



‘Smritigami’ calls out, “*Bhiksham Dehi... !*”

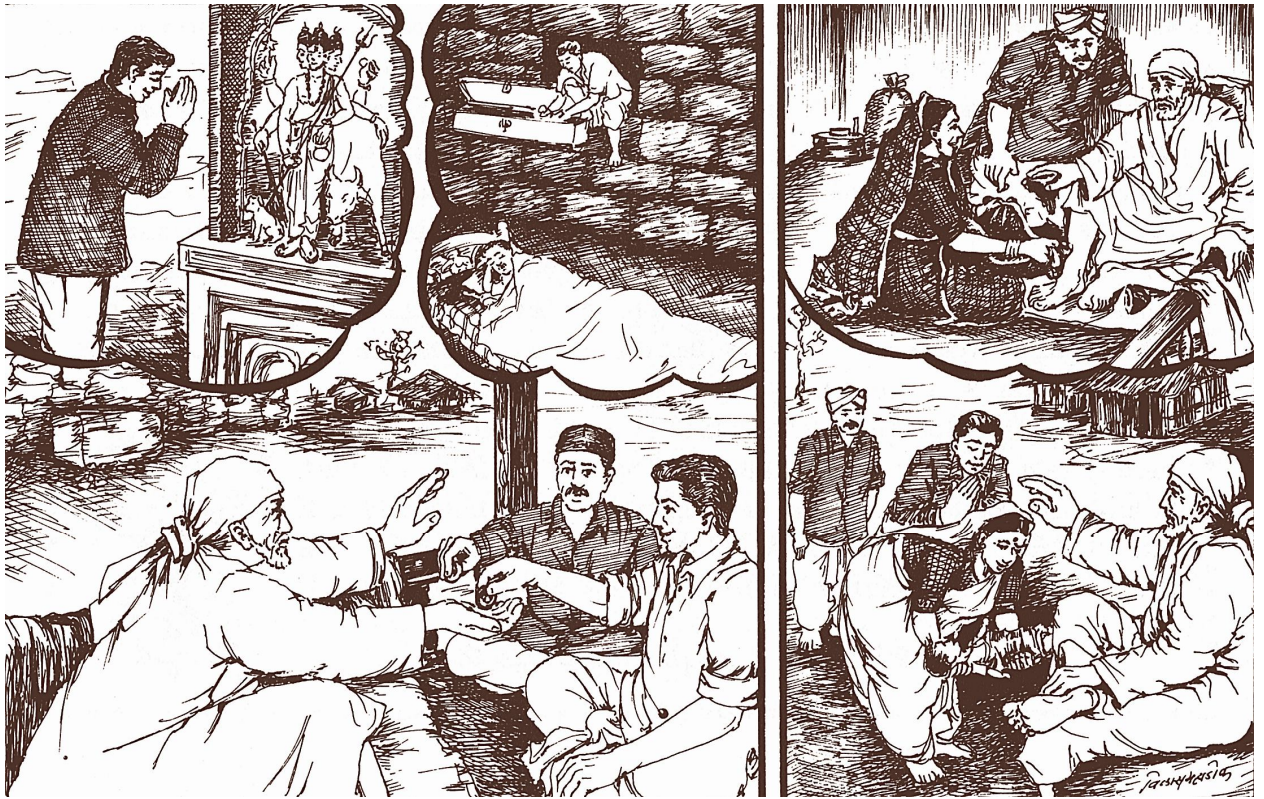
The Enlightened Being - Who helps all common beings find the rhythm of God’s grace, and in whom the divine functions of creation, sustenance, dissolution are constantly revealed- channeled through *Brahmarishi* Atri. The holy *Trimurti* or Trilogy consist of cosmic powers personalized in the form of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. This Holy Trinity amalgamated into one single boundless, eternal and immutable icon, namely, **Lord Dattatreya**.

Smritigami - this is the differential symptom of **Datta**. *Smritigami* means ‘Existence’ - Existence that makes its instant appearance on being remembered. Then, it may be any - of any form... That is why he, who comes to our rescue in the very darkest hours and hard times, is called ‘**Datta**’; and we exclaim thus : ‘The protector has come in the guise of **Lord Datta**’... and the Datta-Aarati puts its stamp on our exclamation, “**Datta yeuniya ubha thakla**” (Datta has come and stood in front of me.)

Like *Guru Dev Datta*, *Sadguru Sai Baba* assured, “**I shall be ever active and vigorous for the welfare of my devotees, even after leaving this earthly body. I’ll come to their rescue as and when they remember me.**”

Because of the visibility of extraordinary divine attributes in Sai Baba, we invoke Him thus : “**Aisa yei ba Sai Digambara...**” (“We invoke, thee, Oh Sai Digambar!”)

Those *sadhus*, *yatis*, *faqirs*, *sanyasis* and *vairagis* - who control destructive instincts and impressions and renounce the world in its entirety - are identified with *Avadhut Digambara*s...



... See, what happened once! Baba returned from the *Lendi* and sat in the *Masjid*. The devotees began arriving for *Darshan*.

Amongst them was the great devotee Chandorkar, whom Baba loved very much. He came with Biniwale (his brother-in-law), eager for *Darshan*.

After doing obeisance to Sai Nath, both of them sat in front of Him. While they were exchanging generalities about the welfare and well-being, Baba suddenly got angry.

Baba said, “Nana, how is it that you have forgotten? After having spent such a long time in my company, is this only, what you have learnt?”

Is this the result of the time, you have spent in my company? How could your judgement have strayed like this? Tell me in detail.”

Listening to this, Nana became dejected. He wondered about the reason for this anger, but could not recall anything. He felt sad.

He could not remember, where he had erred. He could find no reason for the anger. But, unless something had happened, Baba would never hurt anybody.

Therefore, he clutched Baba’s Feet and repeatedly entreated Him. Finally, Nana supplicated earnestly and asked, “Why are You angry?”

“Though you have been in association with me for so many years, how could you have acted thus? What happened to your senses?” Baba asked Nana.

“When did you come to Kopergaon? What happened on the way? Where did you get down on the way? Or did you come here straight?”

Something strange happened on the way. I feel like listening to it in detail. Tell me, what happened and where, be it a big or small incident.”

Hearing this, Nana realised his mistake and his face fell immediately. Though he felt ashamed to speak of it, he narrated it.

Nothing could be concealed here! Having decided this, Nana told Baba, whatever had happened in detail...

Nana said, “We hired a tonga to come straight to Shirdi, as a result of which Biniwale missed the *Darshan* of Lord Datta on the banks of Godavari.

Biniwale is a Datta devotee. When we came across the Datta temple on the way, he wanted to get down to have Datta’s *Darshan*.

But, I was in a hurry; So I prevented him and told him that we could take the *Darshan* on our return journey from Shirdi.

Thus becoming hasty and thinking, it would get late to come to Shirdi, I tried to avoid the matter and disregarded Datta’s *Darshan*.

Later, while bathing in Godavari, a big thorn pierced my foot and gave me a lot of trouble on the way, till I could pull it out with much effort.”

Then Baba advised, “It is not good to be in such haste. Thank your stars, that you had only the thorn to contend with, though you had disrespected the *Darshan*.

When a very venerated Deity like Datta is on the way, awaiting *Darshan*, unfortunate is he who has not taken the *Darshan*! How can I help him?”

Shri Sai Sat Charita Chapter 38

... Then, the guests replied in voices choking with tears, “Sai is Omniscient. He is the *Parabrahma Avatar*, without any duality. He is Infinite and All-Pervading.

Whatever He has said now, is word to word our own story. As soon as this delicious repast is over, we will tell you everything in detail.

