rigorous imprisonment in a police case, and was now on parole. He had now come for an appeal. When he came to know I was going to Shirdi, he did a *namaskar* to me and pleaded me to tell Baba of his plight, "I am not guilty and have been wrongly punished."

When I went to give this message to Baba in the morning, Baba, in an extremely angry mood after the *Kakad Aarti* said, "Tell him he will be freed in the appeal. Not to worry." By the time I gave this answer to Phanse, he had already been set free in the appeal.

4. Atmaram's wife has a change of mind after eating Baba's Prasad...

When we returned one of our friends, Gopal Keshav Vaidya asked his elder brother Atmaram to go for Baba's *Darshan*. Atmaram was 42 years old when he went to Shirdi and his wife had never seen his face. People from both families tried hard to change her mind, but she did not leave her parental home. But, when the *Prasad* from Shirdi was given to her, she came to her marital home the very same day and said to her brother-in-law Gopal, "One's marital home is one's true home. There is no happiness in the parental home." Gopal was surprised. The couple are now living happily and have children.

5. How Baba saved me from the clutches of a mad man...

In 1914, when I was working as cashier, I lived in a rented house near the Maruti Temple in Dahanu.

There was a *Talati* named Ramkrishna Balwant Phanse who lived nearby and had gone mad for some reason.

One day he came and stood near our kitchen door. I was worshipping our family deity and Sri Sai Baba. When I noticed Phanse, he jumped upon me and started to strangle me. He brought his mouth close to my neck and said he would strangulate me to death. In self-defence, I grabbed the *puja* spoon and tried to push it in his mouth, but with it my two fingers went in to his mouth. Shutting his mouth, he sunk his teeth into my hand. At the same time he choked my neck, his nails digging deep, and I bled. I swooned.

When I regained consciousness after doctor's treatment, I came to know that my brother had come in just then and he with my mother's help had freed me from the grip of the mad man.

When I went to Shirdi afterwards, Baba gave me a hint in the afternoon session. Pointing towards me he said to Anna Chinchnikar, "Anna, had I been even a little late, he would have been gone. That mad man almost throttled him. I saved him. What to do, if I do not save my own children, who will?"

When I heard these words, I was overwhelmed.

6. Why are you duping a poor *Brahmin* ?...

Our neighbour, Chaubal's mother had gone to Shirdi with Anand Rao K. Chaubal. She was a shrewd old woman. She told Anand Rao, "Give me one rupee change. I want to give 8 *annas* to Baba."

(In olden days, 1 rupee = 16 *annas*.)

Anand Rao gave her one 8 *anna* and two 4 *anna* coins. When the sly woman kept only 4 annas in front of Baba, he said, "Give me 4 annas more as *Dakshina*. Why are you duping a poor *Brahmin*? Hand it over to me." The lady shame-facedly gave another 4 annas to Baba.

7. Was it a visit to Shirdi or Pandharpur ?...

Shankar Rao's mother was leaving for a visit to Pandharpur. She decided to go via Shirdi.

Consequently, she went and took Sai's *Darshan*. Thereafter Baba said, "Now go back home." He told her to take some *Udi* and gave permission to go home.

The lady cancelled her trip to Pandharpur and returned home. When she reached her village, she searched for the packet of Udi in her baggage. But to her surprise, there was not *Udi*, but sweet-smelling *Bukka* (the holy black powder from Pandharpur) in the packet! She showed us the *Bukka* and said, "There is no *Udi* here, only *Bukka*!" We all said, "You have really visited Pandharpur! Baba has given you the right *Prasad*!"

8. "Always do the work entrusted to you !"...

In 1915, I decided to visit Shirdi once again. My wife, her mother and Shankar Rao accompanied me.

While travelling by train, we met Vasudeo Sitaram Samant, Veterinary Doctor and Sanitation Inspector at Vasai railway station. When he came to know of our plans, he gave me 2 annas and said, "Give Baba a coconut and with the remaining amount buy some camphor and incense sticks." I took the money and said okay, but forgot to do the needful. When I asked for Baba's leave, he said, "Go via Chitali, but do not cheat a poor Brahmin for 2 annas.

I then remembered and did as per Samant's wish; bought a coconut worth one and half annas and camphor and incense sticks with the remainder. When I again asked for permission to leave, Baba said, "Go, but always do the work entrusted to you, or else do not accept it."

9. Baba kept asking for more and more *Dakshina*...

Once, when I was in Shirdi, Shankar Rao came for Baba's *Darshan*. Baba asked for Rs.15/-. He did not have that much money and so went away, with a forlorn look on his face. When he came again, Baba asked for Rs.32/-. This saddened him even more and he began to leave. "Why don't you tell him you don't have the money?" I laughed, "You do not give him any response, and so Baba asks again and again."

