

Chapter VII

Wonderful Incarnation - Behaviour of Sai Baba - His Yoga Practices - His All-pervasiveness - Leper Devotee's service - Master Khaparde's Plague-case - Going to Pandharpur.

Wonderful Incarnation

Sai Baba knew all Yogic Practices. He was well versed in the six processes including Dhauti (Stomach-cleaning by a moistened piece of linen 3" in breadth and 22 1/2" in length), Khandayoga, i.e., separating His limbs and joining them again, and Samadhi, etc. If you think that He was a Hindu, He looked like a Yavan. If you think Him to be a Yavan, He looked like a pious Hindu. No one definitely knew whether He was a Hindu or a Mahomedan. He celebrated the Hindu festival of Rama-Navami with all due formalities, and at the same time permitted the 'Sandal' procession of the Mahomedans. He encouraged wrestling bouts in this festival, and gave good prizes to winners. When the Gokul Ashtami came, He got the 'Gopal-Kala' ceremony duly performed and on Id festivals, He allowed Mahomedans to say their prayers (Namaj) in His Masjid. Once in the Moharum festival, some Mahomedans proposed to construct a Tajiya or Tabut in the Masjid, keep it there for some days and afterwards take it in procession through the village. Sai Baba allowed the keeping of the Tabut for four days, and on the fifth day removed it out of the Masjid without the least compunction. If we say that He was a Mahomedan, His ears were pierced (i.e. had holes according to Hindu fashion). If you think that He was a Hindu, He advocated the practice of circumcision (though according to Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who observed Him closely, He was not Himself circumcised. Vide article in Sai Leela on "Baba Hindu Ki Yavan" by B.V. Deo, page 562). If you call Him Hindu, He always lived in the Masjid; if Mahomedan, He had always the Dhuni - sacred fire there, and the following things which are contrary to Mahomedan religion, i.e., grinding on the handmill, blowing of the conch and bells, oblation in the fire, Bhajan, giving of food, and worship of Baba's Feet by means of ARGHYA (water) were always allowed there. If you think that He was a Mahomedan, the best of Brahmins and Agnihotris, leaving aside their orthodox ways, fell prostrate at His Feet. Those who went to make enquiries about his nationality were dumb-founded and were captured by his darshana. So none could definitely decide whether Sai Baba was a Hindu or a Mahomedan*. (see below this paragraph) This is no wonder; for he who completely surrenders himself to the Lord, by getting rid of his egoism; and body - consciousness thus becomes one with Him, and has nothing to do with any questions of caste or nationality. Such a one as Sai Baba was, saw no difference between caste and caste and even beings and beings. He took meat and fish with Fakirs, but did not grumble when dogs touched the dishes with their mouths.

[* Note--(1) Mhalsapati, an intimate Shirdi devotee of Baba, who always slept with Him in the Masjid and Chavadi, said that Sai Baba told him that He was a Brahmin of Pathari and was handed over to a Fakir in his infancy, and when He told this, some men from Pathari had come, and Baba was enquiring about some men from that place. Vide sai Leela 1924, Page 179. (2) Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar, the famous learned woman of Poona says in the experience No.8, published on Page 79, Sai Leela Vol. 11, 1934, - "On hearing of Baba's miracles, we were discussing according to our theosophic convention and fashion whether Sai Baba belonged to Black or White Lodge. When once I went to Shirdi, I was thinking seriously about this in my mind. As soon as I approached the steps of the Masjid, Baba came to the front and pointing to His chest and staring at me spoke rather vehemently - "This is a Brahmin, pure Brahmin. He has nothing to do with black things. No Musalman can dare to step in here. He dare not." Again pointing to his chest - "This Brahmin can bring lacks of men on the white path and take them to their destination. This is a Brahmin's Masjid and I won't allow any black Mahomedan to cast his shadow here.""]

Such a unique and wonderful incarnation was Sai Baba. On account of the merits in my past birth, I had the good fortune to sit at His Feet and enjoy His blessed company. The joy and delight I derived therefrom was incomparable. In fact Sai Baba was pure Anand and Consciousness. I cannot sufficiently describe Him, His greatness and uniqueness. He who took delight at His Feet, was established in His own self. Many Sanyasis, Sadhakas and all sorts of men aspiring for salvation came to Sai Baba. He always walked, talked and laughed with them and always uttered with His tongue 'Allah Malik' (God is the sole owner). He never liked discussion or arguments. He was always calm and controlled, though irritable at times, always preached full Vedanta and nobody knew till the last Who was Baba. He treated princes and poor people alike. He knew the inmost secrets of all, and when He gave expression to them, all were surprised. He was the repository of all knowledge, still He feigned ignorance. He also disliked honour. Such were the characteristics of Sai Baba. Though, He had a human body, His deeds testified to HIS Godhood. All people considered Him as the Lord God in Shirdi.

Behaviour of Sai Baba

Fool that I am, I cannot describe Baba's miracles. He got almost all the temples in Shirdi repaired. Through Tatyapa Patil, the temples of Shani, Ganapati, Shankar-Parvati, Village Deity, and Maruti were put in order. His charity was also remarkable. The money He used to collect as Dakshina was freely distributed, Rs.20 to some, Rs.15 or 50, to others everyday. The recipients thought that this was 'pure' charity money, and Baba wished that it should be usefully employed.

Having a darshana of Baba immensely benefited people. Some became hale and hearty; wicked people were turned into good ones. Kushtha (Leprosy) was cured in some cases, many got their desires fulfilled, without any drops or medicine being put in the eyes, some blind men got back their sight and some lame ones got their legs. Nobody could see the end of His extraordinary greatness. His fame spread far and wide, and pilgrims from all sides flocked to Shirdi. Baba sat always near the Dhuni and eased Himself there, and always sat in meditation; sometimes with and on other times without a bath.

He used to tie a white turban on his head; and wear a clean Dhotar round his waist, and a shirt on his body. This was his dress in the beginning. He started practicing medicine in the village, examined patients and gave medicines. He was always successful, and He became famous as a Hakim (Doctor). A curious case may be narrated here. One devotee got his eye balls quite red and swollen. No Doctor was available in Shirdi. The other devotees took him to Baba. Other Doctors would use ointments, Anjans, cow's milk and camphorated drugs etc., in such cases. Baba's remedy was quite unique. He pounded some 'BEEBA' (Some Carpus Ana Cardium i.e. marking nuts) and made two balls of them, thrust them on in each eye of the patient and wrapped a cloth-bandage round them (eyes). Next day, the bandage was removed and water was poured over them in a stream. The inflammation subsided and the pupils became white and clear. Though the eyes are very delicate, the BEEBA caused no smarting; but removed the disease of the eyes. Many such cases were cured and this is only an instance in point.

Baba's Yoga Practices

Baba knew all the processes and practices of Yoga. Two of them will be described here:

(1) DHAUTI or CLEANING PROCESS: Baba went to the well near a Banyan tree at a considerable distance from the Masjid every third day and washed his mouth and had a bath. On one occasion, He was seen to vomit out his intestines, clean them inside and outside and place them on a Jamb tree for drying. There are persons in Shirdi, who have actually seen this, and who have testified to this fact. Ordinary Dhauti is done by a moistened piece of linen, 3 inches broad 22 1/2ft. long. This piece is gulped down the throat and allowed to remain in the stomach for about half an hour for being reacted there and then taken out. But Baba's Dhauti was quite unique and extraordinary.

(2) KHANDA YOGA: In this practice, Baba extracted the various limbs from His body, and left them separately at different places in the Masjid. Once, a gentleman went to the Masjid, and saw the limbs of Baba lying separately at separate places. He was much terrified; and he first thought of running to the village officers, and informing them of Baba being hacked to pieces and murdered. He thought that he would be held responsible, as he was the first informant, and knew something of the affair. So he kept silent. But next day when he went to the masjid, he was very much surprised to see Baba, hale and hearty and sound, as before. He thought, that what he had seen the previous day, was only a dream.

Baba practised Yoga since, His infancy and nobody knew or guessed the proficiency He attained. He charged no fees for His cures became renowned and famous by virtue of His merits, gave health to many a poor and suffering person. This famous Doctor of doctors cared not for His interests, but always worked for the good and welfare of others, Himself suffering unbearable and terrible pain many a time in the process. One such instance, I give below, which will show the all-pervasive and most merciful character of Sai Baba.