Whatever Baba said has actually taken place in every detail. How did He come to know without even knowing us? Therefore, it is beyond our comprehension.”

So be it. After the meal, when they were chewing betel-nut leaf, with Madhavrao present, they started telling the stories.

One of the two gentlemen said, “The *ghats* are my native place; but I was destined to earn my livelihood from a place near the sea.

Therefore, I went to Goa and thought of getting a job there. For that purpose, I began worshipping and propitiating Lord Datta and took a vow to Him with great reverence.

I said, ‘O Lord, I need a job for the maintenance of the family. Therefore, be merciful and give me one. I prostrate at Your Feet.

Within a short time, if You keep Your word, I will offer to You my entire earnings of the first month.’

By good fortune, Lord Datta was propitious and, in a short time, the object of my vow was fulfilled. I began to get Rupees 15/- per month, as salary in the beginning.

Later, as Sai Baba described, my promotions came; but I totally forgot about the vow and Baba reminded me in this manner.

It may be considered that ‘*dakshina*’ was taken. But, it was not ‘*dakshina*’, but a repayment of a debt. He reminded me, by this pretext, of a very old vow.”

Shri Sai Sat Charita Chapter 36

... Then Sai gave *Udi* to the *gosavi* and made a small packet of it and placing it in his hand asked him to give it to Nana.

“Take both the *Udi* and *Aarati* and give them to Nana. Inquire after his well-being, and then proceed to go to your village,” He said.

This “*Aarati* Sai Baba”, is like ‘Dnyaneshwar’s *Aarati*’ composed by Ram Janardan. They both have the same tune.

Ram Janardan was a devotee of Swami Janardan, while Madhav Adkar was devoted to Sai’s Feet. This was an inspired composition and without it, Sai’s worship is incomplete.

As Baba liked this *Aarati* very much, listeners should hear this *Aarati* from beginning to end, which Baba sent with the *Udi*. Later, you will realise the fruits of it.

Aarati

Refrain :

“We do *Aarati* to Sai Baba, the Giver of happiness to all. Give refuge to the downtrodden and to Your devotees, who are at Your Feet. We do *Aarati* to Sai Baba.

Burn up the desires. To those who are engrossed in the Self, teach them to obtain *Moksha*. Let them see the Lord Shrirang, with their own eyes. Lord Shrirang. We do *Aarati*...

You grant suitable experiences to everyone in accordance with their faith and devotion. O, Merciful One! Such is Your own way. Your own way. We do *Aarati*...

Meditation upon Your Name removes the worldly sufferings of all. Unfathomable is Your action. Show the path to the unfortunate ones. Show the unfortunate ones. We do *Aarati*...

In this age of *Kaliyug*, You are the True *Brahma Avatar*, that has taken form and descended on this earth. You are also Swami Datta Digambar. Datta Digambar. We do *Aarati*...

Once a week, on Thursdays, the devotees take a trip to have a glimpse of the Lord’s Feet and to avert their worldly fears. Avert fears. We do *Aarati*...

The only wealth that I desire is to serve at Your Feet, O Lord of Lords. We do *Aarati*... Just as the Chatak bird, desires to drink pure water (rain water as it falls from the clouds), so give me Madhav, knowledge directly O Lord! And, kindly give me Your assurance. Your assurance. We do *Aarati*...”

Shri Sai Sat Charita Chapter 33

“ ... Who can give enough to another person? However, much is given, it is always inadequate. But, when my *Sarkar* (God) begins it lasts till the end of time. The only True Giver is my *Sarkar*. Can any else be compared with Him? How can the finite be the ornament of the infinite? My *Sarkar* says ‘take, take’; but everybody comes to me and says ‘give, give’. Nobody attends carefully to the meaning of, what I say. No one takes cognisance. My *Sarkar*’s treasury is overflowing. No one comes to fetch cart loads away. When I say ‘dig’, no one does so. No one wants to make efforts. I say ‘dig up this wealth and plunder cart loads of it. The blessed son of a true mother should fill his store with this wealth’...” **Shri Sai Baba Shri Sai Sat Charita**

Chapter 32

Though they don't own any world of their own, they still bother for the entire world; they maintain faith in others, and allow suffering their body for the welfare of others.

One out of these is the great Saint Sai, full of divine attributes and perfections. But, He lived like a *fakir* and was always engrossed in Self-realization. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 8)

Lord Dattatreya, Who absorbed the whole misery of the entire world into His heart, assured the mankind by putting His words in Sai Baba's mouth : **"If you cast your burden on me, I shall surely bear it... my words shall not pass away."**

Kashi snan jap, prati divashi

Kolhapur bhikshesi, nirmal nadi tunga

Jal prashi, nidra Mahur deshi...

(We invoke thee, Oh Sai Digambar, Who perform thy daily ceremonial ablutions at Kashi (Banares), accept alms at Kolhapur and drink everyday the pure water of the river Tungabhadra and retire to bed at Mahur every night)...

Lord Datta was such a mendicant Who - in the semblance of Sai Baba - stood as a beggar in front of the five houses in Shirdi and called out, "O mother! *Bhiksham Dehi!*" ("Give me a piece of bread"), and spread out His right hand to receive it in the *tumrel* (begging bowl), with a *jhola* (bag) hanging on His left shoulder. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 8).

It might possibly cause curiosity in the minds of most people that while the entire world and all the powers bowed down to these Divine *Avatars*, why should Both of Them have recourse to the begging bowl, all their lifetime? We have the answer to this inquisitiveness of the masses in the Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 9.

Without the five sacrifices (*Brahma Yagna* is reciting of *Vedas*, *Pitru Yagna* - offering food by encircling with water, *Dev Yagna* - offering food to the Deities, *Bhoota Yagna* - offering food to all creatures, *Atithi Yagna* - offering food to the uninvited guest, who may come to the doorstep), the householder is advised against eating of food. But, Sai would perform these sacrifices (for the sake of His devotees) and get the food cooked and daily purified the meals.

Everyday, He would go to five houses and remind the hosts about the *Atithi Yagna*. So, the persons were really fortunate, who could sit at home and earn the '*punya*' (merit of a good did).

Those people, who after performing the '*Panchmaha Yagnas*', ate the remaining food, were saved from the terrible and unknown five sins; because the sins were burnt.

The well-known five sins are : '*Kandani*' - pestle, '*Chulli*' - lighting the hearth fire, '*Udkumbhi*' - water pots, '*Peshani*' - grinding, '*Marjani*' - sweeping.

The grains are put in the pot (*ukhal*) and the pestle strikes the grain, so that the chaff is removed and unknowingly during this activity lives are destroyed.

But, the grains are not edible without the above-mentioned treatment. Therefore, the sin known as '*Kandani*', is counted first in the list of '*Panch Soonas*'.

In the stove, wood is burnt and cooking is done. There also, without knowing, life is destroyed. This sin is known as '*Chulli*', the second sin.

Even in a grinding stone or wooden grinding mill, when grains are ground, unknowingly innumerable lives are destroyed. That sin is known as '*Peshani*'.

When people bring water in the pots from a well, or a lake, or a tank, or when men and women wash clothes, innumerable lives are destroyed.

While cleaning the pot, scrubbing and rubbing with the hands, unwittingly life is destroyed. This is the fourth sin of '*Udkumbhi*'.

Similarly, when bathing in lukewarm water or while sprinkling cow-dung (on the floor), life is destroyed pitifully. This sin is called '*Marjani*'.

In order to be free from these five sins, a householder has to perform these five '*Maha Yagnas*', after which the sins are destroyed and he attains purity.