Shankar Rao went once again, gathering his courage to tell Baba. This time Baba asked for Rs.64/- !

Shankar Rao said, "Baba, where do I have so much money?" Baba replied, "Request some people and send."

A few days later, Baba fell ill. So his devotees started a '*Saptaha*' (Devotional reading for a week). Sai devotee Shri G.R. Dabholkar wrote a letter to Shri Waman Balkrishna of Dahanu to collect donation for the *Bhandara* (*Prasad*). Waman Rao entrusted his younger brother Shankar Rao with this work. We showed the letter to the Sai devotees in our village and the total collection was Rs.64/-! We were really surprised about how Baba had asked for the very same amount in Shirdi!

10. 'Jai Sri Sai Baba! Save us Sai Baba !'...

In March 1915, Shantaram Moreshwar Phanse and I were returning from official duty. While passing through the jungle at night, our bullock-cart reached the Ranshet Pass. Suddenly the bullocks started behaving in a peculiar manner. They tried to reverse the cart. When we tried to find out the reason, at first we could not fathom anything. Then, glancing on one side, we saw that beyond the road the edge of the cliff was broken. If our cart tilted even a little towards that side, we would have fallen into the ravine.

At that moment, Shantaram asked me to look ahead and I saw a ferocious tiger facing south towards the cart. Here we were between the devil and the deep sea! On one side, if we did not get out and support the cart, it would fall into the ravine, and on the other, the tiger was waiting to pounce on us!! Between the two of us, Shantaram was more courageous and told me to hold on to the reins while he got down to rectify the cart's position. But I was scared out of my wits and unable to do so. Besides, one of the bullocks began to sit down.

My throat was parched. But keeping all faith in Sai, I started screaming “Jai Sri Sai Baba! Save us Sai Baba!!”

The tiger got up, jumped towards our right and was gone. When the tiger came towards our right, the bullocks were so scared they jumped and started running for their lives, saving both themselves and us. Thus chanting Sai’s name saved us from a calamity.

11. How Baba’s *Udi* cured a little boy...

There was the plague in Dahanu, so we were staying in a village called Raee. Moru, the younger son of Shri Ravji Sakharam Vaidya suddenly took ill and so his elder brother came to our house, asking for my father who was a *Vaidya*. Since my father was not at home, we told him to go to a doctor. Then on second thought I gave him Baba’s *Udi*. There was immediate improvement in the boy’s health after the application of *Udi* and he did not need any medicine.

12. How Baba saved Parshuram Appaji Nachane...

Parshuram Appaji Nachane was a *Talathi* in Dahanu. Once, he fell ill. He had visited Shirdi earlier.

Now he had seriously fallen ill. The doctor and the *Vaidya* (my father) had given up all hopes. But Parshuram as advised, kept Baba’s photo near him, lit a ghee lamp and his mother ignited an incense stick. She prayed to Baba, “Let my son get well. I will send him to Shirdi for your *darshan* as soon as he recovers.”

Baba answered her prayers and Parshuram recovered. He now has a couple of children and is happier than before.

13. Shri Ganesh Vaidya told me of his experience...

We were looking for a groom for my younger daughter. Early one morning, I saw Baba in my dream, pointing towards me and saying, “Why are you worried? Keshav Dixit has an eligible son.” I had never seen this boy before. When I woke up, I realised that I had seen another boy with this one, but could not recognise him. I described the boy to my son, saying that his father’s name was Keshav Dixit. Had he seen such a boy?

My younger son Dattu replied that there was indeed such a boy in his office and he would find out the details and let me know. Everything turned out to be as said by Baba. Shri Keshav Rao Dixit used to work in Shri Govind Rao Dabholkar’s office and had now retired. Govind Rao and I were good friends. The alliance took place as Baba had said and today they are living together in harmony.

Sai Leela, Year I,

Magh, *Shake* 1845, Vol XII



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1. “How can one *anna* be enough? Give me some more?”

On Friday, a day after the *Guru Purnima* festival in 1930, Rao Bahadur Moreswarrao Pradhan, Sunderrao Navalkar, his son and I left for Mumbai in the afternoon from Dixit Wada. Shri Hareram was sitting in the veranda. He first asked me and then Shri Pradhan for some money to feed *channa* to the children playing around.

It had been a practice for several years of Shri Pradhan to distribute eight annas worth of *channa* to people big and small every Friday and there had never been a break.