[Baba's All-pervasiveness and Mercy](#)

In the year 1910 A.D., Baba was sitting near the Dhuni on Divali holiday and warming Himself. He was pushing firewood into the Dhuni, which was brightly burning. A little later, instead of pushing logs of woods, Baba pushed His arm into the Dhuni; the arm was scorched and burnt immediately. This was noticed by the servant Madhava, and also by Madhavrao Deshpande (Shama). They at once ran to Baba and Madhavarao clasped Baba by His waist from behind and dragged Him forcible back ward and asked, "Deva, for what have You done this?" Then Baba came to His senses and replied, "The wife of a blacksmith at some distant place, was working the bellows of a furnace;her husband called her. Forgetting that her child was on her waist, she ran hastily and the child slipped into the furnace. I immediately thrust My hand into the furnace and saved the child. I do not mind My arm being burnt, but I am glad that the life of the child is saved."

[Leper Devotee's Service](#)

On hearing the news of Baba's hand being burnt from (Shama) Madhavrao Deshpande, Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, accompanied by the famous Doctor Parmanand of Bombay with his medical outfit consisting of ointments, lint and bandage etc. rushed to Shirdi, and requested Baba to allow Dr. Parmanand to examine the arm, and dress the wound caused by the burn. This was refused. Ever since the burn, the leper devotee, Bhagoji Shinde, dressed the arm. His treatment consisted in massaging the burnt part with ghee and then placing a leaf over it and bandaging it tightly with Pattis (bandages). Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar solicited Baba many a time to unfasten the Pattis and get the wound examined and dressed and treated by Dr. Parmanand, with the object that it may be speedily healed. Dr. Parmanand himself made similar requests, but Baba postponed saying that Allah was His Doctor; and did not allow His arm to be examined. Dr. Paramanand's medicines were not exposed to their air of Shirdi, as they remained intact, but he had the good fortune of getting a darshana of Baba. Bhagoji was allowed to treat the hand daily. After some days, the arm healed and all were happy. Still, we do not know whether any trace of pain was left or not. Every morning, Bhagoji went through his programme of loosening the Pattis, massaging he arm with ghee and tightly bandaging it again. This went on till Sai Baba's Samadhi (death). Sai Baba, a perfect Siddha, as He was, did not really want this treatment, but out of love to His devotee, He allowed the 'Upasana' - service of Bhagoji to go on un-interrupted all along. When Baba started for Lendi, Bhagoji held an umbrella over Him and accompanied Him. Every morning, when Baba sat near the post close to the Dhuni, Bhagoji was present and started his service. Bhagoji was a sinner in his past birth. He was suffering from leprosy, his fingers had shrunk, and his body was full of pus and smelling badly. Though outwardly he seemed so unfortunate, he was really very lucky and happy, for he was the premier servant of Baba, and got the benefit of His Company.

[Master Khaparde's Plague-Case](#)

I shall now relate another instance of Baba's wonderful Leela. Mrs. Khaparde, the wife of Mr. Dadasaheb Khaparde of Amraoti, was staying at Shirdi with her young son for some days. One day the son got high fever, which further developed into Bubonic plague. The mother was frightened and felt most uneasy. She thought of leaving the place for Amraoti, and went near Baba in the evening, when He was coming near the Wada (now Samadhi Mandir) in His evening rounds, for asking His permission. She informed Him in a trembling tone, that her dear young son was down with plague. Baba spoke kindly and softly to her, saying that the sky is beset with clouds; but they will melt and pass off and everything will be smooth and clear. So saying, He lifted up His Kafni up to the waist and showed to all present, four fully developed bubos, as big as eggs, and added, "See, how I have to suffer for My devotees; their difficulties are Mine." Seeing this unique and extraordinary deed (Leela), the people were convinced as to how the Saints suffer pains for their devotees. The mind of the saints is softer than wax, it is soft, in and out, as butter. They love their devotees without any idea of gain, and regard them as their true relatives.

[Going to Pandharpur and Staying There](#)

I shall now close this Chapter after relating a story illustrating how Sai Baba loved His devotees and anticipated their wishes and movements. Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was a great devotee of Baba, was Mamlatdar at Nandurbar in Khandesh. He got an order of transfer to Pandharpur. His devotion to Sai Baba bore fruit, as he got an order to go and stay at Pandharpur, which is regarded as the 'BHUVAIKUNTHA' - Heaven on earth. Nanasaheb had to take immediate charge, so he left, immediately, for the place, without even writing or informing anybody at Shirdi. He wanted to give a surprise visit to Shirdi - his Pandharpur, see and salute his Vithoba (Baba), and then proceed. Nobody dreamt of Nanasaheb's departure for Shirdi, but Sai Baba knew all about this, as His eyes were everywhere (omniscient). As soon as Nanasaheb approached Neemgaon, a few miles from Shirdi, there was stir in the Masjid at Shirdi. Baba was sitting and talking with Mhalsapati, Appa Shinde and Kashiram, when He at once said, "Let us all four do some Bhajan, the doors of Pandhari are open, let us merrily sing." Then they began to sing in chorus, the burden of the song being "I have to go to Pandharpur and I have to stay on there, for it is the house of my Lord."

Baba sang and the devotees followed Him. In a short time Nanasaheb came there with his family, prostrated before Baba and requested Him to accompany them to Pandharpur and stay with them there. This solicitation was not necessary, as the devotees told Nanasaheb that Baba was already in the mood of going to Pandharpur and staying there. Hearing this Nanasaheb was moved and fell at Baba's Feet. Then getting Baba's permission, Udi (sacred ashes) and Blessings, Nanasaheb left for Pandharpur.

There is no end to Baba's stories, but let me now make a halt here, reserving for the next Chapter other topics, such as importance of human life, Baba's living on alms, Bayajabai's service and other stories.

Chapter VIII

Importance of Human Birth - Sai Baba Begging Food - Bayajabai's Service - Sai Baba's Dormitory - His Affection for Khushalchand.

As hinted in the last Chapter, Hemadpant now explains at length, in his preliminary remarks, on the importance of human birth; and then proceeds to relate how Sai Baba begged His food,

how Bayajabai served Him, how He slept in the Masjid with Taty Kote Patil and Mhalsapati and how He loved Khushalchand of Rahata.

Importance of Human Birth

In this wonderful universe, God has created billions (84 lacs according to Hindusastra calculation) of creatures or beings (including Gods, demigods, insects, beasts and men) inhabiting heaven, hell, earth, ocean, sky and other intermediate regions. Of these, those creatures or souls, whose merits preponderate, go to heaven and live there till they enjoy the fruits of their actions, and when this is done, they are cast down while those souls, whose sins or demerits preponderate, go down to hell, and suffer the consequences of their misdeeds for so long a time as they deserve. When their merits and demerits balance each other, they are born on earth as human beings, and are given a chance to work out their salvation. Ultimately when their merits and demerits both drop down (are got rid of) completely, they get their deliverance and become free. To put the matter in a nutshell, souls get their births or transmigrations according to their deeds and intelligence (development of their minds).

Special Value of the Human Body

As we all know, four things are common to all the creatures, viz. food, sleep, fear and sexual union. In the case of man, he is endowed with a special faculty, viz. knowledge, with the help of which he can attain God-vision, which is impossible in any other birth. It is for this reasons that Gods envy man's fortune and aspire to be born as men on earth, so as to get their final deliverance.

Some say, that there is nothing worse than the human body, which is full of filth, mucus, phlegm and dirt, and which is subject to decay, disease and death. This is no doubt true to a certain extent; but inspite of these drawbacks and defects, the special value of the human body is - that man has got the capacity to acquire knowledge: it is only due to the human knowledge that one can think of the perishable and transitory nature of the body itself, and of the world and get a disgust for the sense-enjoyments and can discriminate between the unreal and the real, and thus attain God-vision. So, if we reject or neglect the body because it is filthy, we lose the chance of God-vision, and if we fondle it, and run after sense - enjoyments, because it is precious, we go to hell. The proper course, therefore, for us to pursue is the following; that the body should neither be neglected nor fondled, but should be properly cared for, just as a traveler on horse-back takes care of his pony on the way till he reaches his destination and returns home. Thus the body should ever be used or engaged to attain God-vision or self-realization, which is the supreme end of life.