This is the power of purity of mind. The pure knowledge that is gained is sinless. After knowledge, liberation is secured. This is the attainment of the goal of life.

- Dr. Subodh Agarwal

'Shirdi Sai Dham',

29, Tilak Road, Dehra Dun - 248 001,

Uttarakhand.

Mobile : **(0)9897202810**

Tel. & Fax : **0135-2622810**

E-mail : **subodhagarwal27@gmail.com**

Interview with Sri K. V. Ramani - A well-known name amongst Shirdi Sai Baba temples and Sai devotees



Staunch Sai devotee and philanthropist par excellence Sri K. V. Ramani has magnanimously donated Rs. 112 crores for the construction of “Sai Ashram” project for Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi which is serving humanity by providing accommodation facility for Sai devotees.

Sri K. V. Ramani hails from Chennai and is a software expert and globe-trotting industrialist. But, he loves to describe himself as a Sai devotee

Personally he does not like any publicity, is pleasant to interact with, and charitable in disposition. When contacted for an interview, he flatly refused stating that any such interview would tantamount to publicity.

Later, when explained that this magazine serves as a bridge between Sai Baba, Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Sai temples and Sai devotees and an interview with devotees like Sri K. V. Ramani would help to achieve that purpose, he finally agreed.

During this interview Sri K. V. Ramani paid great attention to see that nothing is said by him about himself even inadvertently. His Sai devotion can be realized in this interview.

Q : It is known that Sri K. V. Ramani is a Sai devotee, a willing donor for Sai *seva* activities. Kindly tell us specifically about your family, Family Deity, etc.

A : I was born and brought up in Chennai. In those days, my late father Sri Krishnamurthy Iyer was a renowned lawyer and we were living in Mylapore. I studied in P. S. High School and Vivekanand College, Madras University. Our Family Deity is Shri Venkatachalapathy and Shri Padmavathy in Tirupathi. Since our residence was in Mylapore, Shri Kapaleeswarar and Karpagambal Shiva temple, Ganesha and Anjaneya Swami temples near Mylapore were all worshipped by us and often visited by our family.

Q : While living in Mylapore did you realize Shirdi Sai Baba?

A : Occasionally I used to visit Mylapore Sai Baba temple, but did not worship Sai seriously. You could blame my age for that, because whichever temple I visited, my prayers were limited to seeking good marks in exams, etc.

Q : Then, at what point of time, were you attracted to Shirdi Sai Baba?

A : I think it was in the year 1977. A relative of ours was seriously ill and was bedridden for nearly a week. The best doctors were consulted and all possible medical treatments were given, but the doctors nearly gave up all hopes. The relative had to be saved somehow, from the critical condition. We did not know what to do. It was at that time, a lightning thought occurred in my mind to pray to Sai Baba! I immediately prayed to Sai Baba from where I was, sincerely from the depth of my heart, to cure the patient. In addition, I also vowed to Sai Baba that I would visit and pray to Sai, every Thursday at a Sai temple. That is how Baba pulled this sparrow by a string to Sai and has taken complete care of me, protected me and made me progress materially and spiritually for over last 36 years!

Q : What happened to your relative?

A : Prayer to Shri Sai Baba yielded full beneficial result immediately. Sai blessed us with His Grace and our relative recovered completely. The most astonishing thing was that I prayed to Sai Baba at about 6 p.m. and within two hours, at about 8 p.m. my relative was cured completely. Doctors were greatly puzzled. They could not believe it. They said, “We do not know about nature and cause of the illness and the cure! Also, the reasons as to, how, why and what happened is not clear. But, the patient is perfectly alright now and can be discharged now”.

From that memorable divine event, my devotion to Sai Baba increased. From that day till today, every Thursday without fail, I am going to Sai Baba temple, to have Sai's *Darshan*. During my travels, especially abroad, when I am unable to visit Sai Baba temple on Thursdays due to circumstances, I pray to Sai from wherever I am.

Q : Not knowing anything about Sai Baba in the beginning, your devotion to Sai sprouted in later years and it is the same case with most of Baba's devotees. At the same time, through their ancestors, some sort of connection to Baba must have existed. In your case, was there any such link, through your father or mother?

A : I don't think my parents were devoted to Sai Baba that much. But, my father's younger brother, our uncle Sri Ramamurthy at Secunderabad was a well-known Sai devotee. I did not know this. Only recently, I came to know that he was a Sai *bhakta* and performed Sai *Pooja* and *Aaratis* every Thursday in his house.

Q : Since then, how did your devotion to Sai Baba increase?

A : I started my career in software in the year 1970, with training from IBM in Software and Systems Analysis and Design. From then, till 1985, I worked and built a career in software field, rising from programmer to manager level responsibilities in private sector. In 1985, I established my own private company "Future Software", specialising in communications and networking software. Later in 1990, I also partnered with minority interest, with Hughes of USA and started "Hughes Software Systems" in telecommunications software in Delhi.

In the mean time in 1989, seven of the software industry persons including me, felt the need for an organization to assist and work for the growth of software industry. Thus I was also an instrumental with six others in establishing NASSCOM, which has today contributed to the emergence and growth of a technology industry from India. Apart from being a co-founder and elected as an Executive Council Member several times, I also became the Chairman of Nasscom during 1997-98. At that time, my reputation, status and growth of my business undertakings were all on the ascendancy. I sincerely believe that Shirdi Sai Baba's full Blessing and Grace showered upon me was the reason for all this accomplishment.

Q : In the software sector, do you say that Sai Baba only was the reason for the success of all your ventures?

A : Sai Baba only brought me from a career job to industry! Sai Baba raised me step by step, from job to business and then to devotion and now to service and spirituality and Sai is still raising me. As a *Sadguru*, Sai first develops and makes you ready for the next step and then takes you to the next higher step, to ensure your success!

Ramani before devotion to Sai Baba was very different. After Sai entered my life and I started to worshipping Him, I am a distinctly different person.

Q : When did you start Shirdi Sai Trust?

A : With Sai's Blessings, Shirdi Sai Trust was founded in 1996. Before this, in 1993 Shri Sai Trust was started. Baba has ordered me to help many people and fulfil my *karma* and *dharma* to the extent possible. Accordingly, by utilizing a specified portion of what He has given me as income, every month, I am executing Sai's orders through the Trust.

In the beginning, I was carrying out the duties of these Trusts from our home itself, on Saturdays and Sundays. At certain point of time, this could not continue as the growing activities of the Trusts, was affecting the normal daily family and office routine. Under such circumstances only, I shifted the trust activities here to Krishnankarnai, with staff to support me.

Q : When you shifted the Trust activities to Krishnankarnai, did you decide to construct a meditation hall to Baba?

A : No, No! The plan at that time was just to build a small meditation *mandap*, 11 ft. by 11 ft. for me and my family to meditate exclusively. But, with Baba's Grace, it turned out to be a bigger center when we started the construction, leading to the inauguration of the meditation hall on 3rd April 2003.

Q : Please tell us the financial standing of the Trust?

A : Since inception, I was contributing a part of my income to the Trusts. Sai is providing enough funds required for the two Trusts and as ordered by Sai, we do not take any donations from others for these Trusts. In 2004, I sold my investments in both software companies for a good value. Already by Baba's Grace, I had wealth which was good for

three generations. Therefore, I gave eighty percent of the profits from my share of the companies to the Trusts. That is 80% to the Trust and 20% to the family. Based on this contribution in 2004, the Trusts grew financially much stronger.

Q : Did you spend from these funds to build Shirdi Sai Ashram? Kindly tell us more about Shirdi Sai Ashram?