When Shri Hareram asked for money, Shri Pradhan had completely forgotten it was a Friday. He put one *anna* on Hareram’s palm. Hareram said, “There are so many children around, how can one *anna* be enough? Give me some more?” Suddenly it struck Pradhan that it must be Sai inspiring Hareram to ask for money. Once we had left by car, he would have missed his Friday ritual. He gave Hareram eight *annas*, who ordered the *channa* immediately.

I had already got into the car, wondering if we would be able to catch the train since the river was flooded, and was anxiously waiting for Pradhan and others to come.

Just then Pradhan came near the car. His eyes were brimming with tears of love. Looking at his happy face I was relieved and when he narrated the story, I marvelled at Sai's endless ways to keep his devotees' pledges.

Some may find this trivial, but I can never forget the happy tears on Pradhan's face.

Shri Hareram had initially asked me for some money and I had given two annas to him, whence he had similarly asked, "How can these be enough?" But I had ignored his plea and got into the car. Since I had no such pledge as to distribute *channa* on Fridays, I could ignore the plea without pricking my conscience. But for Pradhan, the same question alerted him to his pledge.

I found this incident quite amusing and marvelled how Baba was caring for his devotees even today.

2. "How amazing is Baba's *Leela* !"

Shri Chintamanrao Ramnath Satghare is a gentleman from an old and distinguished family residing in Bandra, Mumbai. He narrated this incident to me :

It was his practice for several months to light a lamp in front of Sai Baba's picture every evening. If for some reason he was expected to return late from work, he would instruct his mother to light the lamp. His mother always did as told and there had been no break in this ritual.

One Sunday, he left his house for some work in Mumbai. As he thought he would return before evening, he did not think it necessary to tell his mother to light the lamp.

His work in Mumbai took longer than expected and then at the insistence of his friends, he went to see a famous movie. It was evening and the lights were just coming on. Sometime after the movie began, the film snapped and while it was restored, the lights in the theatre were switched on. Unexpectedly, the power failed and there was darkness. The movie was not restored. Suddenly it struck him, that he had come to see the movie, but had not told his mother to light the lamp. Perhaps she too had forgotten, and Baba gave this indication with this blackout. Baba must be in the dark too.

As soon as this thought crossed his mind, he left his friends in the dark theatre and hurried towards the station. Luckily, he straightaway got a train and soon reached Bandra. He rushed home, only to find that his mother had indeed forgotten to light the lamp and there was darkness near Baba's picture.

Chintamanrao told me, "Babasaheb, you may say anything, but I am a small, ignorant child. This experience has overwhelmed me and I shall never forget it in my life. Though *Sai Mauli* is no longer visibly present, he loves us and shows it in many different ways through these incidents. We should feel deeply obliged."

Chintamanrao is a young man. While narrating this episode, he was truly astounded and he became emotional. Seeing him in such a condition made me extremely happy and I said, "How amazing is Baba's *Leela*!"

(7 July, 1930)

R. A. Tarkhad

1. "Baba, that kid is dead !"...

This incident took place two days after Holi in 1911. There was no '*Sabha Mandap*' in front of the Masjid then. The sun was scorching hot. Around 2pm, an 8-10 day old kid of a goat sauntered on the ground in front of the Masjid and fell down due to the excessive heat.

My friend's wife could not bear to see such a sight. As she went near the kid, some villagers too came there. When they declared it dead, she was grief-stricken. She approached bleary-eyed to Baba and said, "Baba, that kid is dead!"

Baba, who was watching the whole scenario, said, "Mother, it may not be dead. It may just be unconscious due to a sun-stroke."

"No Baba, it is dead."

"Is it so?"

Baba got up from his seat, took some water and went down to the kid. He held a steady stream of water as he went around the kid and also put some water in its mouth. Immediately, the little body shook and resumed breathing. Baba said, "See Mother, it was not dead. I told you it was unconscious due to the excessive heat."

The villagers said, "But it was not breathing, Baba!"

Baba laughed, "Come on, do not gather around it. It will get up and go now."

Soon the little kid got up baaing and pranced away happily.

Everyone was happy.

Sometime later, another incident took place. The only son of a woman in the village was dying due to a snake bite. He was about 10-12 years old. It was mid-night. She approached Baba with a fervent plea to give her some 'Tirtha' (Holy water). But Baba refused to give her Tirtha or Udi. He said, "Don't stop him!"

Eventually the boy died. Bhausahab Dixit could not accept it. He prayed Baba to intervene. But Baba said, "Bhau, you keep out of this." But Bhau kept on beseeching and falling at Baba's feet. In the end, Baba said, "The boy has reborn in a new body where he will be able to fulfil what this body would not have helped him to do. Do you want him to leave his new body, i.e. die there and come alive here?"