It is said that though God created various sorts of creatures he was not satisfied, for none of them was able to know and appreciate His work. So he had to create a special being - Man, and endow him with a special faculty, viz. Knowledge and when He saw that man was able to appreciate His Leela - marvellous work and intelligence. He was highly pleased and satisfied. (Vide, Bhagawat 11-9-28). So really it is good luck to get a human body, better luck to get birth in a Brahmin family, and best one, to get an opportunity of having recourse to Sai Baba's Feet and surrendering to Him.

Man's Endeavour

Realizing how precious the human life is, and knowing that Death is certain and may snatch us at any time, we should be ever alert to achieve the object of our life, we should not make the least delay but make every possible haste to gain our object, just as a widower is most anxious to get himself married to a new bride, or just as a king leaves no stone unturned to seek his lost son. So with all earnestness and speed, we should strive to attain our end, i.e., self-realization. Casting aside sloth and laziness, warding off drowsiness, we should day and night meditate on the Self. If we fail to do this, we reduce ourselves to the level of beasts.

How to Proceed?

The most effective and speedy way to gain our object is to approach a worthy Saint or Sage - Sadguru, who has himself, attained God-vision. What cannot be achieved by hearing religious lectures and study of religious works is easily obtained in the company of such worthy souls. Just as the sun alone gives light, which all the stars put together cannot do, so the Sad-Guru alone imparts spiritual wisdom which all the sacred books and sermons cannot infuse. His movements and simple talks give us 'silent' advice. The virtues of forgiveness, calmness, disinterestedness, charity, benevolence, control of mind and body, egolessness etc. are observed by the disciples as they are being practiced in such pure and holy company. This enlightens their minds and lifts them up spiritually. Sai Baba was such a Sage or Sad-Guru. Though He acted as a Fakir (mendicant), He was always engrossed in the Self. He always loved all beings in which He saw God or Divinity. By pleasures He was not elated. He was not depressed by misfortunes. A king and a pauper were the same to Him. He, whose glance would turn a beggar into a king, used to beg His food from door to door in Shirdi, and let us now see how He did it.

Baba Begging Food

Blessed are the people of Shirdi, in front of whose houses, Baba stood as a beggar and called out, "Oh Lassie, give Me a piece of bread" and spread out His hand to receive the same. In one hand He carried a Tumrel (tinpot) and in the other a zoli or choupadari, i.e., a rectangular piece of cloth. He daily visited certain houses and went from door to door. Liquid or semi-liquid things such as soup, vegetables, milk or buttermilk were received in the tinpot, while cooked rice, bread, and such solid things were taken in the zoli. Baba's tongue knew no taste, as He had acquired control over it. So how could He care for the taste of the different things collected together? Whatever things He got in His zole and in the tinpot were mixed together and partaken by Baba to His heart's content. Whether particular things were tasty or otherwise was never noticed by Baba as if His tongue was devoid of the sense of taste altogether. Baba begged till noon, but His begging was very irregular. Some days He went a few rounds, on other days up to twelve noon. The food thus collected was thrown in a kundi, i.e. earthen pot. Dog, cats and crows freely ate from it and Baba never drove them away. The woman who swept the floor of the Masjid took some 10 or 12 pieces of bread to her house, and nobody prevented her from doing so. How could, He, who even in dreams never warded off cats and dogs by harsh words and signs, refuse food to poor helpless people? Blessed indeed is the life of such a noble person! People in Shirdi took Him in the beginning for a mad Fakir. He was known in the village by this name. How could one, who lived on alms by begging a few crumbs of bread, be revered and respected? But this Fakir was very liberal of heart and hand, disinterested and charitable. Though He looked fickle and restless from outside. He was firm and steady inside. His way was inscrutable. Still even in that small village, there were a few kind and blessed people who recognized and regarded Him as a Great Soul. One such instance is given below.

Bayajabai's Brilliant Service

Tatya Kote's mother, Bayajabai, used to go to the woods every noon with a basket on her head containing bread and vegetables. She roamed in the jungles koos (about 3 miles) after koss, trampling over bushes and shrubs in search of the mad Fakir, and after hunting Him out, fell at His feet. The Fakir sat calm and motionless in meditation, while she placed a leaf before Him, spread the eatables, bread, vegetables etc. thereon and fed Him forcibly. Wonderful was her faith and service. Every day she roamed at noon in the jungles and forced Baba to the partake of lunch. Her service, Upasana or Penance, by whatever name we call it, was never forgotten by Baba till his Maha Samadhi. Remembering fully what service she rendered, Baba benefited her son magnificently. Both the son and the mother had great faith in the Fakir, Who was their God. Baba often said to them "Fakir (Mendicacy) was the real Lordship as it was everlasting, and the so called Lordship (riches) was transient". After some years, Baba left off going into the woods, began to live in the village and take His food in the Masjid. From that time Bayajabai's troubles of roaming in the jungles ended.

Dormitory of Trio

Even blessed are the Saints in whose heart Lord Vasudeo dwells, and fortunate, indeed, are the devotees who get the benefit of the company of such Saints. Two such fortunate fellows, Taty Kote Patil and Bhagat Mhalsapati, equally shared the company of Sai Baba. Baba also loved them both equally. These three persons slept in the Masjid with their heads towards the east, west and north and with their feet touching one another at the centre. Stretching their beds, they lay on them, chitchatting and gossiping about many things, till late at midnight. If any one of them showed any signs of sleep, others would wake him up. For instance, if Taty began to snore, Baba at once got up and shook him from side to side and pressed his head. If it was Mhalsapati, He hugged him close, stroked his legs and kneaded his back. In this way for full 14 years, Taty, leaving his parents at home, slept in the Masjid on account of his love for Baba. How happy and never to be forgotten were those days! How to measure that love and how to value the grace of Baba? After the passing away of his father, Taty took charge of the household affairs and began to sleep at home.

Khushalehand of Rahata

Baba loved Ganpat Kote Patil of Shirdi. He equally loved Chandrabhanshet Marwadi of Rahata. After the demise of the Shet, Baba loved his nephew Khushalchand equally or even perhaps more, and watched his welfare, day and night. Sometimes in a bullock cart, at other times in a tanga with intimate friends, Baba went to Rahata. People of that village came out, with band and music, and received Baba at the Ves or gate of the village and prostrated before Him. Then He was taken into the village with great pomp and ceremony. Khushalchand took Baba to his house, seated Him on a comfortable seat and gave Him a good lunch. Then they talked freely and merrily for some time, after which Baba returned to Shirdi, giving delight and blessing to all.

Shirdi is midway between and equidistant from Rahata on one side (south) and Nimgaon on the other (north). Baba never went beyond these places during His lifetime. He never saw any railway train nor travelled by it. Still, He knew exactly the timing of arrival and departure of all trains. Devotees who acted according to Baba's instructions (re: their departure) which were given by him at the time of taking His leave fared well, while those who disregarded them suffered many a mishap and accident. More about this and other matters will be told in the next Chapter.

NOTE: An incident, given in the footnote at the end of this Chapter, showing Baba's love for Khushalchand how He asked one afternoon Kakasaheb Dixit to go to Rahata and fetch Khushalchand to Him, and at the same time appeared before Khushalchand in his noon-nap dream asking him to come to Shirdi, is not given here as it is described in the body of the book (Sai-Charita) later on (Chapter 30).

Chapter IX

Effect of compliance and Non-compliance with Baba's Orders at the Time of Taking Leave - A few Instances - Mendicancy and Its Necessity - Devotees' (Tarkhad family's) Experiences - Baba fed sumptuously - How?

At the end of the last chapter, it was barely stated that the Bhaktas, who obeyed Baba's orders at the time of taking leave, fared well and those, who disobeyed them, suffered many a

mishap. This statement will be amplified and illustrated, with a few striking instances; and by other matters dealt with in this Chapter.