A : Sai Ashram is a place for the devotees to stay in Shirdi. By Sai Baba's Grace, we built the accommodation in twenty acres of land given by Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi. We undertook the total responsibility for construction of the project. By awarding twelve contracts, it took five years to complete the construction at a total cost of about Rs. 112 crores from Shirdi Sai Trust, Chennai. Apart from this, land was made available and about Rs. 50 crores was spent by Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi for external infrastructure development works.

In Sai Ashram, 1,536 rooms have been built, 384 rooms with a/c and 1,152 rooms without a/c. In these rooms, 9,000 devotees can stay. Sai Ashram also has 192 dormitory rooms and about 5,000 people can stay in these dormitories. The project has all common facilities for the comfortable stay of devotees, including an open air theater for *bhajans*, *kirtans*, *palkhis* etc. In the total built up area of more than 9,00,000 square feet, nearly 14,000 devotees can stay comfortably. The Sai Ashram project has been fully handed over to Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi without any rooms for us and they will do the management, allotment of all the rooms, maintenance, etc.

Q : What are the activities you carry out through the Trust?

A : We evaluate and assist public charitable trusts and societies, who are constructing Sai temples in India. So far, we have made partial donations to about 450 Sai Baba's temples. For many temples, we have provided Sai Idols. We also utilise these Sai Baba temples as the vehicle for extending service activities such as, *annadaan*, education and medical assistance for deserving people. Presently, free lunch and dinner is provided for about 10,000 people daily. For people below poverty line, we also provide educational and medical assistance. This way every year approximately 4,000 persons receive medical assistance and about 3,000 students receive scholarships. All these assistance programs are given through Sai Baba temples, selected hospitals, selected educational institutions, old age homes and orphanages. Assistance of any kind is not given directly to any individuals. Assistance is given only after the requests are properly evaluated and reviewed by the respective Sai temples, educational and medical institutions and by us. All the beneficiaries are selected only on the basis of the merit and real need.

Q : You are rendering service through Sai Baba temples. Why not serve other temples also?

A : Sai Baba is not a religious *Guru*. He is a Spiritual *Sadguru*. Sai is a "*Samartha Sadguru*", transcending all the religions. Sai's teachings were common to all and not oriented towards any particular religion. "*Sab ka Malik Ek*" - "All religions are one and the same," says Baba. Therefore, we follow this message and assist Sai temples, without limiting ourselves to any particular religion, to create universal brotherhood.

If we start assistance to temples, we should also include churches and mosques and all other religious institutions. This is way beyond our scope and is not the objective. Baba taught me human compassion as the guiding principle and to consider people, beyond considerations of religion, caste or creed. This is what I try to follow using the Sai temples as the vehicle to help and assist all people, irrespective of their religious or other denominations, to contribute for the benefit of the society.

Q : Your Trust services are mostly social in nature. What does your Trust do on the spiritual lines?

A : For the spiritual service and progress *Avatar Purush* Baba is there. What can we mere mortals do! As for the Trust, it can do only its allotted duty of charitable social activities.

SAI BABA is not a RELIGIOUS GURU. SAI is a SPIRITUAL GURU and AVATAR.

Q : Coming back to devotion, during your prayers, they say that Sai talks to you?

A : Sai talks directly with anyone who prays to Sai with full faith, sincerity and devotion. They need not seek the assistance of any middle men.

Q : Can you kindly tell us about the matters that Sai Baba told you during your prayers?

A : Such divine experiences vary from one devotee to another and it will not be the same. In Shri Sai Sat Charita, Sai has advised us not to steal rags, when Sai is ready to give full gold shawl to us - Shri Sai Sat Charita Page 218. In the

same way, Sai Baba has ordered me that I should not reveal the spiritual experiences given to me by Sai, to others including members of my family.

Sai Baba Himself directly bestows such experiences to each and everyone of His devotees, based on their faith, beliefs, sincere devotion and spiritual evolution. Sai has asked devotees to pray to your Family God and then only come to Him, as a *Guru*. Sri Chandorkar story, Shri Sai Sat Charita Page 204. Sai grants favours for some devotees through important events and material gains in their life. For some devotees Sai gives personal experiences with wonderful, limitless beneficial results. He increases the devotion of some by appearances and messages in dreams. Thus, the experiences Sai bestows differ from person to person, based on their devotion and spiritual progress.

Q : Many persons claim that “Baba speaks to me”. What are your views on this?

A : I do not know about these claims. As far as I am concerned, my experience is as follows. Our brain many times thinks of many ideas. Many thoughts occur and disappear. On certain occasions, the thought in our brain strikes us like a lightning and we know and feel that “this is not my thought”. It is like pronouncements from a Divine Force in the outside world entering our brain and body, creating a new awareness in us. Our *rishis* and sages have absorbed the *Vedas* and *Mantras* like this only and handed over to the future generations of mankind. Similar examples are found in experiences of other religious leaders also.

We can experience this sometimes while reading “Shri Sai Sat Charita” also. We must be completely surrendered to Sai through our devotion and love for Sai without any ego, for this spiritual awakening to happen in us.

Q : You are often referring to “Shri Sai Sat Charita”. When did you read it first?

A : Shri Sai Sat Charita is a treasure chest containing the essence of the holy books of all the religions and is overflowing with the spiritual guidance for the reader. Every time you read Shri Sai Sat Charita, you get new meanings or revelations from this Sai literature. I cannot remember the time I started reading Shri Sai Sat Charita. It was several years ago.

Q : How many times have you read Shri Sai Sat Charita?

A : Even that, I cannot remember. “Many times” is all that I can say.

Q : You tour often and keep yourself busy always. Do you find time to read Shri Sai Sat Charita? Don’t you find it difficult?

A : There is no problem at all for finding time to read Shri Sai Sat Charita. About 20 minutes is enough to read one chapter. For our spiritual advancement, can we not find and allot at least 20 minutes each day?

Q : Kindly tell us about your experiences on reading Shri Sai Sat Charita.

A : Each time I read Shri Sai Sat Charita, I get a different meaning from the same text. I feel differently rejuvenated after reading each and every time. I also get guidance, further clarity and new meanings for spiritual progress on reading Shri Sai Sat Charita. Whatever confusion or problem I am facing, there is a solution found in reading Shri Sai Sat Charita.

Q : Tell us about your Shirdi visits. When did you go to Shirdi first?

A : I do not remember the year in which I went to Shirdi for the first time. I have gone to Shirdi many times and each visit has been special in some way! I could make the Shirdi visit, only on Baba’s call and invitation. If Sai does not will it or does not call you, you cannot visit shirdi.

Q : Has there been any instance when Sai did not call you to Shirdi?

A : I was going to Mylapore Sai temple regularly and did not plan to go to Shirdi for many years, after my devotion to Sai started. Later, on many occasions, I planned to go, but could not visit Shirdi. I really tried hard several times and for a long time, but I could not make the very first visit to Shirdi. For all such instances, Baba surely must have had some very good reason.

For instance, after starting “Hughes Software”, I was working for 15 days a month in Delhi and 15 days in Chennai. On one occasion, I started with a close friend from Delhi, with the intention of flying from Delhi to Mumbai and driving from there to Shirdi. But, on the way to Delhi airport, we heard about the bomb blasts in Mumbai and we were concerned.

We sought guidance of Sai and cancelled the trip to Shirdi. Later, from newspapers we came to know about the big bomb blast that occurred in Mumbai airport, very close to the time of landing of our flight! Sai averted the risk for us, by cancelling our planned visit to Shirdi and protecting us from any danger!