I shall do it for you, but do you know the outcome? Are you aware of the responsibility? Will you take it?"

Hearing this, Dixit was perplexed. Bringing the child alive meant Sai giving some years of his own life to the boy. In spite of that, he would not be able to fulfil his destiny. Realising this, Dixit relented and fell at Baba's feet, completely speechless.

It was not difficult for a divine being like Baba to bring a person alive. Had he not resurrected the goat kid? Then he could revive a human too.

We shall now consider what we can deduce from this. A similar case took place in the life of 'Bramhmibhoot' Sri Bhaskaranand Saraswati.

The astrologers had predicted the death of the son of a sub-judge of Nadia at the age of 17. But heeding his devotees' request, Sri Bhaskaranand Saraswati lent him 4 years of his own life and the day he lay down his life in Kashi, the young lad too passed away in Nadia. These things are unfathomable. Divine beings are not ordinary mortals. They are visual expressions of the Divine.

At the behest of the lad's grand-mother (who was a devotee), Sri Bhaskaranand Saraswati increased the boy's life-span and clearly said, "As long as I am alive, this boy shall live!"

One Thursday, when the boy was 21, he fell down while riding a horse and became unconscious. He died the following Sunday at noon. That same Thursday, the complete yogi Sri Bhaskaranand Saraswatiiji, took ill with a cholera-like malady. He was better the next day and sat for his usual consultations. But at dawn on Sunday, he again took ill and going into the Samadhi pose, he left this world at noon, right in front of his beloved devotees, including the Civil Surgeon and various British officers.

What lesson do we learn from this? It is obvious that Sri Bhaskaranand Saraswati gave four years of his own life to the lad for the love of the boy's father and grand-mother. It is my humble opinion that such stories help us to bravely face the calamities in our own life.

2. "Why does Baba ask for *Dakshina* ?"...

In December 1910, I went to Shirdi for Sai's *Charan Darshan* for the second time. The first time was in September. Then, I had seen Sai ask many people for *Dakshina*, but he had never asked me.

This time, I approached Baba after his bath at the well near Lendi Baug. (This well is not used now). I wanted to give him one rupee as *Dakshina* as it was a tradition that one should not visit a great soul empty-handed. When I went near Sai, he asked, "Hey, are you thinking of giving me some *Dakshina*?"

I said, "Yes Baba, what should I give?"

Baba said, "Give me two rupees."

I immediately gave them and sat amongst the conglomeration. A well-read and illustrious political figure was seated next to me at that time. I whispered my question to him, “Dadasaheb, why does Baba ask for *Dakshina*?” “I’ll tell you later” he said. When I repeated my question after some time, he said, “I think he removes our flaws by taking *Dakshina*.” He had almost murmured those words and could not have been heard by even the person next to us.

Baba was a few yards away. There was a huge crowd milling around and the cacophony was intense.

The smoke from the *Dhuni* was unbearable as there was no chimney then. Yet, Baba heard us and told Dadasaheb in no uncertain terms, “What nonsense are you telling him? Bhau, you pay no heed!”

The gentleman said, “No, Baba, I am sorry!” I shall never forget the expression on his face as he uttered those words!

3. “Keep that note safe ! It might be stolen !”...

This episode occurred a few days after *Holi* in 1913.

I was seated near Baba’s feet, when he asked for *Dakshina*. I did not have any change, but only a 5 rupee note. People around me said, “Baba does not take notes.” As I considered getting change, Baba said, “Give me that note!” I was overjoyed. He took the note, examined it from both sides and returned it to me. He said, “Bhau, I am giving this note back to you. Keep it safely!”

I did not pay much attention to his words and put it in the side pocket of my hunting coat. It could not fall out from there. Baba again said, “Bhau, see that you keep that note safe.” I patted my pocket and said, “Yes, Baba, I have kept it safe.” Baba said, “It might be stolen.”

I should at least have paid attention to his words then. But stupid me!

When I returned to Dixit Wada, I hanged the coat on a hook near the door and went down with the others for a meal. After returning, I checked my pocket, and lo! The note had disappeared! I later found out that while we were eating, a certain person had gone upstairs. This person had been strictly banned from going upstairs as Shri Dixit suspected him of stealing various objects of a number of people. Dixit wanted to hand him over to the police, but I did not let him do so. However, that man always held hostility against Dixit.

Old Man

Shri Sai Leela, Year VII,

Vol . 5-6-7-8

(Contd.)

