

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXIII

Yoga and Onion - Shama Cured of Snake - Bite - Cholera Ordinance Broken - Ordeal of Guru-Bhakti.

Preliminary

Really this Jiva (human soul) transcends the three qualities, viz. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, but being deluded by Maya, he forgets his nature which is 'Existence-knowledge-bliss', and thinks that he is the doer and enjoyer and thus entangles himself in endless miseries and does not know the way of deliverance. The only way of deliverance is Loving Devotion towards the Guru's feet. The great Player or Actor Lord Sai has delighted His Bhaktas and transformed them into Himself (His nature).

We regard Sai Baba as an incarnation of God for reasons already stated, but He always said that He was an obedient servant of God. Though an incarnation He showed the people the way, how to behave satisfactorily and carry out the duties of their respective stations (Varnas) in this life. He never emulated others in any way, nor asked others to have something done for Him. For Him, Who saw the Lord in all movable and immovable things of this world, humility was the most proper thing. None He disregarded or disrespected; for He saw Narayan (Lord) in all beings, He never said, "I am God," but that He was a humble servant and He always remembered Him and always uttered - "Allah Malik" (God is the sole proprietor or Owner).

We do not know the various kinds of Saints, how they behave, what they do and eat etc. We only know, that by God's grace they manifest themselves in this world to liberate the ignorant and bound souls. If there be any store of merits on our account, we get a desire in listening to the stories and Leelas of the Saints, otherwise not. Let us now turn to the main stories of this Chapter.

Yoga and Onion

Once it so happened, that a sadhak of Yoga came to Shirdi with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He had studied all the works on Yoga, including the Yoga-sutras of Patanjali, but had no practical experience. He could not concentrate his mind and attain samadhi even for a short time. He thought that if Sai Baba be pleased with him, He will show him the way to attain samadhi for a long time. With this object in view he came to Shirdi, and when he went to the Masjid he saw Sai Baba eating bread with onion. On seeing this, a thought arose in his mind - 'How can this man, eating stale bread with raw onion, solve my difficulties and help me?' Sai Baba read his mind and said to Nanasaheb - "Oh Nana, he who has the power to digest onion, should eat it and none else". Hearing this remark, the yogi was wonder-struck and then he fell at Baba's Feet with complete surrender. With pure and open mind, he asked his difficulties and got their solution from Baba. Thus being satisfied and happy, he left Shirdi with Baba's Udi and blessings.

Shama Cured of Snake-Bite

Before Hemadpant begins the story, he says about the Jiva that it can be very well compared with a parrot, and that they both are bound, the one in the body and the other in a cage. Both think that their present bound state is good for them. It is only when a Helper, i.e., Guru comes and by God's grace opens their eyes and liberates them from their bondage, that their eyes are opened to a greater and larger life, compared to which their former limited life is nothing.

In the last Chapter, it was shown how Baba anticipated the calamity, that was to befall on Mr. Mirikar and rescued him from it. Now let the readers hear a story grander than that. Once Shama was bitten by a poisonous snake. His little finger of the hand was stung and the poison began to spread into the body. The pain was also severe and Shama thought that he would pass off soon. His friends wanted to take him to the God Viroba, where such cases were often sent, but Shama ran to the Masjid -- to His Viroba (Sai Baba). When Baba saw him, He began to scold and abuse. He got enraged and said - "Oh vile Bhaturdya (Priest) do not climp up. Beware if you do so" and then roared - "Go, Get away, Come down." Seeing Baba thus red with wrath, Shama was greatly puzzled and disappointed. He thought that the Masjid was his home and Sai Baba his sole Refuge, but if he was driven away like this, where should he go? He lost all hope of life and kept silent. After a time Baba became normal and calm when Shama went up and sat near. Then Baba said to him - "Don't be afraid, don't care a jot, the Merciful Fakir will save you, go and sit quiet at home, don't go out, believe in Me and remain fearless and have no anxeity". Then he was sent home. Immediately afterwards, Baba sent Taty Patil and Kakasaheb Dixit to him with instructions to the effect, that he should eat what he liked, should move in the home, but should never lie down and sleep. Needless to say that these instructions were acted upon and Shama got all-right in a short time. The only thing to be remembered in this connection is this - the words of Baba (or the five syllabled Mantra, viz, 'Go, Get away, Come down') were not addressed to Shama- as it apparently looked - but they were a direct order to the snake and its poison not to go up and circulate through Shama's body. Like others well-versed in Mantrashastra, He had not to use any incantation, charged rice or water etc. His words only were most efficacious in saving the life of Shama.