Characteristic of Shirdi - Pilgrimage

One special peculiarity of Shirdi-pilgrimage was this, that none could leave Shirdi, without Baba's permission; and if he did, he invited untold sufferings, but if any one was asked to quit Shirdi, he could stay there no longer. Baba gave certain suggestions or hints, when Bhaktas went to bid good-bye and take leave. These suggestions had to be followed. If they were not followed or were departed from, accidents were sure to befall them, who acted contrary to Baba's directions. We give below a few instances.

Tatya Kote Patil

Tatya Kote was once going in a tanga to Kopargaon bazar. He came in haste to the Masjid, saluted Baba, and said that he would go to Kopargaon bazar. Baba said, "Don't make haste, stop a little, let go the bazar, don't go out of the village". On seeing his anxiety to go, Baba asked him to take Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande) at least with him. Not minding this direction, Tatya Kote immediately drove his tanga. Of the two horses one, which cost Rs.300/- was very active and restless. After passing Sawul well, it began to run rashly, got a sprain in its waist and fell down. Tatya was not much hurt, but was reminded of Mother Sai's direction. On another occasion while proceeding to Kolhar village, he disregarded Baba's direction, and drove in a tanga, which met with a similar accident.

European Gentleman

One European gentleman of Bombay once came to Shirdi, with an introductory note from Nanaheh Chandorkar, and with some object in view. He was comfortably accommodated in a tent. He wanted to kneel before Baba and kiss His hand. Therefore, he tried thrice to step into the Masjid, but Baba prevented him from doing so. He was asked to sit in the open courtyard below and take Baba's darshan from there. Not pleased with this reception he got, he wanted to leave Shirdi at once and came to bid good-bye. Baba asked him to go the next day and not to hurry. People also requested him to abide by Baba's direction. Not listening to all this, he left Shirdi in a tanga. The horses ran at first all right, but when Sawul well was passed, a bicycle came in front, seeing which the horses were frightened and ran fast. The tanga was turned topsy-turvy and the gentleman fell down and was dragged some distance. He was immediately released; but had to go and lie in Kopargaon hospital for the treatment of the injuries. Because of such experiences all people learnt the lesson that those who disobeyed Baba's instruction met with accidents in one way or the other and those who obeyed them were safe and happy.

The Necessity of Mendicancy

Now to return to the question of mendicancy. A question may arise in the minds of some that if Baba was such a great personage - God in fact, why should He have recourse to the begging bowl, all His lifetime? This question may be considered and replied from two standpoints. (1) Who are the fit persons, who have a right to live by the begging-bowl? Our Shastras say that those persons, who, getting rid of, or becoming free from the three main Desires, viz. (1) for progeny, (2) for wealth, (3) for fame, accept Sannyas, are the fit persons to live by begging alms. They cannot make cooking arrangements and dine at home. The duty of feeding them rests on the shoulders of householders. Sai Baba was neither a householder nor Vanaprastha. He was a celibate sannyasi, i.e., sannyasi from boyhood. His firm conviction was that the universe was His home; He was the Lord Vasudeo - the Supporter of the universe and the Imperishable Brahman. So He had the full right to have recourse to the begging-bowl. (2) Now from the standpoint of (1) Pancha-soon - five sins and their atonement. We all know that in order to prepare food-stuffs and meals, the householders have to go through five actions or processes, viz. (1) Kandani-Pounding, (2) Peshani-Grinding, (3) Udakumbhi - Washing pots, (4)

Marjani - Sweeping and cleaning, (5) Chulli-Lighting hearths. These processes involve destruction of a lot of small insects and creatures, and thus the householders incur a lot of sin. In order to atone for this sin, our Shastras prescribe five kinds of sacrifices, viz. (1) Brahma-Yajna, (2) vedadhyan - offerings to Brahman or the study of the Vedas. (3) Pitra-Yajna-offerings to the ancestors, 4)Deva-Yajna - offerings to the Gods, (5) Bhoota-Yajna-offerings to the beings, (6) Manushya-Atithi-Yajna-offerings to men or uninvited guests. If these sacrifices, enjoined by the Shastras are duly performed, the purification of their minds is effected and this helps them to get knowledge and self-realization. Baba, in going from house to house, reminded the inmates of their sacred duty, and fortunate were the people, who got the lesson at their homes from Baba.

Devotee's Experiences

Now to return to the other more interesting subject. Lord Krishna has said in the Bhagawadgeeta (9-26) "Whosoever devoutly offers to me a leaf, a flower, or a fruit or water, of that pure-hearted man, I accept that pious offering." In the case of Sai Baba, if a devotee really longed to offer anything to Sai Baba, and if he afterwards forgot to offer the same, Baba reminded him, or his friend about the offering, and made him present it to Him, and then accepted it and blessed the devotee. A few instances are given below.

Tarkhad Family (father and son)

Mr. Ramachandra Atmaran alias Babasaheb Tarkhad, formerly a Prarthana-Samajist, was a staunch devotee of Sai Baba. His wife and son loved Baba equally or perhaps more. It was once proposed that Master Tarkhad should go with his mother to Shirdi and spend his May vacation there, but the son was unwilling to go, as he thought that in case he left his home at Bandra, the worship of Sai Baba in the house would not be properly attended to, as his father being a Prarthana Samajist, would not care to worship Sai Baba's enlarged portrait. However, on his father's giving an assurance of oath, that he would perform the worship exactly as the son was doing, the mother and the son left for Shirdi on one Friday night.

Next day (Saturday) Mr. Tarkhad got up early, took his bath and before proceeding with the Puja, prostrated himself before the Shrine and said - "Baba, I am going to perform the Puja exactly as my son has been doing, but please let it not be a formal drill." After he performed the Puja, he offered a few pieces of lump-sugar as naivedya (offering), which were distributed at the time of the lunch.

That evening and on Sunday, everything went on well. The following Monday was a working day and it also passed well. Mr. Tarkhad, who had never performed Puja like this in all his life, felt great confidence within himself that every thing was passing on quite satisfactorily according to the promise given to his son. On Tuesday, he performed the morning Puja as usual and left for his work. Coming home at noon, he found that there was no Prasad (sugar) to partake of, when the meal was served. He asked the servant - cook, who told him that there was no offering made that morning, and that he had completely forgotten then to perform that part of the Puja (offering naivedya). After hearing that he left his seat and prostrated himself before the Shrine, expressed his regret, at the same time chiding Baba for the want of guidance in making the whole affair a matter of mere drill. Then he wrote a letter to his son stating the facts and requested him to lay it before Baba's feet and ask His pardon for his neglect.

This happened in Bandra at Tuesday noon.

At about the same time, when the noon Arati was just about to commence in Shirdi, Baba said to Mrs. Tarkhad, "Mother, I had been to your house in Bandra, with a view to having something to eat. I found the door locked. I somehow got an entrance inside and found to My regret, that Bhau (Mr. Tarkhad) had left nothing for Me to eat. so I have returned from there without eating anything."

The lady could not understand anything; but the son, who was close by, understood that there was something wrong with the Puja in Bandra and he, therefore, requested Baba to permit him to go home. Baba refused the permission, but allowed him to perform Puja there. Then, the son wrote a letter to his father, stating all that took place at Shirdi and implored his father not to neglect the Puja at home.

Both these letters crossed each other and were delivered to the respective parties the next day.

Is this not astonishing?

[Mrs. Tarkhad](#)

Let us now take up the case of Mrs. Tarkhad herself. She offered three things, viz. (1) Bharit (roasted brinjal egg plant mixed curds and spice). (2) Kacharya (circular pieces of brinjal fried in ghee), (3) Peda (sweetmeat ball). Let us see how Baba accepted them.

Once Mr. Raghuvir Bhaskar Purandare of Bandra, a great devotee of Baba started for Shirdi with his family. Mrs Tarkhad went to Mrs. Purandare, and gave her two brinjals and requested her to prepare Bharit of one brinjal and Kacharya of the other, when she went to Shirdi and serve Baba with them. After reaching Shirdi, Mrs. Purandare went with her dish of Bharit to the Masjid when Baba was just about to start his meals. Baba found the Bharit very tasty. So He distributed it to all and said that He wanted Kacharyas now. A word was sent to Radha Krishna-Mai, that Baba wanted Kacharyas. She was in a fix, as that was no season of brinjals. How to get brinjals was the question? When an enquiry was made as to who brought the Bharit, it was found that Mrs. Purandare was also entrusted with the duty of serving Kacharyas. Everybody then came to know the significance of Baba's enquiry regarding Kacharyas, and was wonderstruck at Baba's all-pervasive knowledge.