Translated into English by **Jyoti Ranjan Raut**

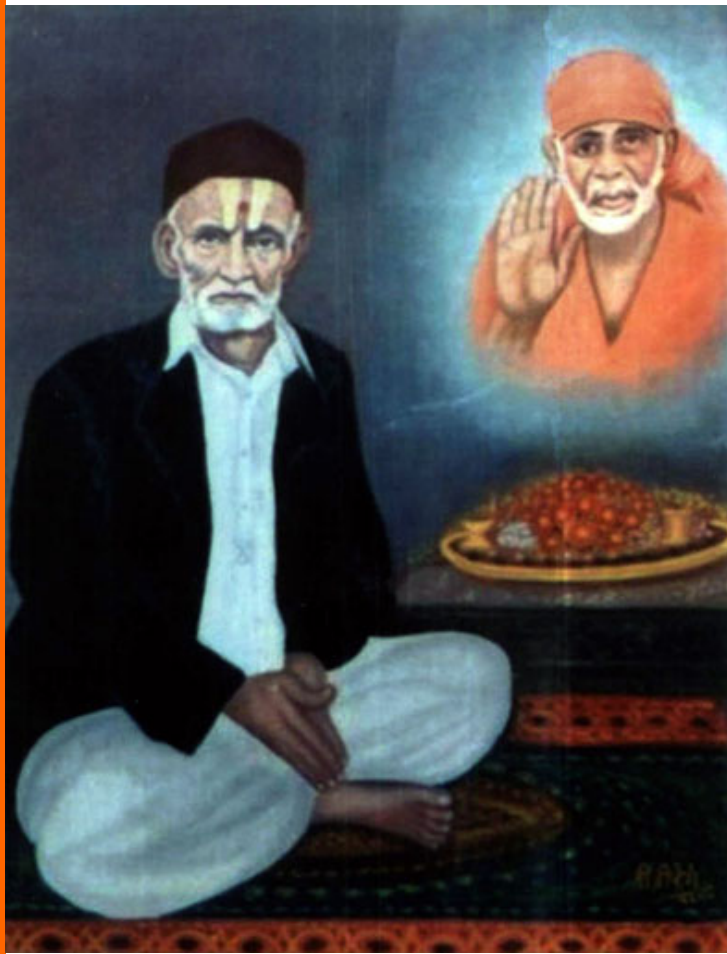
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MADHAVRAO ADKAR



The name of Madhavrao Adkar has reached in the world of 'Sai *Vishva*' through "Aarati Sai Baba..." which was composed by him.

The holy book of Srimad Bhagvad Gita has narrated the qualities of a *Dnyani* devotee. While reading these qualities, the name of Madhavrao Adkar comes easily to our minds. He had many of those values. Since his childhood, he was gloomy by nature. He believed that the world is mortal and therefore, one should not get attached to his human body. He felt that a person should remain away from all kinds of desires and temptations. He deemed that a person should travel on the path of truth, go to various places of pilgrimage and spend time in chanting the name of God. Thus, he would succeed in achieving the real goal of getting spiritual bliss.

In his own life, he made progress on that path and achieved the pinnacle of spirituality.

Early life

Adkar's family originated from the village of Dhanora, which is close to Ahmednagar. The family owned two *wadas* (large houses) and a lot of farm land. They were also holding the post of 'Kulkarni' and were trusted with collection and keeping accounts of govt. land revenue.

The *Mool Purush* of Adkar family was a person by the name 'Yogiraj'. His *samadhi* / tomb exists in one of the two *wadas*. In the recent times, the dilapidated *samadhi* was restored by Madhavrao's nephew Shri Vishnupant Adkar and members of his family.

Swami Yogiraj had only one son by the name Sabaji. Sabaji Pant had three sons. The eldest – Trimbakrao – was the grandfather of Madhavrao.

Madhavrao's father Vamanrao was a devotee of Lord Vitthal. He visited the pilgrimage town of Pandharpur four times in a year. His mother Godavaribai belonged to the religious family of Deshmukh.



Madhavrao was born on 5th September 1877 in this *Brahmin* rich and pious family. The birth took place at the house of his maternal grandparents at Ahmednagar.

About the birth, a story is being told in the family. According to it, Madhavrao's grandfather was sleeping in the *Salee Vitthal Mandir*. Around 2'o clock in the morning, he heard in his dream - "Get up ! You have been blessed with a grandson !!" He rushed towards his home. He came to know that his daughter has given birth to a son. He realized that the dream which he saw in *Vitthal Mandir* has come true. He felt that his grandson was like newly born Lord Madhav (another name of Lord Vitthal). Therefore, the family decided to name the child as Madhav.