After that, a few years later, there was a sudden invitation to me, from a group of eminent Sai devotees, to attend a Sai *Naam Saptah* in Shri Khandobha temple in Shirdi. I attended the function and had a great treat of Sai *Darshan* to my heart's content. Such are the many wonders effected by Sai Baba.

Q : Baba has showered many gifts to you. At the same time, do you concede that Baba does give testing times to some others?

A : Sai Baba's ways are unique. Sai Baba always tests everyone for their *Shraddha* and *Saburi*, i.e. Faith and Patience. Being a *Sadguru*, Sai guides everybody day and night. Depending on the ability and merits of each person, Sai takes us along the path to our progress. Sai only knows what should be bestowed on us and the best time for giving it. Before Baba gives anything to us, He judges whether we are qualified to receive it. Shri Sai Sat Charita page 91 - Instead of making ourselves fit and suitable to receive the gift or boon we seek, we continue to expect Sai to give everything we want. Also, another important aspect is that Sai knows our past, present and future and only grants what is good for us and not necessarily what we seek which may not be good for us. That is why it results in disappointment for us. On the other hand, **when we do not expect anything from Sai Baba, and offer pure devotion and love to Sai and follow Sai's teachings and do service, we get much more than what we deserve.**

But, when we do not get what we desire, it is not testing! In material world, we should have Faith and Patience and wait for Sai to grant what is good for us. In spiritual pursuit, we should take it as if we are not fit to reach next higher stage in our life. We should take it as an experience gained and necessary for our spiritual progress. We can consider it as a lesson or teaching for our life.

Q : Where else could Sai devotees turn to, without praying to Sai Baba? Is Sai not their only Solace and Protector?

A : Yes indeed. You could tell Sai your difficulties and seek redress. Sai will do needful. Sai is the only Protector for us. There is no second opinion on that. But, your request is only a prayer to Him. What I want to say is about "*Bhakti*". We ask Baba for something. If we get it, we are happy and often forget Sai and think that we got it due to our own efforts! If we do not get it, we blame Baba. We say, "Baba did not do anything and He is testing us so much". We must look at the worldly material life and Godly spiritual life separately and differently.

Prayer is different from devotion. In prayer, which is materialistic, we pray and seek something from Sai. But, in devotion, which is spiritual, we offer unconditional love to Sai, without expecting anything from Him, except His Grace and Blessings.

Q : Can all the devotees differentiate as above and believe in it?

A : Why not? Sai says He would be with us for 72 "*Janmas*". Our previous births, the present one and next births are all known to Him. Baba keeps giving everything to all His devotees, based on their merits. Therefore, Sai does not leave any necessity for us to seek any favour from Him. Truth is that Sai keeps on giving more than what we deserve, on His own volition. Let me repeat that Sai only grants what is good for us and not necessarily what we seek which may not be good for us. That is why it results in disappointment for us. What is the difficulty in realizing and accepting this?

Q : Nevertheless, only when a need arises or only when the devotee finds themselves in a dilemma, the devotee feels the urge to ask Sai. What is wrong in that?

A : Yes, we are anxious in times of trouble and pray to Sai for help. This is prayer for a cause and seeking Sai's help by prayer is alright. After praying to Sai, be patient till the result comes through. That is what Baba means by offering "*Shraddha*" and "*Saburi*" or Faith and Patience as *dakshina* to Sai. When we lose Faith or Patience we lose the trust in Sai. When we lose the trust, we complain that Baba is testing us. Is testing us the sole purpose of Sai's *Avatar*?

But, *Bhakti* is different from prayer! Sai says, "In all situations trust in me. Even if the whole world turns upside down trust in me". Do you believe in it or not? If you do believe, the question of praying to Sai for a purpose does not arise. You should believe that Sai knows what is best for you and is always there to take complete care of you. This is total surrender to Sai and is the real and true devotion.

To put it succinctly, granting all our needs just like that, it is not Sai's only concern. While bestowing all our wishes, He has taken it on Himself the responsibilities to elevate us to the real goal in life, the path of Self Realisation. In Shri Sai Sat Charita, Sai has said that He has to account for all His devotees to *Allah*!

Q : What is Sai service and how do we serve Sai?

A : We frequently talk about Sai service. We are really not serving Sai! At best, we are serving Sai devotees in different ways. This service to Sai devotees is in itself a good purpose, as it leads to our own spiritual progress. When we progress in spiritual evolution, it pleases Sai, as this is the real purpose of Sai's *Avatar*!

Sai is God and does not need our services from human beings for Him! Sai is serving us. As a *Sadguru*, Sai is always watching us and serving us.

Sai is serving, guiding and preparing the devotee continuously and only after the devotee attains all the necessary requirements, Sai takes you to the next stage of spiritual progress. Sai gives bountifully and generously. What is the use of raising a person to a higher step, if he doesn't know how to climb? As a *Sadguru*, will Sai not consider this, before trying you to take you to the next higher step?

Q : Is there any method of seeking favour from Baba?

A : We should know how to seek and reach to Sai Baba, as the method is very important. Sai always protects His devotees by His Glance, just as the tortoise feeds her young ones, whether they are near her or away from her on the other side of the bank, by her loving glances. *Guru's* tortoise like loving glance gives us happiness. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Page 98)

For example, we may refer to T.V. If you switch it on, you will hear the jumbled noise only in the first instance. Only if we know how to tune it, we can see the required channel or program. For a moment, consider Baba like a T.V. station or cell phone tower. Sai is continuously transmitting and receiving or in other words, talking and listening in all the channels and frequencies. Only when we pray to Sai with full devotion, we can speak to or hear Sai in any one of the channels or frequencies tuned in by our devotion. There is a difference between just asking Sai plainly and asking Sai in an enlightened manner. If we do not know how to tune, there is no use even if we stand upside down for twelve hours and do penance, as our prayers are not reaching Sai. Sai Baba is always showering His Benevolent Grace on all. When you pray to Sai with devotion you become deserving to receive His Grace. First of all, we need to become worthy to receive Baba's Grace.

Q : You keep stressing on being deserving. Do we have that deserving status from birth? When we seek asylum and surrender to God, how can Baba reject us?

A : I did not say Baba rejects without compassion. He grants His Grace to each one according to what he deserves and only to the extent he is qualified to receive it, at any point of time. Whether we were born with or without the qualification, is not the criterion. We can become deserving by our acts, in this birth also.

We are born with "*karma*" and this cannot be refuted. Therefore, *Sadgurus* like Baba redress our problems to the extent and limitations of the effects of *karma*, or mitigate the adverse effects of *karma* or they grant us the strength to bear it. *Sadgurus* do not fully annul the effects of *karma*; because then in any case, we have to be born again and suffer the effects of our *karma* in the next birth. Therefore, the *Sadgurus* give their grace and protection and reduce the bad effects of the *karmas* and want us to fully finish off the effects our *karma* in this birth, without affecting us greatly. This will lead us to more progress in this or our next birth, ultimately leading to salvation or the merger of our soul with the *Parabrahman*. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Mr. Ambadekar story, Page 139)

Q : How do you see *karma*, its effects on us and the solution for us?

A : I see *karma* in three perspectives :-

First, *karma* from our previous birth, i.e., experience the effect of our actions in the previous birth. Secondly, the result of good actions or bad deeds of our parents. Thirdly, we have to face the reactions of the actions done by us, in this birth itself.

We face the effects of all these three *karmas* in our present life. We also commit various sins to accumulate wealth and leave the wealth behind for our children. After our life ends, the family enjoys the wealth; but we alone suffer the effects of these sins and *karmas*!

