

Shri Sai Satcharitra

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 Tatyia 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 whom 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 butter-milk 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 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 that "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, Tatya 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 Tatya 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, Tatya, 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, Tatya 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 life time. 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.

Bow to Shri Sai-- Peace to be all

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).

Shri Sai Satcharitra

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 Kopargtaon 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 similiar accident.

European Gentleman

One European gentleman of Bombay once came to Shirdi, with an introductory note from Nanasaheb 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 court-yard 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 house-holders. Sai Baba was neither a house-holder 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) vedadhyayan - 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 bringal 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 contented 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.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

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 store-house 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 it can be approximately determined by His stay in Shirdi. 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 evil-doers. 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, nor 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.

Bow to Shri Sai -- Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

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 Dadabhat 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 Dadabhat'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 Dadabhat 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!

Bow to Shri Sai -- Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XII

Sai Leelas - Experience of (1) Kaka Mahajani - (2) Dhupal 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 evil-doers 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 Sathé'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. Very soon Baba sat on his seat, was worshipped by the devotees 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.

Bow to Shri Sai -- Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XIII

More Sai Leelas - Diseases Cured - (1) bhimaji Patil - (2) Bala Shimpi - (3) Bapusaheb Booty - (4) Alandi Swami - (5) Kaka Mahajani - (6) Dastopant of Harda.

The Inscrutable Power of Maya

Baba's words were always short, pithy, deep, full of meaning, efficient and well-balanced. He was ever content and never cared for anything. He said, "Though I have become a Fakir, have no house or wife, and though leaving off all cares, I have stayed at one place, the inevitable Maya teases Me often. Though I forgot Myself I cannot forget Her. She always envelops Me. This Maya (illusive power) of the Lord (Shri Hari) teases God Brahma and others; then what to speak of a poor Fakir like Me? Those who take refuge in the Lord will be freed from Her clutches with his grace".

In such terms Baba spoke about the power of Maya. Lord Shri Krishna has said to Uddhava in the Bhagwat that the Saints are His living forms; and see what Baba had said for the welfare of His devotees: "Those who are fortunate and whose demerits have vanished; take to My worship. If you always say 'Sai, Sai' I shall take you over the seven seas; believe in these words, and you will be certainly benefited. I do not need any paraphernalia of worship - either eight-fold or sixteen-fold. I rest there where there is full devotion". Now read what Sai, the friend of those, who surrendered themselves to Him, did for their welfare.

Bhimaji Patil

One Bhimaji Patil of Narayanagaon, Taluka Junnar, Dist. Poona, suffered in the year 1909 A.D. from a severe and chronic chest-disease which ultimately developed into Tuberculosis. He tried all sorts of pathos (remedies), but to no effect. Losing all hopes, he ultimately prayed to God - "Oh Lord Narayana, help me now". It is a well known fact that, when our circumstances are well off, we do not remember God, but when calamities and adversities overtake us, we are reminded of Him, So Bhimaji now turned to God. It occurred to him that he should consult Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, a great devotee of

Baba, in this respect. So he wrote to him a letter, giving all details of his malady, and asking for his opinion. In reply, Mr. Nanasaheb wrote to him that there was only one remedy left, and that was to have recourse to Baba's Feet. Relying on Mr. Nanasaheb's advice, he made preparations for going to Shirdi. He was brought to Shirdi and taken to the Masjid, and placed before Baba. Mr. Nanasaheb and Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande) were then present. Baba pointed out that the disease was due to the previous evil karma, and was not at first disposed to interfere. But the patient cried out in despair that he was helpless, and sought refuge in Him, as He was his last hope, and prayed for mercy. Then Baba's heart melted and He said, "Stay, cast off your anxiety, your sufferings have come to an end. However, oppressed and troubled one may be as soon as he steps into the Masjid, he is on the pathway to happiness. The Fakir here is very kind and He will cure the disease, and protect all with love and kindness." The patient vomitted blood every five minutes, but there was no vomiting in the presence of Baba. From the time, Baba uttered the words of hope and mercy, the malady took a favourable turn. Baba asked him to stay in Bhimabai's house, which was not a convenient and healthy place, but Baba's order had to be obeyed. While he was staying there, Baba cured him by two dreams. In the first dream, he saw himself as a boy suffering the severe pain of a flogging, which he received for not reciting his 'Swami-poetry' lesson before his class-master. In the second dream, some one caused him intense pain, and torture, by rolling a stone up and down over his chest. With the pain thus suffered in dream, his cure was complete, and he went home. He then often came to Shirdi, gratefully remembering what Baba did for him, and prostrated before Him. Baba also did not expect anything from devotees, but grateful remembrance, unchanging faith and devotion. People in the Maharashtra, always celebrate Satya-Narayana Puja in their homes every fortnight or month. But it was this Bhimaji Patil, who started a new Sai Satya-vrata Puja, instead of Satya-Narayana-vrata Puja, in his house, when he returned to his village.