In his childhood, a unique accident took place. While playing with little Madhav, his mother tossed him in the air, but failed to catch him. He landed in the sand. The lady panicked. However, the child was smiling at her. The mother realized that there was something unique about her child.

Madhav had a younger brother, Ganesh and younger sister, Durga.

Madhavrao – a man without worldly desires

Madhav suffered a major mental shock, when his mother passed away. At that time he was only about 8-9 years of age. His playful nature suddenly became serious, sad and depressed. His grandparents had to shoulder the responsibility of brining up their three young grandchildren.

Madhav's father was always on the move as his job took him from place to place. Therefore, from 1885 to 1895, Madhav lived with the family of his maternal grandparents – Deshmukh at Ahmednagar. He completed his education up to matriculation there. He was known as a sharp and intelligent student. His favourite subject was mathematics.

In this connection, Madhavrao's grandson (Ramchandrapant's son) Shri Janardanpant says : "Madhavrao lost his mother at an early age and hence, was brought up by his maternal grandparents. Due to this, in the years, when he should have been playing with kids of his own age, he became depressed and dejected. This was, but natural. The atmosphere at his grandparent's house was religious and spiritual. Therefore, he began regularly accompanying his grandfather Nanasaheb to attend religious singing of *bhajans* and *kirtans*. He was gifted with a sweet voice and had a natural talent for singing. Therefore, he started going to musical classes and began getting trained in the art of singing. He used to get the opportunity to sing *abhangs*, when Belapurkar Maharaj's *dindi* used to arrive in the temple. The grandparents were overjoyed with his grandson's talent.

He developed a liking for reading religious literature like stories, *puran*, *pravachan*, *bhajan*, *kirtan* and the like.

However, misfortune was regularly visiting him. In due course, he lost his both maternal grandparents within a short span of 4 months. Therefore, he had no other alternative, but to come back to his father – where there was no lady to take care of him. Thus, the boy - who had lost his mother at an early age of about 8-9 years - also lost the couple, who gave him love and affection.

Madhav's father was employed as a '*Nakedar*' at village Karodgiri in Hyderabad state, which was under the rule of Nizam in those days.

While staying with his father, Madhavrao studied languages like Sanskrit, Farsi and Urdu and gained proficiency in the same. He completed education up to Inter and on his father's advice, took up a job as a teacher in the Nizam state education dept.

Madhav's father was many times away from his place residence. Therefore, Madhav was alone for several days at a time. Further, the responsibility of looking after his younger brother and sister also weighed on him. These all factors contributed to Madhav's depression even more.

To come out of these periods of darkness, Madhav took to a different path. On one hand, he began a search for the truth and eternal bliss. On the other hand, he was simultaneously, pursuing his job. He was not daunted by the difficult balancing act that he had to carry out.

Raghopant Kavade (jeweller from village Sade, taluka – Karmala, district – Solapur) was very much impressed by Madhavrao's sharp intelligence and beautiful handwriting. He wanted his daughter Gangubai to marry him. Accordingly, the marriage took place at village Sade in 1899. Madhavrao was 22 years old at that time.

Gangubai was fair and slim. By nature, she was devout, affectionate and sweet. She was good in womanly crafts like knitting and embroidery.

Even after getting married, Madhavrao did not alter his routines. By reasons of his job and visits to places of pilgrimage, he remained away from his own residence. Therefore, Gangubai had to stay with parents or with her

father-in-law for long periods of time.

After 11 long years, the couple had their first child. Krishnabai was born in 1910. Even after her birth, whenever Madhavrao came to his father's town, he did not stay there. He preferred to stay in nearby Maruti *Mandir* and spend his time alone.

While travelling, he ate whatever was available. He relished a dish made from egg-plant / brinjal. But, he never insisted on likes or dislikes in these matters of food. He managed his day even with a dry *bhakari/roti*, groundnuts, rice-flakes and similar things.

As far as his attire was concerned, he had no preferences. He wore a freshly washed shirt and *dhoti* and wore a coat and a cap. He would tie his books in a *dhoti*. He carried a yellow metal *lota* / jar. With these meager belongings, he had travelled even up to the far off holy town of Kashi/Banaras.

During his journeys, there were occasions when money would get exhausted. But, on every such circumstance, someone would come to his rescue. He was able to continue with his journey. His pocket never remained empty for long.

His favourite hobby was to distribute eatables amongst little children. He had no desire to collect things. Therefore, he was always busy in handing out, whatever he had, to people around him. If someone presented him with a cloth or any article, he would immediately part with it. Once, he attended the marriage in Vallabhbhai Patel's sister's family. He received a bowl made out of silver as a present. The moment he stepped out of the premises, he gave the bowl away to an unknown poor *Brahmin* – because he was the first person spotted by Madhavrao.