Therefore, Sai has taught us to keep only the wealth needed for you and your family and use the rest of the wealth to work out your *karma* and *dharma*. In this way, we will at least lighten our burden of *karmas* after our life ends. This is why Sai asked for *dakshina* from the devotees, to teach us non attachment, habit of sharing our wealth with others and to reduce our *karmic* bad effects. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, page 192)

We cannot avoid or escape from this Nature's law of *karma*. Even if we are badly affected by the first two cases of past *karmas* referred above, by living a life of practicing good deeds and *dharma* in this birth as taught by Sai, we can reap good results in overcoming the bad effects of our past *karmas*. By strongly clinging on to a *Sadguru* like Baba, we can get many beneficial results. How we dedicate and surrender ourselves totally to Baba is the most important aspect.

In Shri Sai Sat Charita, page 192, Baba says, "Debt, enmity and murder have to be atoned for, as there is no escape from them." These are our terrible *karmas*, from several births. Sai can stop the bad effects of our past *karmas*. But, we have to have another birth to face these effects. Even then, by completely surrendering to Baba, Sai can dilute the resultant harmful effects of our *karmas* and we can get a relief from the effects of these *karmas* in this birth itself. This is demonstrated by Sai in the Dr. Pillay story in Shri Sai Sat Charita, page 183.

Sai Baba guides by diluting and removing the effects of our *karmas* and actions and leads the devotees to progress. Sai is granting us a good and fruitful life leading ultimately to "*Moksha*" or freedom from the *karmic* cycle of birth and death. Sai has taken the full responsibility on our behalf. The sole purpose of Sai Baba's *Avatar*, is to help and enable us at every stage in this birth itself, to reach the stage of freedom from rebirth, and attain the realization of *Brahman* or merge with the Formless Source of all creation. In His unique way Sai Baba is keeping a constant watch to help us and is rendering a great service to all of us. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, page 85) To worship Sai with Faith and Patience and with full devotion is the only way open to us to become free from our *karmas*.

Q : How do we worship Baba?

A : We can worship Sai, in whichever way each devotee likes. But, the worship should be with full faith and devotion. You may worship Sai in *Nirgun* as Formless God, *Parabrahman* or in *Sagun* Form with traits in the Physical Form of an Idol or Picture. Shri Sai Sat Charita, page 63 and 99.

Sai does not want eight types of *poojas* or sixteen types of *upachars*. Sai resides where there is true love and devotion to Sai. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Pages 19 and 72) There is no need to offer gold, silver, precious items or money or share in business (Shri Sai Sat Charita, page, 132) to Sai, since Sai has given all of these to us in the first place! We have to offer pure love and devotion, by silently meditating on Sai and chanting "Sai, Sai, Sai" in our mind. That is enough!

Sai is the Supreme Being, the *Parabrahman*. Instead of doing the *pradakshina* around many temples and worshipping several Deities, worshipping Baba alone is enough. Worship of all the Incarnations or of all Religious Deities are the same. That is the *Ekatva* or the *Advait* principle. They are different roads to reach the same goal in life. This is what Sai means by His pronouncement "*Sab ka Malik Ek*", or There is only one God!

Q : How do we find out or differentiate between charitable activities and 'Sai service'?

A : Whatever we are doing to benefit or improve the life of other human beings or animals or other living beings, is considered charitable activity in general. Whatever we do as *poojas*, *bhajans* or other Sai *prachar* work, could be considered as service to Sai devotees. But, by these activities we are not rendering any service to Sai. Therefore, these are not "Sai service".

It is Sai Who is doing great service to us, by trying to make us progress in material terms and then advance spiritually to become better human beings. Sai the great "*Maha Purush*" Who has taken this *Avatar*, solely to save the mankind. Sai protects and guides us from all directions. There is no need for us to seek or pray for anything specifically from Sai. Sai knows everything about our past, present and future births. Sai trains us and helps us towards spiritual progress, to advance towards freedom from rebirth.

Sai is the Saviour not only for mankind, but for animals, birds and all living beings. He is the *Brahman* – Formless Primordial Creator, Who has come in human form for our sake. Sai *Avatar* itself is a service for advancement of all living beings.

Q : In this interview, finally what would you like to say?

A : Firstly, **apply *Udi* on your forehead and swallow a little bit daily and then offer your prayers to Shirdi Sai Baba with devotion and read at least one chapter of 'Shri Sai Sat Charita', without fail. At least one day in a week, go to a Sai temple, and pray to Sai with Faith and Patience, chanting "Sai, Sai, Sai" in your mind silently.** Shri Sai Sat Charita, Pages 61 & 72.

Sai will first grant all your material prayers and wishes required for your life. With this wealth, provide for your family; but you must also help others with a portion of your earnings given by Sai.

Then, simply concentrate and meditate thinking only of Sai. When you are free from material wants and ready for next stage of life, Sai will take you towards spiritual progress. Thereafter, with renewed devotion, surrender completely to Sai Baba. This experience is different for each devotee and therefore, do not compare yourself with other's experience and try to follow different practices followed by others!

Sai has said that He is not just this body of 3 cubits length and also that He will be ever active from the *Samadhi*. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Page 133) Therefore, try to experience Sai within yourself and not just as His Physical Form in an Idol or a Picture. Try to feel Sai's presence within us and see Sai inside every human being and all living beings. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Pages 85, 230) That is the spiritual quest.

When you can feel Sai's Formless Presence within you and in every other form of life, Sai Baba will surely come running and seeking you to and grant His Blessings for your spiritual progress. This spiritual path will lead you closer to Sai Baba and you will merge with Sai. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Page 230). Achievement of this union or total merger with Sai is the sole purpose and only goal of life for all Sai devotees.

Shri Sachchidanand Sadguru Sai Nath Maharaj ki jai!

Courtesy : Based on extracts taken partly from Sai Marggam, Tamil magazine, Diwali 2013 special issue and with additional views given by Sri K. V. Ramani.

Collection
Mohan Yadav
Public Relations Officer,
Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi)

Baba's love for *Bhaktas*

We think that we love Baba and go to Shirdi for His *Darshan*.

But it is Baba Who loves us more and it is His wish to see us, so He pulls us lovingly to Him.

Baba has said, **"My man can be in any place - even thousands of miles away. I will draw him to me with a string tied to his feet, like a sparrow."**

And the pull can be from birth after birth, and it is His love that we are attracted to Him.

One may recall this episode from Shri Sai Sat Charita -

One day, after Baba's meal, there was no one in the mosque, while wiping His hand on the towel, Baba pinched Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande) on the cheek affectionately. Shama feigning anger said, **"Deva (God), is it proper for You to pinch me like this? We don't want such a mischievous God. Is this the fruit of our intimacy?"**

Baba replied, **"O Shama, during the 72 births that you and I are together, I never pinched you till now, and you resent my touching you."**

Shama replied, **"I want a God Who will always love us and give us new dishes to eat. We do not want riches, but only firm faith in Your Feet."**

Baba said, **"Yes, I have come for that. I have been taking care of you and have received your love and affection."**

Baba's love for us is beyond our comprehension.

Jai Sai!