Bala Ganpat Shimpi

Another devotee of Baba by name Bala Ganapat Shimpi, suffered much from a malignant type of Malaria. He tried all sorts of medicines and decoctions, but in vain. The fever did not abate a jot and so he ran to Shirdi and fell on Baba's Feet. Baba gave him a strange recipe, in this case as follows:- "Give a black dog some morsels of rice mixed with curds in front of the Laxmi temple". Bala Shimpi did not know, how to execute this recipe; but no sooner he went home, then he found rice and curds. After mixing them together, he brought the mixture near the Laxmi temple, when he found the a black dog waving its tail. He placed the curds and rice before the dog. The dog ate it and, strange to say, Bala got rid of his Malaria.

Bapusaheb Booty

Shriman Bapusaheb Booty suffered, once from dysentery and vomiting. His cupboard was full of patent drugs and medicines, but none of them had any effect. Bapusaheb got very weak, on account of purgings and vomittings and, therefore, was not able to go to the Masjid for Baba's darshana. Baba then sent for him and made him sit before Him and said, "Now take care, you should not purge any more" and waving His index-finger "The vomiting must also stop". Now look at the force of Baba's words. Both the maladies took to their heels (disappeared) and Booty felt well.

On another occasion he had an attack of Cholera, and suffered from severe thirst. Dr. Pillai tried all sorts of remedies but could give him no relief. Then he went to Baba and consulted Him as what to drink that would allay his thirst and cure the disease. Baba prescribed an infusion of almonds, walnuts, pistachio (a kind of dry fruit), boiled in sugared milk. This would be considered, as a fatal aggravation of the disease by any other doctor or physician, but in implicit obedience to Baba's order, the infusion was administered and strange to say, the disease was cured.

Alandi Swami

A Swami from Alandi, wishing to take Baba's darshana, came to Shirdi. He suffered from a severe pain in his ear, which prevented him from getting the sleep. He was operated for this, but it served no purpose. The pain was severe and he did not know what to do. While he was returning, he came to take Baba's leave, when Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande) requested Baba to do something for the pain in the Swami's ear. Baba comforted him saying, "Alla Accha Karega (God will do good)." The Swami then returned to Poona, and after a week sent a letter to Shirdi, stating that the pain in his ear had subsided though the swelling was there, and in order to get the swelling removed, he went to Bombay for operation, but the surgeon on examining the ear said that no operation was then necessary. Such was the wonderful effect of Baba's words.

Kaka Mahajani

Another devotee named Kaka Mahajani suffered once from diarrhea. In order that there should be no break in his services to Baba, Kaka kept a tambya (pot) with water in some corner of the Masjid and whenever there was a call, he would go out. As Sai Baba knew everything, Kaka did not inform Him of his disease, thinking that Baba would of His own cure it soon. The work of constructing the pavement in front of the Masjid was permitted by Baba, but when the actual work was begun, Baba got wild and shouted out loudly. Everybody ran away, and as Kaka was also doing the same, Baba caught hold of him and made him sit there. In the confusion that followed, somebody left the a small bag of groundnuts. Baba took a handful of groundnuts, rubbed them in His hands, blew away the skins, and gave the clean nuts to Kaka and made him eat them. Scolding and cleaning the nuts, and making Kaka eat them, went on simultaneously. Baba Himself ate some of them. Then, when the bag was finished, Baba asked him to fetch water as He felt thirsty. Kaka brought a pitcher full of water. Then Baba drank some water and made Kaka also drink it. Baba then said, "Now your diarrhea has stopped, and you may attend to the work of the pavement." In the meanwhile other persons, who had run away, returned and