It was his nature to disappear from time to time and go on travels to any place that he wished. On one such occasion, he went to Shegao to avail the *darshan* of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. On return, he resumed his duties at village Ashti. At that time, Dasganu Maharaj had been transferred to nearby Jamkhed as a *Havaladar*. The two had met earlier. But, the meeting had not 'clicked'. This time, they really met and they became '*Gurubandhu*'.

Madhavrao's job was transferrable. According to his grandson Shri Janardanpant, from the old papers, that he has seen, Madhavrao had changed his jobs on 3-4 occasions. It seems that, whenever he felt like going on a pilgrimage tour and found that he did not have sufficient leave to his credit, he would simply leave the job !

(Continued)

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Translated from original Marathi into English by **Sudhir**



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Translated from Marathi into English by

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The annual Sri Gurupurnima festival, this year too was celebrated in a pious atmosphere, on behalf of the Sri Saibaba Sansthan from July 14, 2011 to July 16, 2011, amidst the chanting of Baba's name. On the main Gurupurnima day lakhs of devotees availed the darshan of Sri Saibaba's Samadhi. The number of devotees this year surpassed all previous years' highest record.

The Guru- shishya tradition is very ancient. Ashadhi Purnima is celebrated as Gurupurnima for the students to express their gratitude towards their Guru. This purnima is also known as Vyasa puja. The period of Sri Saibaba's mortal sojourn in Shirdi is also celebrated as Gurupurnima. Therefore, this day has extra-ordinary significance even today. Scores of devotees having faith in Sri Saibaba come to Shirdi and take darshan of Saibaba's Samadhi and register their attendance at the festival.

140 palanquins arrived from Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Harayana and various other places alongwith Maharashtra for this year's Gurupurnima festival. For the accompanying padayatris, accommodation mandap was erected along with shelves and bedding in Sainagar ground, Sainath mangal karyalaya, in front of Saiudhyan building, in the parking to the south of Bhakti nivas and in the old prasadalaya complex. Anticipating rains, tarpaulins were laid over the mandap.

Drinking water and accommodation were arranged for palanquins from Pune on behalf of the Sansthan. The whole of Shirdi reverberated with the name of Saibaba with the arrival of the palanquins in Shirdi.

On the first day of the festival on Thursday, July 14, the kakad arti of Saibaba was done at 4.30 a.m. After that a shobha yatra of the picture of Sri Saibaba, the sacred grantha-Sri Saisatcharita and the veena was taken out. Trustee shri Suresh Wabale participated in the shobha yatra by holding the veena, trustee shri Shailesh Kute held the grantha, trustees Dr. Eknath Gondkar and shri Krishnachandra Pandeya carried Baba's picture. After the shobha yatra arrived at Dwarkamai the complete reading of Sri Saisatcharita commenced. Trustee shri Shailesh Kute read the first chapter, trustee Dr. Eknath Gondkar read the second, shrimati Saraswati Bhausahab Wakchoure read the third, shrimati Daivashala Yeshvantrao Mane read the fourth, shrimati Manjushri Kishore More read the fifth and shrimati Shobhatai Eknath Gondkar read the sixth chapter. On this day the worship of Sri Sai's holy feet was done by trustees shri Krishnachandra Pandeya and Ramakant Karnik.

The mid-day arti of Sri Saibaba was done at 12.30 p.m. In the evening between 4 and 6 p.m. a programme of kirtans, in the tradition of Das Ganu Maharaj, by Hari Bhakta Parayan (HBP) shri Manohar Kokalegaonkar of Nanded was held, on the

platform beside the Samadhi mandir. The dhoop arti of Sri Saibaba was done in the evening at 7 p.m. The Sai bhajan sandhya programme of shri Bobby Srivastava of Mumbai at 7.30 p.m. and of Dr. Mangala Apte of Pune at 9.30 p.m. was held on the platform beside the Samadhi mandir. The participating artistes in the programme were felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan. At 9.15 p.m. the shobha yatra with the sounding of musical instruments of the palanquin (palkhi) of Sri Saibaba was taken from the Samadhi mandir to Dwarakamai and from there through Shirdi city. Local devotees and those from other places too joined the shobha yatra. Various musical bands, cymbal band, lezim band registered their attendance in the shobha yatra. The programme of Bharud was held when the palkhi entered the temple complex. As the non-stop (akhand) reading of Sri Saisatcharita was on during the festival, Dwarakamai was kept open throughout the night.