Any one, hearing this story and other similar ones, will beget firm faith in the Feet of Sai Baba, and the only way to cross the ocean of Maya is to remember ever the Feet of Baba in the heart.

Cholera Epidemic

Once, Cholera was raging virulently in Shirdi. The residents were much frightened and they stopped all communication with the outside people. The panchas of the village assembled together and decided upon two ordinances as a remedy to check and put down the Epidemic. They were (1) No fuel-cart should be allowed to come in the village, and (2) No goat should be killed there. If anybody disobeyed these ordinances, they were to be fined by the village-authorities and panchas. Baba knew that all this was mere supersition, and therefore, He cared two pence for the Cholera-ordinances. While the ordinances were in force, a fuel-cart came there, and wanted to enter the village. Everybody knew that there was dearth of fuel in the village, still the people began to drive away the fuel-cart. Baba came to know of this. He came to the spot and asked the cartman to take the fuel-cart to the Masjid. None dared to raise his voice against this

action of Baba. He wanted fuel for His Dhuni and so He purchased it. Like an Agnihotri keeping his sacred fire alive throughout his life, Baba kept His Dhuni ever burning all day and night; and for this He always stocked fuel. Baba's home, i.e. the Masjid was free and open to all. It had no lock and key; and some poor people removed some wood from there for their use. Baba did not grumble about this. Baba saw that the whole universe was pervaded by the Almighty, and so He never bore enmity or ill-will to anybody. Though perfectly detached. He behaved like an ordinary house-holder to set an example to the people.

Ordeal of Guru-Bhakti

Let us now see, how the second Cholera-ordinance fared with Baba. While it was in force, somebody brought a goat to the Masjid. It was weak, old and about to die. At this time Fakir Pir Mohamad of Malegaon alias Bade Baba was near. Sai Baba asked him to behead it with one stroke, and offer it as an oblation. This Bade Baba was much respected by Sai Baba. He always sat on the right hand of Sai Baba. After the chilim (pipe) was first smoked by him, it was then offered to Baba and others. After the dishes were served, at the time of taking meals at noon, Baba respectfully called Bade Baba and made him sit on His left side, and then all partook of food. Baba paid him also daily Rs.50/- out of the amount collected as Dakshina. Baba accompanied him hundred paces whenever he was going away. Such was his position with Baba. But when Baba asked him to behead the goat, he flatly refused, saying "Why it should be killed for nothing?" Then Baba asked Shama to kill it. He went to Radha-Krishna-Mai and brought a knife from her and placed it before Baba. Knowing the purpose for which the knife was taken, she recalled it. Then Shama went to bring another knife, but stayed in the Wada, and did not return soon. Then came the turn of Kakasaheb Dixit. He was 'good gold' no doubt, but had to be tested. Baba asked him to get a knife and kill the goat. He went to Sath's Wada and returned with a knife. He was ready to kill it at Baba's bidding. He was born in a pure Brahmin family and never in his life knew killing. Though quite averse to do any act of violence, he made himself bold to kill the goat. All the people wondered to see that Bade Baba, a Mahomedan was unwilling to kill it while this pure Brahmin was making preparations to do so. He tightened his dhotar and with a semicircular motion raised his hand with the knife and looked at Baba for the final signal. Baba said - "What are you thinking of? Go on, strike". Then, when the hand was just about to come down, Baba said - "Stop, how cruel you are! Being a Brahmin, you are killing a goat?" Kakasaheb obeyed and kept the knife down and said to baba - "Your nectarlike word is law unto us, we do not know any other ordinance. We remember You always, meditate on Your Form and obey You day and night, we do not know or consider whether it is right or wrong to kill, we do not want to reason or discuss things, but implicit and prompt compliance with Guru's orders, is our duty and dharma".