started the work; and Kaka, whose motions had stopped, also joined them. Are groundnuts medicine for diarrhea? According to current medical opinion, groundnuts would aggravate the disease, and not cure it. The true medicine, in this as in other cases, was Baba's word.

Dattopant of Harda

A gentleman from Harda by name Dattopant suffered from stomach-ache for fourteen years. None of the remedies gave him any relief. Then hearing of Baba's fame, that He

cures diseases by sight he ran to Shirdi, and fell at Baba's Feet. Baba looked at him kindly and gave him blessings. When Baba placed His hand on his head, and when he got Baba's Udi with blessing, he felt relieved and there was no further trouble about the malady.

Towards the end of his Chapter three cases are cited in footnotes:

1. Madhavrao Deshpande suffered from Piles. Baba gave him decoction of Sonamukhi (senna pods). This relieved him. Then after two years the trouble again recurred and Mahdavrao took the same decoction without consulting Baba. The result was that the disease aggravated but later on it was cured by Baba's grace.
2. Kaka Mahajani's elder brother, Gangadharpant, suffered for many years from stomach-pain. Hearing Baba's fame he came to Shirdi and requested Baba to cure him. Baba touched his belly and said, "God will cure". From that time there was no stomach-pain and he was completely cured.
3. Nanasaheb Chandorkar also once suffered from intense stomach-pain; he was restless the whole day and night. Doctors administered syringes which produced no effect. Then he approached Baba, who told him to eat Burfi (a kind of sweetmeat) mixed with ghee. This recipe gave him complete relief.

All these stories go to show, that the real medicine that cured the various diseases permanently was Baba's word, and grace, and not any medicines or drugs.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XIV

Ruttonji Wadia of Nanded - Saint Moulisaheb - Dakshina Mimansa.

In the last Chapter, we described how Baba's word and grace cured many incurable diseases. Now, we shall describe, how Baba blessed Mr. Ruttonji Wadia with an issue.

The life of this Saint is naturally sweet in and out. His various doings, eating, walking and His natural sayings are also sweet. His life is Bliss incarnate. Sai gave it out as a means of His devotee's remembrance to Him. He gave them various stories of duty and action, which ultimately led them to true religion. His object may be that people should live happily in this world, but they should be ever cautious and gain the object of their life, viz. self-realization. We get human body as a result of merits in past births and it is worth-while that with its aid, we should attain devotion and liberation in this life. So we should never be lazy, but always be on the alert to gain our end and aim of life.

If you daily hear the Leelas (stories) of Sai, you will always see Him. Day and night you will remember Him in your mind, When you assimilate Sai in this way, your mind will lose its fickleness and if you go on in this manner, it will finally be merged in pure Consciousness.

Ruttonji of Nanded :