In December 1915 A.D., one Govind Balaram Mankar wanted to go to Shirdi to perform the obsequies of his father. Before he left, he came to see Mr. Tarkhad. Then Mrs. Tarkhad wanted to send something with him to Baba. She searched the whole house but found nothing, except a Peda, which had already been offered as naivedya. Mr. Mankar was in mourning. Still out of great devotion to Baba, she sent the Peda with him, hoping that Baba would accept and eat it. Govind went to Shirdi and saw Baba, but forgot to take the Peda with him. Baba simply waited. When again he went to Baba in the afternoon, he went empty-handed without the Peda. Baba could wait no longer and, therefore, asked him straight, "What did you bring for me?" "Nothing" was the reply. Baba asked him again. The same reply came forth again. Then Baba asked him the leading question, "Did not the mother (Mrs. Tarkhad) give some sweetmeat to you for Me at the time of your starting?" The boy then remembered the whole thing. He felt abashed, asked Baba's pardon, ran to his lodging, brought the Peda and gave it to Baba. As soon as Baba got it in His hand. He put it into His mouth and gulped it down. Thus the devotion of Mrs. Tarkhad was recognized and accepted. "As men believe in Me, so do I accept them" (Gita, 4-11) was proved in this case.

[Baba Fed Sumptuously, -- How?](#)

Once, Mrs. Tarkhad was staying in a certain house in Shirdi. At noon, meals were ready and dishes were being served, when a hungry dog turned up there and began to cry, Mrs. Tarkhad got up at once and threw a piece of bread, which the dog gulped with great relish. In the afternoon, when she went to the Masjid and sat at some distance, Sai Baba said to her, "Mother, you have fed Me sumptuously up to my throat, My afflicted pranas (life-forces) have been satisfied. Always act like this, and this will stand you in good stead. Sitting in this Masjid I shall never, never speak untruth. Take pity on Me like this. First give bread to the hungry, and then eat yourself. Note this well." She could not at first understand the meaning of what Baba said. So she replied -- "Baba, how could I feed You? I am myself dependent on others and take my food from them on payment." Then Baba replied -- "Eating that lovely bread I am heartily

contended and I am still belching. The dog, which you saw before meals and to which you gave the piece of bread, is, one with Me, so also other creatures (cats, pigs, flies, cows etc.) are one with Me. I am roaming in their forms. He, who sees Me in all these creatures is My beloved. So abandon the sense of duality and distinction, and serve Me, as you did today." Drinking these nectar-like words, she was moved, her eyes were filled with tears, her throat was choked and her joy knew no bounds.

Moral

"See God in all beings" is the moral of this chapter. The Upanishads, the Geeta and the Bhagwat, all exhort us to perceive God or Divinity in all the creatures. By the instance given at the end of this Chapter and others too numerous to mention. Sai Baba has practically demonstrated to us how to put the Upanishadic teachings into practice. In this way Sai Baba stands as the best Exponent or Teacher of the Upanishadic doctrines.

Chapter X

Sai Baba's Mode of Life - His Sleeping - board - His Stay in Shirdi - His Teachings - His Humility - The Easiest Path.

Remember Him (Sai Baba) always with love, for He was engrossed in doing good to all, and always abided in His Self. To remember Him only is to solve the riddle of life and death. This is the best and easiest of Sadhanas, as it involves no expenditure. A little exertion here brings great rewards. So as long as our senses are sound, we should, minute by minute, practice this Sadhana. All other Gods are illusory; Guru is the only God. If we believe in Sad-guru's holy feet, he can change our fortune for the better. If we serve Him nicely, we get rid of our Samsar. We need not study any philosophy like the Nyaya and the Mimansa. If we make Him our Helmsman, we can easily cross over the sea of all our pains and sorrows. As we trust the helmsman in crossing rivers and seas, so we have to trust our Sadguru in getting over the ocean of worldly existence. The Sadguru looks to the intense feeling and devotion of his devotees, endows them with knowledge and eternal bliss.

In the last chapter, Baba's mendicancy, and devotees' experiences and other subjects are dealt with. Let the readers now hear, where and how Baba lived, how He slept, and how He taught etc.

Baba's Wonderful Bed-Stead

Let us first see where and how Baba slept, Mr. Nanasaheb Dengale brought, for Sai Baba, a wooden plank, amount 4 cubits in length and only a span in breadth, for sleeping upon. Instead of keeping the plank on the floor and then sleeping on it, Baba tied it like a swing to the rafters of the Masjid with old shreds or rags and commenced to sleep upon it. The rags were so thin and worn out that it was a problem how they could bear or support even weight of the plank itself, let alone the weight of Baba. But somehow or other-it was Baba's sheer Leela that the worn out rags did sustain the plank, with the weight of Baba on it. On the four corners of this plank, Baba lighted panatis (earthen lamps), one at each corner, and kept them burning the whole night. It was a sight for the Gods to see Baba sitting or sleeping on this plank! It was a wonder to all, how Baba got up and down the plank. Out of curiosity, many careful observers kept watching the process of mounting and dismounting, but none succeeded. As crowds began

to swell so to detect this wonderful feat, Baba one day broke the plank into pieces and threw it away. Baba had all the eight Siddhis (powers) at His command. He never practiced nor craved for them. They came to Him naturally, as a result of His perfection.

[Sagun Manifestation of Brahman](#)

Though Sai Baba looked like a man, three cubits and a half in length, still He dwelt in the hearts of all. Inwardly, he was unattached and indifferent, but outwardly, He longed for public welfare. Inwardly most disinterested, He looked outwardly full of desires, for the sake of His devotees. Inwardly an abode of peace, He looked outwardly restless. Inwardly He had the state of Brahman; outwardly He acted like a devil. Inwardly He had the state of Brahman; outwardly he acted like a devil. Inwardly He loved Adwaita (union or monism), outwardly He got entangled with the world. Sometimes He looked on all with affection, and at times He threw stones at them; sometimes He scolded them, while at times He embraced them and was calm, composed, tolerant and well balanced. He always abided and was engrossed in the Self and was well disposed towards His Bhaktas. He always sat on one Asan and never travelled. His 'band' was a small stick, which He always carried in His hand. He was calm, being thought-free. He never cared for wealth and fame and lived on begging. Such a life He led. He always uttered 'Allah Malik' (God the real owner). Entire and unbroken was His love for the Bhaktas. He was the mine or storehouse for self-knowledge and full of Divine Bliss. Such was the Divine Form of Sai Baba, boundless, endless and undifferentiated. One principle which envelopes the whole universe, (from a stone pillar to Brahma) incarnated in Sai Baba. The really meritorious and fortunate people got this treasure-trove in their hands, while those people who not knowing the real worth of Sai Baba took or take Him to be a man, a mere human being, were and are indeed miserable.

[His Stay in Shirdi and Probable Birth-date](#)

None knew or knows the parents and exact birth-date of Sai Baba; but His stay in Shirdi can approximately determine it. Baba first came to Shirdi, when he was a young lad of sixteen and stayed there for three years. Then all of a sudden He disappeared for some time. After some time, He reappeared in the Nizam state near Aurangabad, and again came to Shirdi with the marriage-party of Chand Patil, when He was twenty years old. Since then, He stayed in Shirdi continuously for a period of sixty years, after which Baba took His Maha-Samadhi in the year 1918. From this we can say that the year of Baba's birth is approximately 1838 A.D.