Friday, July 15 was the main day of the festival. The kakad arti of Sri Saibaba was done at 4.30 a.m. After kakad arti, a shobha yatra of the holy book (pothi), veena and the picture of Sri Saibaba was taken from Dwarakamai to Gurusthan and from there to Samadhi mandir. In this shobha yatra trustee shri Ashok Khambekar carried the veena, trustee Dr. Eknath Gondkar the pothi and trustees shri Pandurang Abhang and shri Krishnachandra Pandeya carried Sri Saibaba's picture. Trustees shri Suresh Wabale, Shailesh Kute, villagers and Sai devotees in large numbers were present on the occasion. After the shobha yatra reached the Samadhi mandir, the arti – Shirdi majhe Pandharpur, was done and the akhand parayan (reading) was concluded. The worship of the holy feet (padyapuja) was done by the president of the Sansthan, shri Jayant Sasane and shrimati Rajashri Sasane.

The mid-day arti was done at 12.30 p.m. The kirtan programme by HBP shri Manohar Kokalegaonkar was held from 4 to 6 p.m. The dhoop arti of Sri Saibaba was done at 7 p.m. At 7.30 p.m. the bhav and bhakti geet programme by shri Bhushan Toshniwal of Pune and at 9.30 p.m. the Sai swarnrityaotsav, a programme of variety songs by shri Vijay Sakharkar of Mumbai were presented. The participating artistes were felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan. At 9.30 p.m. the shobha yatra of the golden chariot of Sri Saibaba was taken out from Samadhi mandir to Dwarakamai and from there through Shirdi city. Local bhajan mandals, cymbal band, lezim band and band groups participated in this shobha yatra. The Bharud programme was done in front of the chariot after it entered the temple complex. Being the main day of the festival the Samadhi mandir was kept open throughout the night. Various artistes presented their programmes from mid-night to 5 a.m.

On Saturday, July 16, the concluding day of the festival, at 5.05 a.m. Sri Saibaba was given the holy bath. After that the padyapuja of Sri Saibaba was done by trustee shri Ashok Khambekar with his wife and trustee shri Krishnachandra Pandeya with his wife. They also did the rudra abhishek in Gurusthan at 7.30 a.m. At 10.30 a.m. HBP shri Manohar Kokalegaonkar's kirtan on Gopalakala was presented. After this kirtan, as per the tradition every year, a dahi handi was broken in the Samadhi mandir at 12 noon. After that the mid-day arti was done. HBP shri Manohar Kokalegaonkar was felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan.

At 7 p.m. dhoop arti of Sri Saibaba was done. At 7.30 p.m. a shehnai programme by ustad Mumtaz Hussain Khan of Varanasi and at 9.30 p.m. the Saibhajansandhya programme by shri Mukesh Saxena of New Delhi were presented on the dais beside the Samadhi mandir. The participating artistes in these programmes were felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan.

ETV, NTV (devotional) and other television channels did live telecast of the Sri Gurupurnima festival, enabling Sai devotees to avail the benefit of Sai darshan in their home.

On all 3 days during the festival, the prasad meal with a sweet was served in the Sai prasadalaya from donations by PARTHA IVC Sukanya Agrawal of Raipur, shri Saheblal Gupta of Mumbai, shri Anandprakash Choudhary of Delhi, shri Akshaya Divekar of Mumbai, shrimati Bina Maheshchand Sharma of Modinagar, shri V.R.S. Murthy of Banoor, Dr. Rajani Pandit of Canada, shri R.D.S. Manighar of Hyderabad, shrimati Kantaben Bharati of Hyderabad, Bhausaheb Madhavrao Choudhary of Nandurkhi bu., shri L.R. Choudhary of Faridabad and other Sai devotees.

Under the guidance of State minister for agriculture and marketing shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, president of the Sansthan shri Jayant Sasane, vice-president shri Shankarrao Kolhe, All other trustees of the Sansthan, executive officer shri Kishore More, and deputy executive officer Dr. Yeshwantrao Mane, all the administrative officers, departmental heads and employees of the Sansthan made special efforts for the successful conduct of the festival.

Other special features during the festival :

_ V.S.L. Industrial Pvt. Ltd. of Bangaluru donated various attractive decoration of beautiful flowers in the temple and the complex.

_ Sairaj Decorators of Mumbai did the dazzling electric lighting free of cost.

_ K.V. Subramaniam Yadav of Bangaluru donated 1.5 kgs. gold and 1.5 kgs. silver frame of Dwarakamai's picture.

_ Alka Kapoor of Delhi donated a golden agarbathi stand and necklace.