Now let us come to the main story of this Chapter. In Nanded, in the Nizam state, there lived a Parsi mill-contractor and trader, by name Ruttonji Shapurji Wadia. He had amassed a large amount of money and had acquired fields and lands. He had got cattle, horses and conveyances and was very prosperous. To all outward appearances he looked very happy and contented, but inwardly, and really he was not so. Providential dispensation is such, that no one in this world is completely happy and rich; Ruttonji was no exception to this. He was liberal and charitable, gave food and clothing to the poor and helped all in various ways. The people took him to be a good and happy man, but Ruttonji thought himself miserable as he had no issue, male or female, for a long time. As Kirtan (singing glories of the Lord) without love or devotion, music of singing without rhythmical accompaniments, Brahmin without the sacred thread, proficiency in all arts without commonsense, pilgrimage without repentance and ornamentation without a necklace, are ugly and useless, so is the house of a man or house-holder without a male issue. Ruttonji always brooded on this matter and said in his mind, "Would God be ever pleased to grant me a son?" He thus looked morose, had no relish for his food. Day and night, he was enveloped with anxiety whether he would ever be blessed with a son. He had a great regard for Dasganu Mahajat. He saw him and opened his heart before him. Dasganu advised him to go to Shirdi, take Baba's darshan, fall at His Feet and seek His blessing and pray for issue. Ruttonji liked the idea, and decided to go to Shirdi. After some days he went to Shirdi, took Baba's darshana and fell at His Feet. Then opening a basket, he took out a beautiful garland of flowers and placed it around Baba's neck and offered Him a basket of fruits. With great respect he then sat near Baba, and prayed to Him saying- "Many persons who find themselves in difficult situations come to You, and You relieve them immediately. Hearting this, I have sought anxiously Your Feet; please, therefore, do not disappoint me." Sai Baba then asked him for Dakshina of Rs. five which Ruttonji intended to give, but added, that He has already received Rs. 3-14-0 from him, and that he should pay the balance only. Hearing this, Ruttonji was rather puzzled. he could not make out what Baba meant. That was the first time, he thought, that he went to Shirdi and how was it that Baba said that He had formerly got Rs. 3-14-0 from him? He could not solve the riddle. But he sat at Baba's Feet and gave the balance of the Dakshina asked for, explained to Baba fully, as to why he came and sought His help, and prayed that Baba should bless him with a son. Baba was moved and told him not to be worried, and that that time his bad days had ended. He then gave him Udi, placed His hand on his head and blessed him saying that Allah (God) would satisfy his heart's desire.

Then after taking Baba's leave, Ruttonji returned to Nanded and told Dasganu everything that took place at Shirdi, He said that everything went on well there, that he got Baba's darshan and blessing with Prasad, but there was one thing which he could not understand. Baba said to him that he had got Rs.3-14-0 before. Please explain as to what Baba meant by this remark. He said to Dasganu, "I never went to Shirdi before, and how could I give Him the sum to which Baba referred?" To Dasganu also, it was a puzzle, and he pondered much over it for a long time. Some time afterwards it struck him that Ruttonji had received some days ago a Mahomedan Saint, by name Moulisaheb, in his house and had spent some money for his reception. This Moulisaheb was coolie-saint wellknown to the people of Nanded. When Ruttonji decided to go the Shirdi, this Molisaheb accidentally came to Ruttonji's house. Ruttonji knew him and loved him. So he gave a small party in his honour. Dasganu got from Ruttonji the yadi or memo of expenses of this reception, and everybody was wonderstruck to see, that the expenses amounted to exactly Rs.3-14-0, nothing more, nothing less. They all came to know, that Baba was omniscient, that

thought He lived in Shirdi, He knew what happened outside far away from Shirdi. In fact He knew the past, present and future, and could identify Himself heart and soul with anybody. In this particular instance how could He know the reception given to Moulisaheb, and the amount spent therefore, unless He could identify Himself with him, and be One with him?

Ruttonji was satisfied with this explanation and his faith in Baba was confirmed and increased. In due time afterwards, he was blessed with a son and his joy knew no bounds. It is said that he had in all a dozen (12) issues out of which only four survived.

In a foot-note towards the end of this Chapter, it is stated that Baba told Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe, after the death of his first wife, to remarry and that he would get a son. R.B. Sathe married second time. The first two issues by this wife were daughters and he, therefore, felt very despondent. But the third issue was a son. Baba's word did turn out true and he was satisfied.

Dakshina - Mimansa

Now we shall close this Chapter with a few remarks about Dakshina. It is a well-known fact that Baba always asked for Dakshina from people who went to see Him. Somebody may ask a question, "If Baba was a Fakir and perfectly non-attached, why should he ask for Dakshina and care for money?" We shall consider this question broadly now.