[Baba's Mission and Advice](#)

Saint Ramadas (1608-1681) flourished in the 17th century, and fulfilled to a great extent his mission of protecting cows and Brahmins against the Yavanas (Mahomedans), but within two centuries after him, the split between the two communities -- Hindus and Mahomedans widened again, and Sai Baba came to bridge the gulf. His constant advice to all was to this effect. "Rama (the God of the Hindus) and Rahim (the God of the Mahomedans) were one and the same; there was not the slightest difference between them; then why should their devotees and quarrel among themselves? You ignorant folk, children, join hands and bring both the communities together, act sanely and thus you will gain your object of national unity. It is not good to dispute and argue. So don't argue, don't emulate others. Always consider your interest and welfare. The Lord will protect you. Yoga, sacrifice, penance, and knowledge are the means to attain God. If you do not succeed in this by any means, vain is your birth. If any one does any evil unto you, to do not retaliate. If you can do anything, do some good unto other." This in short was Sai Baba's advice to all; and this will stand in good stead both in material and spiritual matters.

[Sai Baba as Sadguru](#)

There are Gurus and Gurus. There are many so-called Gurus, who go about from house to house with cymbals and veena in their hands, and make a show of their spirituality. They blow

mantras into the ears of their disciples and extract money from them. They profess to teach piety and religion to their disciples, but are themselves impious and irreligious. Sai Baba never thought of making the least show of His worth (piety). Body-consciousness, He had none, but He had great love for the disciples. There are two kinds of Gurus (1) 'Niyat' (appointed or fixed) and (2) 'Aniyat' unappointed or general). The latter by their advice develop the good qualities in us, purify our hearts and set us on the path of salvation; but contact with the former, dispels our quality (sense of difference); and establishes us in Unity by making us realize "Thou art that". There are various Gurus imparting to us various kinds of worldly knowledge, but he, who fixes us in our Nature (Self) and carries us beyond the ocean of worldly existence, is the Sadguru. Sai Baba was such a Sadguru. His greatness is undescrivable. If anybody went to take His darshana, he, without being asked, would give every detail of his past, present and future life. He saw Divinity in all beings. Friends and foes were alike to Him. Disinterested and equal-balanced, He obliged the evildoers. He was the same in prosperity and adversity. No doubt, ever touched Him. Though He possessed the human body, He was not in the least attached to His body or house. Though He looked embodied, He was really disembodied, i.e., free in this every life.

Blessed are the people of Shirdi, who worshipped Sai as their God. While eating, drinking, working in their backyards and fields and doing various household works, they always remembered Sai and sang His glory. They knew no other God except Sai. What to speak of the love, the sweetness of the love, of the women of Shirdi! They were quite ignorant, but their pure love inspired them to compose poems or songs in their simple rural language. Letters or learning they had none, still one can discern real poetry in their simple songs. It is not intelligence, but love, that inspires real poetry as such. Real poetry is the manifestation of true love; and this can be seen and appreciated by intelligent listeners. Collection of these folk songs is desirable and Baba willing, some fortunate devotee may undertake the task of collecting and publishing these folk songs, either in the Sai Leela magazine or separately in a book-form.

Baba's Humility

Lord or Bhagwan is said to have six qualities, viz. (1) Fame, (2) Wealth, (3) Non-attachment, (4) Knowledge, (5) Grandeur, and (6) Generosity. Baba had all these in Him. He incarnated in flesh for the sake of the Bhaktas. Wonderful was His grace and kindness! He drew the devotees to Him, or how else one could have known Him! For the sake of His Bhaktas Baba spoke such words, as the Goddess of Speech dare not utter. Here is a specimen. Baba spoke very humbly as follows:- "Slave of slaves I am your debtor, I am satisfied at your darshan. It is a great favour that I saw your feet. I am an insect in your excreta. I consider Myself blessed thereby". What humility is this? If anybody would think that by publishing this, any disrespect is shown to Sai, we beg His pardon and to atone for this we sing and chant Baba's name.

Though Baba seemed outwardly to enjoy sense-objects, he had not the least flavour in them, or even the consciousness of enjoying them. Though He ate, he had no taste and though He saw, He never felt any interest in what He saw. Regarding passion, He was as perfect a celibate as Hanuman. He was not attached to anything. He was pure consciousness, the resting place of desire, anger, and other feelings. In short, He was disinterested, free and perfect. A striking instance may be cited in illustration of this statement.

Nanavalli

There was in Shirdi, a very quaint and queer fellow, by name Nanavalli. He looked to Baba's work and affairs. He once approached Baba who was seated on His Gadi (seat) and asked Him to get up, as he wanted to occupy the same. Baba at once got up and left the seat, which he occupied. After sitting there awhile Nanavalli got up, and asked Baba to take His seat. Then Baba sat on the seat and Nanavalli fell at His feet, and then went away. Baba did not show the slightest displeasure in being dictated to and ousted.

This Nanavalli loved Baba so much that he breathed his last, on the thirteenth day of Baba's taking Maha-Samadhi.

The Easiest Path

Hearing the stories of the Saints and Being in their Company:

Though Sai Baba acted outwardly like an ordinary man, His actions showed extraordinary intelligence and skill. Whatever He did, was done for the good of His devotees. He never prescribed any asan, regulation of breathing or any rites to His Bhaktas, nor did He blow any mantra into their ears. He told them to leave off all cleverness and always remember "Sai" "Sai". "If you did that" He said, "all your shackles would be removed and you would be free". Sitting between five fires, sacrifices, chantings, eight-fold Yoga are possible for the Brahmins only. They are of no use to the other classes. The function of the mind is to think, it cannot remain for a minute without thinking. If you give it a Sense-object, it will think about it. If you give it to a Guru, it will think about Guru. You have heard most attentively the greatness, grandeur of Sai. This is the natural remembrance, worship and Kirtan of Sai. Hearing the stories of the Saints is not so difficult, as the other Sadhanas mentioned above. They (stories) remove all fear of this Samsar (worldly existence), and take you on to the spiritual path. So listen to these stories, meditate on them, and assimilate them. If this is done, not only the Brahmins, but women and lower classes will get pure and holy. You may do or attend to your worldly duties, but give your mind to Sai and His stories, and then, He is sure to bless you. This is the easiest path, but why do not all take to it? The reason is that without God's grace, we do not get the desire to listen to the stories of Saints. With God's grace everything is smooth and easy. Hearing the stories of the Saints is, in a way, keeping their company. The importance of the company of Saints is very great. It removes our body-consciousness and egoism, destroys completely the chain of our birth and death, cuts asunder all the knots of the heart, and takes us to God, Who is pure Consciousness. It certainly increases our non-attachment to sense-objects, and makes us quite indifferent to pleasures and pains, and leads us on the spiritual path. If you have no other Sadhana, such as uttering God's name, worship or devotion etc., but if you take refuge in them (Saints) whole-heartedly, they will carry you off safely across the ocean of worldly existence. It is for this reason that the Saint manifest themselves in this world. even sacred rivers such as the Ganges, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri etc., which wash away the sins of the world, desire that the Saints should come to them, for a bath and purify them. Such is the grandeur of the Saints. It is on account of the store of merit in past births that we have attained the feet of Sai Baba.

We conclude this chapter with meditation on Sai's Form. He, the beautiful and handsome Sai, standing on the edge of the Masjid and distributing Udi to each and every Bhakta, with a view to his welfare. He who thinks the world as naught and Who is ever engrossed in Supreme Bliss -- before Him -- we humbly prostrate ourselves.

Chapter XI

Sai, as Sagun Brahman -- Dr. Pandit's Worship -- Haji Sidik Falke --Control over the Elements

Let us now, in this Chapter, describe the manifested (Sagun) Brahman Sai. How He was worshipped and how He controlled the elements.