Then Baba said to Kakaseheb, that He would Himself do the offering and killing business. It was settled that the goat should be disposed of near a place called Takkyia, where fakirs used to sit. When the goat was being removed to that place, it fell dead on the way.

Hemadpant closes the Chapter with a classification of disciples. He says that they are of three kinds : (1) First or best (2) Second or middling and (3) Third or ordinary. The best kind of disciples are those who guess what their Gurus want and immediately carry it out and serve them without waiting for an order from them. The average disciples are those who carry out the orders of their Masters to a letter, without any delay, and the third kind

of disciples are those, who go on postponing the carrying out of their orders and making mistakes at every step.

The disciples should have firm faith, backed up by intelligence and if they have patience to these, their spiritual goal will not be distant. Control of breath -- ingoing and outgoing, or Hath-Yoga or other difficult practices are not at all necessary. When the disciples get the above-mentioned qualities, they become ready for further instructions and the Masters then appear and lead them on, in their spiritual path to perfection.

In the next Chapter we will deal with Baba's interesting wit and humour.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXIV

Baba's Wit and Humour - Chanak Leela - (1) Hemadpant (2) Sudama (3) Anna Chinchanikar vs. Mavsibai.

Preliminary

To say that, we shall state such and such in the next or this Chapter, is a sort of egoism. Unless, we surrender our ego to the feet of our Sad-guru, we will not succeed in our undertaking. If we become egoless, then our success is assured.

By worshipping Sai Baba, we attain both the objects, worldly and spiritual, and are fixed in our true Nature, and get peace and happiness. Therefore, those who want to gain their welfare, should respectfully hear Sai Baba's Leelas or stories and meditate on them. If they do this, they will easily attain the object of their life and get Bliss.

Generally, all people like wit and humour, but they do not like that jokes should be cut at their expense. But Baba's method was peculiar; when it was accompanied with gestures, it was very interesting and instructive, and the people, therefore, did not mind, if they were held up to the ridicule. Hemadpant gives his own instance below.

Chanak-Leela

In Shirdi, bazar was held every Sunday, and people from the neighbouring villages came there, erected booths and stalls on the street, and sold their wares and commodities. Every noon, the Masjid was crowded more or less; but on Sunday, it was crowded to suffocation. On one such Sunday, Hemadpant sat in front of Baba, shampooing His Legs and muttering God's name. Shama was on Baba's left, Vamanrao to His right - Shriman Booty and Kakasaheb Dixit and others were also present there. Then Shama laughed and

said to Annasaheb - "See that some grains seem to have stuck to the sleeve of your coat". So saying he touched the sleeve and found that there were some grains. Hemadpant straightened his left fore-arm to see what the matter was, when to the surprise of all, some grains of gram come rolling down and were picked up by the people who were sitting there.

This incident furnished a subject-matter for joke. Everybody present began to wonder and said something or other as to how the grains found their way into the sleeve of the coat and lodged there so long. Hemadpant also could not guess how they found an entrance and stayed there. When nobody could give any satisfactory explanation in this matter, and everybody was wondering about this mystery, Baba said as follows :-

Baba - "This fellow (Annasaheb) has got the bad habit of eating alone. Today is a bazar-day and he was here chewing grams. I know his habit and these grams are a proof of it. What wonder is there in this matter?"

Hemadpant - "Baba, I never know of eating things alone; then why do you thrust this bad habit on me? I have never yet seen Shirdi bazar. I never went to the bazar today, then how could I buy grams, and how could I eat them if I had not bought them? I never eat anything unless I share it with others present near me".

Baba - "It is true that you give to the persons present; but if none be near-by, what could you or I do But do you remember Me before eating? Am I not always with you? Then do you offer Me anything before you eat?"