First for a long time, Baba did not accept anything. He stored burnt matches and filled His pocket with them. He never asked anything from anybody--whether he be a devotee or otherwise. If anybody placed before Him a pice or two, He purchased oil or tobacco. He was fond of tobacco, for He always smoked a bidi or Chilim (an earthen pipe). Then some persons thought that they could not see the Saints empty-handed, and they, therefore, placed some copper coins before Baba. If a pice was placed before Him. He used to pocket it; if it was a two pice coin, it was returned immediately. Then after Baba's fame had spread far and wide, people began to flock in numbers; and Baba began to ask Dakshina from them. It is said in the Shruti (veda) that Puja of the Gods is not complete, unless a golden coin was offered. If a coin was necessary in the Puja of the Gods, why should it be not so in the Puja of the Saints also? Ultimately, the Shastras laid it down that, when one goes to see God, King, Saint or Guru, he should not go empty-handed. He should offer something, preferably coin or money. In this connection we may notice the precepts recommended by the Upanishads. The Brihadaranyak Upanishad says that the Lord Prajapati advised the Gods, men and demons by one letter "Da". The Gods understood by this letter that they should practice (1) "Dama" i.e. self-control; the men thought or understood that they should practice (2) "Dana" i.e. charity; the demons understood that they should practice (3) "Daya" i.e. compassion. To men Charity or giving was recommended. The teacher in the Taittiriya Upanishad exhorts his pupils to practise charity and other virtues. Regarding charity he says, "Give with faith, give with magnanimity, i.e. liberally, give with modesty, with awe and with sympathy. In order to teach the devotees the lesson of charity and to remove their attachment to money and thus to purify their minds, Baba extracted Dakshina from them; but there was this peculiarity, as Baba said, that He had to give back hundred times more of what He received. There are many instances, in which this has happened. To quote an instance, Mr. Ganpatrao Bodas, the famous actor, says in his Marathi autobiography, that on Baba's pressing him often and often for Dakshina, he emptied his money-bag before Him. The result of this

was, as Mr. Bodas says, that in later life he never lacked money, as it came to him abundantly.

There were also secondary meanings of Dakshina, in many cases, in which Baba did not want any pecuniary amount. To quote two instances - (1) Baba asked Rs.15/- as Dakshina from Pro. G.G.Narke, who replied that he did not have even a pie. Then Baba said, "I know you have no money; but you are reading Yoga-Vashistha. Give Me Dakshina from that." Giving Dakshina in this case meant - 'Deriving lessons from the book and lodging them in the heart where Baba resides'. (2) In the second case Baba asked a certain lady (Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad) to give Rs.6/- as Dakshina. The lady felt pained, as she had nothing to give. Then her husband explained to her that Baba wanted six inner enemies (lust, anger, avarice etc.) to be surrendered to Him. Baba agreed with this explanation.

It is to be noted, that though Baba collected a lot of money by Dakshina, He would distribute the whole amount the same day, and the next morning He would become a poor Fakir as usual. When Baba took His Mahasamadhi, after receiving thousands and thousands of Rupees as Dakshina for about ten years, He had only a few Rupees in His possession.

In short, Baba's main object in taking Dakshina, from His devotees was to teach them the lessons of Renunciation and Purification.

Post-script

Mr. B. V. Deo of Thana, retired Mamlatdar, and a great devotee of Baba, has written an article on this subject (Dakshina) in "Shri Sai Leela" magazine, Vol.VII, P.6-26, in which he says amongst other things, as follows:-

"Baba did not ask Dakshina from all. If some gave Dakshina without being asked, He sometimes accepted it; and at other times He refused it. He asked it from certain devotees only. He never demanded it, from those devotees, who thought in their minds that Baba should ask them for it, and then they should pay it. If anybody offered it against His wish, He never touched it, and if he kept it there, He asked him to take it away. He asked for small or big amounts from devotees, according to their wish, devotion and convenience. He asked it, even from women and children. He never asked all the rich for it, nor from all the poor."