Sai as Sagun Brahman

There are two aspects of God or Brahman : (1) the Unmanifested (Nirgun) and (2) the Manifested (Sagun). The Nirgun is formless, while the Sagun is with form, though both denote the same Brahman. Some prefer to worship the former, some the latter. As stated in the Gita (chapter XII) the worship of the latter is easy and preferable. As man has got a form (body, senses, etc.), it is natural and easy for him to worship the God with form. Our love and devotion do not develop unless we worship Sagun Brahman for a certain period of time, and as we advance; it leads us to the worship (meditation) of Nirgun Brahman. So let us start with Sagun worship. Image, altar, fire, light, sun, water, Brahman are the seven objects of worship, but Sadguru is better than all these. Let us, on this occasion, bring to our mind the form of Sai, Who was non-attachment Incarnate, and Who was a resting-place for His whole-hearted devotees. Our faith in His words is the seat of Asan; and our Sankalpa (determination to start and finish the Puja) is the abandonment of all our desires. Some say that Sai was a Bhagwad-bhakta (devotee of the Lord), others say He was a Maha-Bhagwat (a great devotee), but to us He is God Incarnate. He was extremely forgiving, never irritable, straight, soft, tolerant and content beyond comparison. Though He looked embodied (as having the form), He was really dis-embodied, emotionless, unattached and internally free. The Ganges on its way to the sea, cools and refreshes the creatures affected with heat, gives life to the crops and trees, and quenches the thirst of many. Similarly Saints (Souls) like Sai, while they live their own life, give solace and comfort to all. Lord Krishna has said that 'the Saint is My soul, My living image, I am He or He is My pure form (Being).' This in-describable Shakti or Power of God, known as Pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, incarnated in the form of Sai in Shirdi. The Shruti (Taitiriya Upanishad) describes Brahman as Bliss. This we read or hear daily in the books, but the devout people experienced this Brahman or Bliss in Shirdi. Baba, the support of all, required no prop or support (Asan) from anybody. He always used a piece of sack-cloth for His seat, which was covered with a small beautiful bed by His bhaktas and has a bolster placed by them, as a rest to His back. Baba respected the feelings of His devotees and allowed them to worship Him as they liked. Some waved Chamara or fans before Him, some played on musical instruments, some washed His hands and Feet, some others applied scent and chandan, some gave betel nut with leaves and other things, and some others offered naivedya. Though He looked like living in Shirdi, He was present everywhere. This all-pervasiveness of His way daily experienced by His devotees. Our humble prostration to this all-pervasive Sadguru.

Dr. Pandit's Worship

One Dr. Pandit, a friend of Tatyasaheb Noolkar, once came to Shirdi for Baba's darshana. After saluting Baba, he stayed in the Masjid for some time. Baba asked him to go to Dadabhat Kelkar. He went to Dadabhat, by whom he was well received. Then Dababhat left his house for Puja and Dr. Pandit accompanied him. Dadabhat worshipped Baba. Nobody until then dared to apply sandal paste to Baba's forehead. Only Mhalsapati used to apply it to His throat. But this simple-hearted devout, Dr. Pandit, took Dabadhat's dish containing Puja-materials and taking sandal-paste out of it, drew a Tripundra, i.e. three horizontal lines on Baba's forehead. To the surprise of all, Baba kept silent without uttering a single word. Then Dababhat that evening asked Baba, "How is it, that though You object to the sandal-paste being applied by others to Your forehead, but You allowed Dr. Pandit to do so now?" Baba replied that Dr. Pandit believed Him to be the same as his Guru, Raghunath Maharaja of Dhopeswar, known as Kaka Puranik, and he applied the paste to His forehead, as he was doing to his Guru. Hence He could not object. On enquiry, Dr. Pandit told Dadabhat that he took Baba as his Guru Kaka Puranik, and hence he marked the Tripundra on Baba's forehead, as he did on his Guru's head.

Though Baba allowed the devotees to worship Him as they pleased, still sometimes, He acted in a strange way. Sometimes, He threw away the Puja-dish and was wrath Incarnate, then who could approach Him? Sometimes, He scolded the devotees, at times, He looked softer than wax, a statue of peace and forgiveness. Though He seemed to shake with anger and His red eyes rolled round and round, still, He was internally a stream of affection and motherly love. Immediately, He called out His devotees and said, that He ever angry with His devotees; that if mothers kicked their children and if the sea turned back the rivers, He would neglect the

devotees' welfare: that He, the slave of His devotees, always stood by them, and responded to them, whenever they called upon Him, and that He always longed for their love.

Haji Sidik Falke

There was no knowing, when Baba would accept a devotee. That depended on His sweet will. Sidik Falke's story is to the point. One Mahomedan gentleman by name Sidik Falke of Kalyan, after making a pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina, came to Shirdi. He lived in a Chavadi, facing north, and sat in the open court-yard of the Masjid. For nine months, Baba ignored him, and did not allow him to step into the Masjid. Falke felt much disconsolate, and did not know what to do. Somebody advised him not to be disappointed; but to try to approach Baba through Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande), a close and intimate devotee of Baba. He told him that as they approach the God Shiva through his servant and devotee, Nandi, so Baba should be approached through Shama. Falke liked the idea and implored Shama to intercede for him. Shama agreed and on a convenient occasion spoke to Baba about him thus:- "Baba, why don't You allow the old Haji to step into the Masjid, while so many persons freely come and go, after taking Your darshan; why not bless him once?" Baba replied "Shama, you are too young to understand things. If the Fakir (Allah) does not allow, what can I do? Without His grace, who will climb into the masjid? Well, go to him and ask him whether he will come to the narrow footpath near the Barvi well." Shama went and returned with an affirmative answer. Again Baba said to Shama, "Ask him whether he is willing to pay me the sum of Rs. 40,000/- in four instalments." Shama went and returned with the answer that he was willing to pay even 40 lacs. Again Baba said to Shama- "We are going to butcher a goat in the Masjid, so ask him, whether he would like to have mutton, haunch or testicles of the goat." Shama returned with the answer that the Haji would be happy to receive a small crumb from Baba's kolamba (mudpot). Hearing this Baba got excited and with His hands threw away the earthen jars and kolamba and straightway advanced to the Haji and lifting His Kafni up with His hands said - "Why do you brag and fancy yourself great and pose yourself as an old Haji? Do you read Koran like this? You are proud of your pilgrimage to Macca, but you do not know Me." Being thus scolded, the Haji was confounded. Baba then went back to the Masjid, purchased a few baskets of mangoes and sent them to the Haji. Then again Baba went to the Haji and taking out Rs.55/- from His pocket, gave them to the Haji. From that time, Baba loved the Haji, invited him for meals and the Haji, thereafter, came into the Masjid whenever he liked. Baba gave him at times some rupees, and thus the Haji was enlisted in Baba's Darbar.

Baba's Control over the Elements

We shall close this Chapter after describing two incidents showing Baba's control over the elements. (1) Once at evening time, there was a terrible storm at Shirdi. The sky was overcast with thick black clouds. The winds began to blow forcibly; the clouds roared and the lighting began to flash, and the rains began to descend in torrents. In a short time, the whole place was flooded with water, All the creatures, birds, beasts and men got terribly frightened; and they all flocked to the Masjid for shelter. There are many local deities in Shirdi, but none of them came to their help. So they all prayed to Baba - their God, Who was fond of their devotion, to intercede and quell the storm. Baba was much moved. He came out and standing at the edge of the Masjid, addressed the storm in a loud and thunderous voice - "Stop, stop your fury and the calm." In a few minutes the rains subsided, the winds ceased to blow, and the storm came to a stop. Then the moon rose in the sky, and the people then went back home well-pleased, (2) On another occasion at noon the fire in the Dhuni began to burn brightly, its flames were seen to be reaching the rafters above. The people who were sitting in the Masjid did not know what to do. They dared not to ask Baba to pour water or do anything to quench the flames. But Baba soon came to realize, what was happening. He took up His Satka (short stick) and dashed it against a pillar in front, saying - "Get down, Be calm." At each stroke of the Satka, the flames began to lower and slow down; and in a few minutes the Dhuni became calm and normal.

This is our Sai, an Incarnation of God. He will bless any man who will prostrate and surrender himself to Him. He, who will read the stories of this Chapter daily with faith and devotion, will

soon be free from all calamities; not only this, but always attached and devoted to Sai, he will get very soon God-vision: all his desires will be fulfilled and being ultimately desireless, he will attain the Supreme. Amen!

Chapter XII

Sai Leelas - Experience of (1) Kaka Mahajani - (2) Dhumal Pleader - (3) Mrs. Nimonkar - (4) Moolay Shastri - (5) A Doctor

Now let us see in this Chapter how devotees were received and treated by Baba.