Shamshaad Ali Baig
E-mail : shamshaad.baig@gmail.com



Shirdi News

* Public Relations Publicity Section *

Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi)

- Translated from Marathi into English by Vishwarath Nayar

E-mail : vishwarathnayar@gmail.com

Shri Sai Baba

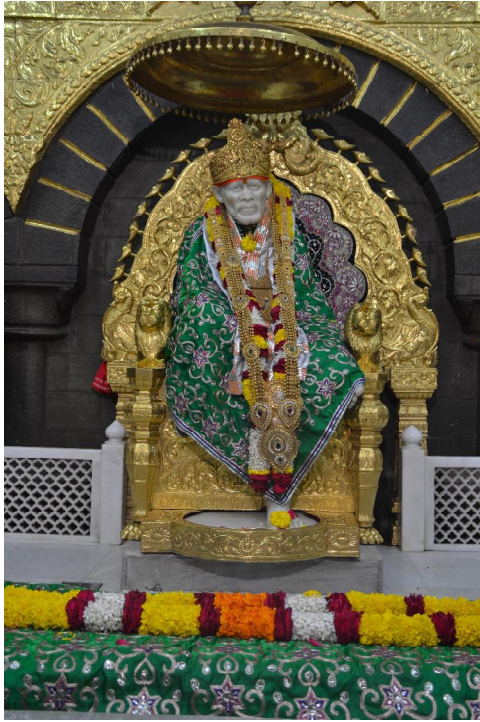
Punyatithi Festival 2013

Celebrating the *Punyatithi* (shedding the mortal coil anniversary) of unique personalities is a great blessing. After noble people take

Samadhi, their *Punyatithi* is the true day of their remembrance! Countless Sai devotees are scattered around the globe. These devotees come to seek the blessings of their *Param Pujya* (most revered) *Daivat* (Lord) in large numbers to Shirdi on the occasion of Shri Sai Baba's *Punyatithi*...

On behalf of the Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi), this year too like every year, the 95th *Punyatithi* of Shri Sai Baba was celebrated in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm and piety, from Saturday, October 12, 2013 to Monday, October 14, 2013.

On the first day of the festival on October 12, the *Kakad Aarati* of Shri Sai Baba was done at 4.30 a.m. After that at 5 a.m. a *Shobhayatra* (Grand Procession) of Shri Sai Baba's Photo, 'Shri Sai Sat Charita' *Pothi* (holy book) and *Veena* was taken out. Sri Ajay More, Member of the 3-Members Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan and Deputy Divisional Officer (Shirdi, Ahmednagar) participated in the *Shobhayatra* alongwith Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer and Tehsildar (Shirdi, Ahmednagar), officials and employees of the Sansthan and villagers.



After the *Shobhayatra* reached Dwarkamai from the *Samadhi Mandir* via *Gurusthan* route, ritual worship of Shri Sai Baba's Photo, 'Shri Sai Sat Charita' *Pothi* and the *Veena* was done and the *Aarati* "Shirdi *majhe* Pandharpur" was done. After that the reading of Shri Sai Sat Charita commenced. The first five chapters of this *Pothi* were read by Sri Ajay More, Member of the Sansthan Committee and Executive Officer, Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer, Sai devotees Sri Arun Rane, Sri Shashikant Gondkar and Manisha Shinde, respectively. At 5.15 a.m. the holy bath programme of Shri Sai Baba was conducted in an atmosphere of devotion. At 7.15 a.m. the *Padyapooja* (worship of the Holy Feet) of Shri Sai Baba was done in the *Samadhi Mandir* by Sri Ajay More, the Committee Member and Executive Officer of the Sansthan. After that the

Abhishek Pooja was done at 7.30 a.m.

The mid-day *Aarati* took place at 12.30 p.m. Out of the 375 villagers and Sai devotees, who registered their names for holding the *Bhikshajholi* (a cloth for collecting alms), 20 names were announced by draw of lots for it.

A programme of melodious *kirtan* was rendered by H. B. P. (*Hari Bhakta Parayan*) Sri Manoharbuva Balkrishna Dikshit (Aurangabad) from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. *Dhoop Aarati* was done at 6.15 p.m.

Sri Vishwanath Ojha (Shrirampur) presented his 'Sai milan ki aas' programme from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Dr. Madhumati Mishra (Pune) presented an Odissi dance programme from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. on the stage in front of the *Samadhi Mandir*. At 9.15 p.m. a *Shobhayatra* of the *Palkhi* (palanquin) of Shri Sai Baba was taken out from the *Samadhi Mandir* to Dwarkamai and from there through Shirdi village. Several troupes that included various musical instruments –

cymbals, *lezim* and band registered their attendance in front of the *Palkhi*. After the *Palkhi* reached the temple premises, Sri Subhash Jakhadi and Sri Ulhas Walunjkar and others presented a *bharud* programme in front of the *Palkhi*. Dwarkamai was kept open throughout the night for the reading of Shri Sai Sat Charita. A 70 feet display of the idol of Lord Vitthal based on the devotional emotion portrayed in “Shirdi *majhe* Pandharpur” by Dwarkamai Mandal of Mumbai and the attractive floral decorations in the temple premises by Sri Mukesh Gupta of Delhi were the two main sights that drew the special attention of Sai devotees.

On Sunday, October 13, the main day of the festival, *Kakad Aarati* of Shri Sai Baba was done at 4.30 a.m. After that, concluding the *akhand parayan*, the programme of the holy bath of Shri Sai Baba was done. After that a *Shobhayatra* of the Photo of Shri Sai Baba, the Shri Sai Sat Charita *granth* and *Veena* was taken out. Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan participated in the *Shobhayatra* alongwith Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer, officials and employees of the Sansthan and villagers. Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan alongwith his wife performed the *Padyapooja* at 7.15 a.m. in the *Samadhi Mandir*. Sri Jayant Kulkarni, Chairman of the 3-Members Managing Committee of the Sansthan and Principal District and Session Judge of Ahmednagar, Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan, Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer and others alongwith the 10 villagers and 10 Sai devotees picked up by lots to wield the *Bhikshajholi* participated in the *Bhikshajholi* programme around the village at 9 a.m. Villagers and Sai devotees contributed wholeheartedly in the *Bhikshajholi*. 72 sacks of grain and Rs. 5,9150/- in cash were collected in this donation drive.

A programme of melodious *kirtan* on the occasion of the *Punyatithi* festival was rendered by H. B. P. Sri Manoharbuva Balkrishna Dikshit from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the stage adjoining the *Samadhi Mandir*. At 10.45 a.m. the *Aaradhana* (worship) ritual of Shri Sai Baba commenced in an ancient (traditional) way on the first floor of the *Samadhi Mandir*. *Vastradan* (donation of clothes) was done by Sri Jayant Kulkarni, Chairman of the Managing Committee of the Sansthan and Smt. Anuradha Kulkarni, as hosts of the worship.

The Mid-day *Aarati* was done at 12.30 p.m.

At 5 p.m. a procession was taken out from the *Samadhi Mandir* to Khandoba *Mandir* for the *Seemolanghan* (reaching out). *Dhoop Aarati* took place after the procession at 6 p.m.

From 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. listeners were spellbound by the programme ‘Sai bhajan sandhya and Babanche upadesh and divya sandesh’ presented by Pandit Kailas Harekrishnadas (Nagpur). At 9.15 p.m. Shri Sai Baba’s Chariot was taken out in a Procession with musical instruments around the village. Local *bhajan mandals*, cymbal troupes, *lezim* troupes and band troupes participated in the Chariot Procession. After the Chariot reached the temple premises, Sri Subhash Jakhadi and Sri Prakash Bhalariao and others presented a *bharud* programme in front of the Chariot.

Artistes performed the attendance programme on the stage adjoining the *Samadhi Mandir* from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. the following day. Being the main day of the festival the *Samadhi Mandir* was kept open for *Darshan* for Sai devotees throughout the night.