"Baba never got angry with those from whom He asked Dakshina, and who did not give it. If any Dakshina was sent, through some friend, who forgot to hand over the same to Baba, He reminded him somehow of it and made him pay it. On some occasions, Baba used to return some sum from the amount tendered as Dakshina, and ask the donor to guard it or keep it in his shrine for worship. This procedure benefited the donor or devotee immensely. If anybody offered more than he originally intended to give, He returned the extra amount. Sometimes, He asked more Dakshina from some, than what they originally intended to give and, if they had no money, asked them to get or borrow from others. From some, He demanded Dakshina three or four times a day."

"Out of the amount collected as Dakshina, Baba spent very little for His own sake, viz., for buying Chilim (clay pipe) and fuel for His Dhuni (sacred fire), and all the rest, He distributed as charity in varying proportions to various persons. All the paraphernalia of the Shirdi Sansthan was brought, by various rich devotees at the instance and suggestion

of Radha-Krishna-Mai. Baba always used to get wild and scolded those, who brought costly and rich articles. He said to Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, that all His property consisted of one kroupin (codpiece), one stray piece of cloth, one Kafni and a tumrel (tinpot), and that all the people troubled Him by bringing all these unnecessary, useless and costly articles."

Woman and wealth are the two main obstacles in the way of our Pramatha (spiritual life); and Baba and provided in Shirdi two institutions, viz., Dakshina and Radha-Krishna-Mai. Whenever they came to Him, He demanded Dakshina from them, and asked them to go to the 'SCHOOL' (Radha-Krishna-Mai's house). If they stood these two tests well, i.e. if they showed that they were free from attachment for woman and wealth, their progress in spirituality was rapid and assured by Baba's grace and blessings.

Mr. Deo has also quoted passages from the Gita and Upanishads; and shown that charity given in a holy place and to a holy personage, conduces to the donors' welfare to a great degree. What is more holy than Shirdi and its Presiding Deity -- Sai Baba?

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XV

Naradiya Kirtan - Paddhati - Mr. Cholkar's Sugarless Tea - Two Lizards.

The readers may remember that mention was made in the 6th Chapter regarding the Rama-Navami Festival in Shirdi; how the festival originated and how in the early years there was a great difficulty in getting a good Haridas for performing Kirtan on that occasion, and how Baba permanently entrusted this function (Kirtan) to Dasganu permanently. Now in this Chapter we shall describe the manner in which Dasganu was performing the Kirtan.

Naradiya Kirtan-Paddhati

Generally our Haridasas, while performing the Kirtan, wear a gala and full dress. They put on a head-dress, either a pheta or a turban, a long flowing coat with a shirt inside, an uparane (short dhotar) on the shoulders and the usual long dhotar from the waist below. Dressed in this fashion for some Kirtan in the Shirdi village, Dasganu once went to bow to Baba. Baba asked him - "Well, bridegroom! where are you going dressed so beautifully like this?" 'For performing a Kirtan' was the reply. Then Baba said - "Why do

you want all this paraphernalia-coat, uparani and pheta etc, doff all that before Me, why wear them on the body?" Dasganu immediately took them off and placed them at the Baba's Feet. From that time Dasganu never wore these things while performing the Kirtan. He was always bare from waist upwards, a pair of 'chiplis' was in his hand and a garland round his neck. This is not in consonance with the practice generally followed by all the Hardidasa, but this is the best and the purest method. The sage Narada, from whom the Kirtan-Paddhati originated, wore nothing on his trunk and head. He carried a 'veena' in his hand, and wandered from place to place everywhere singing the glory of the Lord.