Saints' Mission

We have seen before, that the purpose or object of Divine Incarnation is to protect the good and destroy the wicked. But the mission of the Saints is quite different. To them the good and the wicked are the same. First they feel for the evildoers and set them on the right path. They are like the Agasti to destroy the Bhava-sagar (the ocean of wordly existence) or like the Sun to the darkness of ignorance. The Lord (God) dwells in the Saints. In fact they are not different from Him. Our Sai is One of these, Who incarnated for the welfare of the devotees, Supreme in knowledge and surrounded with divine lustre, He loved all beings equally. He was unattached. Foes and friends, kings and paupers, were the same to Him. Hear His powers. For the sake of devotees, He spent His stock of merits and was ever alert to help them. But the devotees could never approach Him, unless He meant to receive them. If their turn did not come, Baba did not remember them, and His Leelas could not reach their ears. Then, how could they think of seeing Him? Some men desired to see Sai Baba's but they did not get any opportunity of taking His darshan, till His Mahasamadhi. There are many such persons, whose desire for Baba's darshan was not thus satisfied. If these persons, believing in Him, listen to His Leelas, their quest for milk (darshan) will be, to a great extent, satisfied by the butter-milk (Leelas). If some persons went there by sheer luck and took Baba's darshan, were they able to stay there longer? No. Nobody could go there of his own accord, and nobody could stay there long even if he so wished. They could stay there, so long as Baba permitted them to stay, and had to leave the place when asked to do so by Baba; so everything depended of Baba's will.

Kala Mahajani

Once, Kaka Mahajani went to Shirdi from Bombay. He wanted to stay there for one week, and enjoy the Gokul-Ashtami festival. As soon as he took Baba's darshan, Baba asked him - "When are you returning home?" He was rather surprised at this question, but he had to give an answer. He said that he would go home when Baba ordered him to do so. Then Baba said - "Go to-morrow". Baba's word was law and had to be obeyed. Kaka Mahajani, therefore, left Shirdi, immediately. When he went to his office in Bombay, he found that his employer was anxiously waiting for him. His munim, i.e., the manager, suddenly fell ill, hence Kaka's presence was absolutely necessary. He had sent a letter to Kaka at Shirdi, which was redirected to him at Bombay.

Bhausahab Dhumal

Now listen to an opposite story. Once Bhausahab Dhumal, a pleader, was going to Niphad for a case. On the way he came to Shirdi, took Baba's darshan and wanted to proceed to Niphad immediately. But, Baba did not permit him to do so. He made him stay at Shirdi, for a week or

more. In the meanwhile, the magistrate at Niphad suffered intensely from pain in his abdomen, and the case was adjourned. Mr. Dhumal was then allowed to go and attend to his case. It went on for some months and was tried by four magistrates. Ultimately Mr. Dhumal won the case, and his client was acquitted.

[Mrs. Nimonkar](#)

Mr. Nanasaheb Nimonkar, Watandar of Nomon and Honorary Magistrate, was staying at Shirdi with his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Nimonkar were spending most of their time in the Masjid with Baba and serving Him. It so happened, that their son fell ill at Belapur and the mother decided, with Baba's consent, to go to Belapur, and see her son and other relatives; and stay there for a few days, but Mr. Nanasaheb asked her to return the next day. The lady was in a fix and did not know what to do; but her God Sai came to her help. While leaving Shirdi she went to Baba, who was standing in front of Sathe's wada with Mr. Nanasaheb and others, and prostrated at His Feet and asked His permission to go. Baba said to her, "Go, go quickly, be calm and unperturbed. Stay comfortably at Belapur for four days. See all your relatives and then return to Shirdi." How opportune were Baba's words! Mr. Nanasaheb's proposal was overruled by Baba's decree.

[Moolay Shastri of Nasik](#)

An orthodox Agnihotri Brahmin of Nasik, by name moolay Shastri, who had studied the six Shastras and was well-versed in astrology and palmistry, once came to Shirdi to see Mr. Bapusaheb Booty, the famous millionaire of Nagpur. After seeing him, he and others went to see Baba in the Masjid. Baba bought various fruits and other things from vendors with His own money, and distributed them to the persons present in the Masjid. Baba used to press the mango on all sides so skilfully that when any person received it from Baba and sucked it, he got all the pulp at once in his mouth and could throw away the stone and the skin forthwith. Plantains were peeled off by Baba and the kernel was distributed to the devotees, while the skins were retained by Baba for Himself. Moolay Shastri, as a palmist, wanted to examine Baba's hand or palm and requested Him to extend the same. Baba ignored his request and gave four plantains to him. Then, they all returned to the Wada and Moolay Shastri bathed, wore sacred clothes, and started his routine duties, viz. Agnihotra etc. Then Baba as usual started for Lendi and said - "Take some Geru (i.e. a red miry substance, to dye clothes in saffron-colour), we shall today don saffron-coloured cloth. None understood what Baba meant. Then after some time when Baba returned, and preparations for the noon-Arati were being made. Bapusaheb Jog asked Moolay Shastri, whether he would accompany him for the Arti. He replied that he would see Baba in the afternoon. As soon as Baba sat on his seat, the devotees worshiped Him and Arti commenced. Then Baba said - "Get some Dakshina from the new (Nasik) Brahmin." Booty himself went to get the Dakshina; and when he gave Baba's message to Moolay Shastri, he was sorely perplexed. He thought in his mind thus: "I am a pure Agnihotri Brahmin, why should I pay Dakshina? Baba may be a great Saint. I am not His dependent." But as a great Saint like Sai Baba was asking for Dakshina through a millionaire like Booty, he could not refuse. So leaving his routine unfinished, he forthwith started with Booty to the Masjid. Thinking himself holy and sacred, and the Masjid otherwise, he remained at a distance, and joining his hands threw flowers at Baba. Then lo! all of a sudden, he saw no Baba on the seat, but saw his late Guru Gholap Swami there. He was wonder-struck. Could this be a dream? No, it was not, as he was wide-awake; but though awake, how could his late Guru Gholap be there? He was speechless for some time. He pinched himself and thought again, but could not reconcile the fact of his late Guru Gholap being in the Masjid. Ultimately, leaving all doubt, he went up, fell at his Guru's feet and then getting up stood there with folded hands. Other people sang Baba's Arati, while Moolay Shastri chanted his Guru's name. Then casting off all pride of caste and ideas about sacredness, he fell flat at his Guru's feet and closed his eyes. When he got up and opened his eyes, he saw Baba asking for Dakshina. Seeing Baba's blissful form, and His inconceivable power, Moolay Shastri forgot himself. He was extremely pleased, his eyes were full of tears of joy. He again saluted Baba and gave the Dakshina. He said that his doubt was removed and that he saw his own Guru. On seeing his wonderful Leela of Baba all the people, including Moolay Shastri, were much moved, and they realized the meaning of

Baba's words, "Bring Geru, we shall don saffron-coloured garment." Such is the wonderful Leela of Baba.

A Doctor

Once a Mamlatdar came to Shirdi with a doctor friend of his. The Doctor said that his Deity was Rama and that he would not bow before a Mahomedan, and so, he was unwilling to go to Shirdi. The Mamlatdar replied, that nobody would press him to make a bow, nor would ask him to do so. So he should come and give the pleasure of his company. Accordingly, they came to Shirdi, and went to the Masjid for Baba's darshan. All were wonder-struck to see the Doctor going ahead and saluting Baba. They asked him how he forgot his resolve and bowed before a Mussalman. Then the Doctor replied that he saw his beloved Deity, Rama, on the seat and he, therefore prostrated himself before Him. Then as he was saying this, he saw Sai Baba there again. Being dismayed, he said, "Is this a dream? How could He be a Mahomedan? He is a great Yogasampanna (full of Yoga) Avatar."

Next day, he made a vow and began to fast. He absented himself from the Masjid, resolving not to go there, until Baba blessed him. Three days passed and on the fourth day, a close friend of his from Khandesh, turned up, and with him, he went to the Masjid for Baba's darshan. After the salutation, Baba asked him, whether anybody had gone to call him, so that he had come. Hearing this vital question, the doctor was moved. The same night he was blessed by Baba, and he experienced the Bliss supreme, in his sleep. Then he left for his town, where he experienced the same state of a fortnight. Thus his devotion to Sai Baba increased manifold.

The moral of all the stories mentioned above, specially, that of Moolay Shastri, is this that we should have firm faith in our Guru and nowhere else.

More Leelas of Sai Baba will be described in the next Chapter.