As the *Samadhi Mandir* was open throughout the night for *Darshan* on the main day of the festival, the early morning *Kakad Aarati* on the concluding day of the festival on October 14 was not done. The Holy Bath to Shri Sai Baba was done at 5.05 a.m. After that “Shirdi *majhe* Pandharpur” *Aarati* was done. In the morning *Rudra Abhishek* was done at *Gurusthan* by Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan and *Padyapooja* was done by Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer alongwith his wife. At 10 a.m. H. B. P. Sri Manoharbuva Balkrishna Dixit presented ‘*Gopalkala*’ *kirtan* and at 12 noon ‘*Dahi Handi*’ programme was held in the *Samadhi Mandir*.

At 12.10 p.m. Mid-day *Aarati* was done and at 6.15 p.m. *Dhoop Aarati* was done.

From 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Kuchipudi dance programme was presented by K. V. Satyanarayan (Yeluru).

Sri Madhukar Dagduji Deshmukh, Sai devotee from Aurangabad offered a golden crown weighing 956 grammes worth Rs. 29,89,584/- at the Feet of Shri Sai Baba on the occasion of the *Punyatithi* festival.

Free *Prasad* meals were served to Sai devotees in the Prasadalay on behalf of philanthropic Sai devotees – Sita Hariharan (America), Ramdhan Dang and Smt. Kailasrani Dang (Delhi), Smt. Manjulata Devi (Barabanki), Natarajan

Mathu Export House (Karur), S. Kaseem Babu (Peddapuram), Challa Narsimhamulu (Kurnul), Shirdi Sai Charitable Trust (Karur), Bharati S. Srirangurkar (Bengaluru), Nirmala Srivastav (Satna), Aashish Bakshi of Shri Sai Charity Trust (Kandivli, Mumbai) and Rajgopal Natrajan (Chennai).

On behalf of the Sansthan, Dwarkamai Mandal, office bearers and honorary artistes of Sant Krishnadas Seva Samiti and invited artistes, were felicitated. Arrangements for their stay and *Prasad* meals were also made.

In order to avoid any inconvenience for stay and *Prasad* meals to Sai devotees during the festival, a *mandap* spanning 57,000 sq. ft. was erected in the temple premises as also in the car parking adjoining the old Prasadalay, New Bhakta Niwas, Sai Prasad building, Sai Nagar ground and other places. Anticipating rains a plastic cover was provided over the *mandap*. 24 hours water, electricity, security and other facilities were provided in the *mandap*. Additional meals facility was provided in Sai Ashram Dharamshala No.1.

Meals with sweets were served on all the three days of the festival, which included dal – rice, two vegetables, *chappatis*, *puris* and *bundi* etc. 100 quintals sugar *ladoos* were made to ensure that everyone gets *motichur ladoo Prasad*. To ensure easy availability of tea, coffee and milk to Sai devotees additional arrangements were made in Sai Ashram Dharamshala 1 and 2 and on the first floor of the *Darshan* line in Bhakta Niwas. 24 hours bus service was started from Bhakta Niwas to the temple premise and from 10 a.m. from Sai Prasad building to New Prasadalay. First Aid Centre facility was provided at two places and an ambulance was posted in the temple premises for any emergency.

Due to the huge arrival of Sai devotees during the festival period, the *Abhishek Pooja* and Shri Sai *Satyavrat Pooja* for the devotees were not undertaken.

For the successful conduct of the festival, under the guidance of Sri Jayant Kulkarni, Chairman of the Sansthan Committee, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar, Member of the Sansthan Committee and District Collector (Ahmednagar), Sri Ajay More, Member of the Sansthan Committee and Executive Officer and Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer, all the administrative officers, department heads and employees made special efforts.

Shri Sai Prasadalay certified ISO 22000 : 2005



On the occasion of the 95th *Punyatithi* of Shree Sai Baba organized by Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi), the ISO 22000 : 2005 certification letter for the Shri Sai Prasadalay was handed over to Sri Jayant Kulkarni, Chairman of the 3-Members Managing Committee of the Sansthan and Principal judge of the District and Session Court (Ahmednagar) by Sri Chandrashekhar Reddy, auditor of TCL (Trans – Pacific Certification Limited, Australia – New Zealand) and Sai devotee Keshu Murty of Bengaluru.



Sri Ajay More, Member of the 3-Members Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan and Deputy Divisional Officer (Shirdi, Ahmednagar), Sri Aappasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer and Tehsildar (Tal. Rahata, Ahmednagar), Dr. Yeshwantrao Mane, former Executive Officer of the Sansthan, food safety consultant Sri Dilip Kumar (Nandikonda, Hyderabad), administrative officers of the Sansthan – Sri Bhausaheb Sabale, Sri Uttamrao Gondkar, Sri Subhash Garkal and Sri Dilip Ugale, Sri Hemant Jadhavar, Chief Accounts Officer and others graced the acceptance ceremony.

This certification has added to the reputation of the grand Shri Sai Prasadalay that provides Sai devotees, without waiting, tasty and likable *Prasad* meals in a fully equipped clean atmosphere.

Various *yojanas* (schemes) are implemented to facilitate and serve Sai devotees by the Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi).

In His mortal sojourn Shri Sai Baba cooked and served meals to His devotees with His own hands. This service was started by the Sansthan from January 1, 1973 in the meeting hall adjoining Dikshit Wada. At that time 500 to 2500 devotees on an average used to partake the meals daily. A 1000 seater *Prasadalay* facility was constructed in Sai Prasad building No. 1 to eliminate inconvenience caused to other Sai devotees. The *Prasadalay* was shifted to Sai Prasad building No. 1 on January 25, 1980. On an average 22,000 devotees availed *Prasad* meals daily in this *Prasadalay*. Later the then management committee of the Sansthan with foresight decided to construct a new, grand Shri Sai Prasadalay building, and in a short time a 5000 seater new structure was erected and the *Prasadalay* was shifted to the new premises on January 8, 2009.

It is due to this huge, grand Shri Sai Prasadalay that Sai devotees even today are getting, without waiting, tasty and likable *Prasad* meals in a fully equipped clean atmosphere. Therefore, TCL has granted Shri Sai Prasadalay ISO 22000 : 2005 certification for 3 years. For this certification, necessary changes, repairs and improvements were done in the *Prasadalay* under the guidance and advise of food safety consultant Sri Dilip Kumar and Sri Chandrashekhar Reddy, chief auditor of TCL – Australia and New Zealand.

The certification has brought progress in the day-to-day conduct of the *Prasadalay* as also discipline in the storage and safety of food items. Since all care to meet food safety standards are met, Sai devotees get the facility of *Prasad* meals instantly, without delay. Sai devotees avail this benefit. The Chairman of the Sansthan, Sri Jayant Kulkarni stated that Sai Baba hospital and accounts department of the Sansthan are also trying for this certification in future. Sri Mohan Yadav, public relations officer of the Sansthan compered the proceedings of the certification acceptance ceremony and Sri Uttamrao Gondkar, chief of the *Prasadalay* department and administrative officer proposed the vote of thanks.



Sunday, 3.11.2013 : Laxmi Poojan in **Shri Sai Samadhi Mandir** by Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan

For Sai Darshan



Tuesday, 1.10.2013 : Sadhus from Swami Narayan Mandir, Gujarat

Friday, 11.10.2013 : After offering a silver mini table and platform for sitting Sai devotees from Delhi, Sri Brijlal Khadriya and Sri Prakashchand Mittal presented it to Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan



Thursday, 24.10.2013 : Sri A. K. Singh, Governor of Andaman and Nicobar islands with Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan



Sunday, 27.10.2013 : Sri Srinivas Patil, Governor of Sikkim with Sri Ajay More, Member of the Managing Committee and Executive Officer of the Sansthan, Sri Appasaheb Shinde, Deputy Executive Officer and other dignitaries