Mr. Cholkar's Sugarless Tea

Initially, Baba was known in Poona and Ahmednagar Districts, but Nanasaheb Chandorkar, by his personal talks and by Dasganu, by his splendid Kirtans, spread the fame of Baba in the Konkan (Bombay Presidency). In fact, it was Dasganu - May God bless him-who, by his beautiful and inimitable Kirtans, made Baba available to so many people there. The audience, who come to hear the Kirtans have different tastes. Some like the erudition of the Haridas; some his gestures, some his singing, some his wit and humour, some his preliminary dissertation on Vedanta, and some others, his main stories and so on; but among them, there are very few, who by hearing the Kirtan get faith and devotion or love for God or saints. The effect of hearing Dasganu's kirtan on the minds of audience was however electric, as it were. We give an instance here

Dasganu was once performing his Kirtan and singing the glory of Sai Baba, in the Koupineshwar temple in Thana. One Mr. Cholkar, a poor man serving as a candidate in the Civil Courts in Thana, was amongst the audience. He heard Dasganu's Kirtan most attentively and was much moved. He there and then mentally bowed and vowed to Baba saying - "Baba, I am a poor man, unable to support my family. If by your grace, I pass the departmental examination, and get a permanent post, I shall go to Shirdi, fall at Your Feet and distribute sugar-candy in Your name." As good luck would have it, Mr.Cholkar did pass the examination and did get the permanent post and now it remained for him to fulfil his vow, the sooner the better. Mr. Cholkar was a poor man with a large family to support; and he could not afford to pay for the expenses of a Shirdi trip. As is well said, one can easily cross over Nahne ghat in Thana District or even the Sahyadri Range; but it is very difficult for a poor man to cross Umbareghat, i.e., the threshold of his house. As Mr. Cholkar was anxious to fulfill his vow as early as possible, he resolved to economize, cut down his expenses, and save money. He determined not to use sugar in his diet; and began to take his tea without it. After he was able to save some money in this way, he came to Shirdi, took Baba's darshan, fell at His Feet, offered a coconut, distributed it with a clean conscience along with sugar-candy as per his vow and said to Baba that he was much pleased with His darshan and that his desires were fulfilled that day. Mr. Cholkar was in the Masjid with his host Bapusaheb Jog. When the host and the guest both got up and were about to leave the Masjid, Baba spoke to Jog as follows:- "Give him (your guest) cups of tea, fully saturated with Sugar." Hearing these significant words, Mr. Cholkar was much moved, he was wonderstruck, his eyes were bedewed with tears, and he fell at Baba's Feet again. Mr. Jog was also curious about this direction, regarding the tea-cups to be given to his guest. Baba wanted by His words to create faith and devotion in Cholkar's mind. He hinted as it were, that He got the sugar-candy as per his vow and that He knew full well his secret determination not to use sugar in his diet. Baba meant to say, "If you spread your palms with devotion before Me, I am immediately with you, day and night. Though, I am here bodily, still I know what you do; beyond the seven seas. Go

wherever you will, over the wide world, I am with you. My abode is in your heart and I am within you. Always worship Me, Who is seated in your heart, as well as, in the hearts of all beings, Blessed and fortunate, indeed, is he who knows Me thus."

What a beautiful and important lesson was thus imparted by Baba to Mr. Chokar !

Two Lizards

Now we close this Chapter, with a story of two little lizards. Once Baba was sitting in the Masjid. A devotee sat in front of Him, when a lizard tick-ticked. Out of curiosity, the devotee asked Baba whether this tick-ticking of the lizard signified anything; was it a good sign or a bad omen? Baba said that the lizard was overjoyed as her sister from Aurangabad was coming to see her. The devotee sat silent, not making out the meaning of Baba's words. Immediately, a gentleman from Aurangabad came on horse-back to see Baba. He wanted to proceed further, but his horse would not go, as it was hungry and wanted grams. He took out a bag from his shoulders to bring grams and dashed it on the ground to remove dirt. A lizard came out therefrom and in the presence of all, climbed up the wall. Baba asked the questioner devotee to mark her well. She at once went strutting to her sister. Both sisters met each other after a long time, kissed and embraced each other, whirled round and danced with love! Where is Shirdi and where is Aurangabad? How should the man on horse-back come there from Aurangabad with the lizard? And how should Baba make the prophesy of the meeting of the two sisters? All this is really very wonderful and proves the omniscience -- the all-knowing nature of Baba.

Post Script

He who respectfully reads this Chapter or studies it daily, will get all his miseries removed by the grace of the Sadguru Sai Baba, Hence:

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all