Moral

Let us mark and note carefully, what Baba has taught us, by this incident. He has advised us that before the senses, mind and intellect enjoy their objects, he should first be remembered, and if this be done, it is in a way an offering to Him. The senses etc. can never remain without their objects, but if those objects are first offered to the Guru, the attachment for them will naturally vanish. In this way, all the Vrittis (thoughts) regarding Desire, Anger, Avarice etc. should first be offered and directed to the Guru and if this practice be followed, the Lord will help you in eradicating all the Vrittis. When before enjoyment of the objects, you think that Baba is close by, the question whether the object is fit to be enjoyed or not will at once arise. Then the object that is not fit to be enjoyed will be shunned and in this way our vicious habits or vices will disappear and our character will improve. Then love for the Guru will grow and pure knowledge will sprout up. When this knowledge grows, the bondage of body - consciousness (we are the body) will snap and our intellect will be merged in spirit-consciousness (we are the spirit). Then we shall get Bliss and contentment. There is no difference between Guru and God. He who sees any difference in them, sees God nowhere. So leaving aside all ideas of difference, we should regard Guru and God as one, and if we serve our Guru as stated above, Lord (God) will be certainly pleased and purifying our minds He will give us self-realisation. To put the matter in a nut-shell, we should not enjoy any object with our senses etc. without first remembering our Guru. When the mind is trained in this way, we will be always reminded of Baba, and our meditation on Baba will grow apace. The Sagun Form of Baba will ever be before our eyes and then devotion, non-attachment and salvation will all be ours. When Baba's Form is thus fixed before our mental vision, we

forget hunger, thirst, and this samsar; the consciousness of worldly pleasures will disappear and our mind shall attain peace and happiness.

Sudama's Story

When the above story was being narrated, Hemadpant was reminded of similar story of Sudama, which illustrates the same principle and, therefore, it is given here.

Shri Krishna and His elder brother, Balarama, were living with a co-student, named Sudama, in the ashram of their Guru, Sandipani. Once Krishna and Balarama were sent to the forest for bringing fuel. Then the wife of Sandipani sent also Sudama for the same purpose with some quantity of grams for the three. When Krishna met Sudama in the forest, he said to him - "Dada, I want water as I am thirsty". Sudama replied - "No water should be drunk on an empty stomach, so it is better to rest a while". He did not say that he had got grams with him and that He should take some. As Krishna was tired, He lay down for rest on the lap of Sudama and was snoring. Seeing this, Sudama took out the grams and began to eat. Then Krishna suddenly asked him - "Dada, what are you eating, whence is the sound?". He replied - "What is there to eat? I am shivering with cold and my teeth are chattering. I can't even repeat distinctly Vishnu-Sahastra-Nama". Hearing this, the Omniscient Krishna said - "I just dreamt a dream, in which I saw a man, eating things of another, and when asked about this, he said - "What earth (dust) should he eat?", meaning thereby that he had nothing to eat? The other man said - "Let it be so". Dada, this is only a dream. I know that you won't eat anything without Me; under the influence of the dream I asked you what you were eating?" If Sudama had known a bit of the Omniscient, Shri Krishna and His Leelas, he would not have acted, as he did. Therefore, he had to suffer for what he did. Though he was a chum of Shri Krishna he had to pass his later life in utter poverty. But when he later offered Krishna a handful of parched rice, earned by his wife with her own labour, Krishna was pleased and gave him a golden city to enjoy. This story should be remembered by those who have the habit of eating things alone without partaking them with others.

The Shruti also emphasizes this lesson, and asks us to offer things first to God and then enjoy them after they are renounced by Him. Baba also has taught us the same lesson in His inimitable and humorous way.

Anna Chinchanikar vs. Mavsibai

Hemadpant, now describes another witty incident, in which Baba played a peace-maker's part. There was one devotee by name Damodar Ghanashyama Babare alias Anna Chinchanikar. He was simple, rough and straightforward. He cared for nobody, always spoke plainly and carried all dealings in cash. Though he looked outwardly harsh and uncompromising, he was good natured and guileless. So Sai Baba loved him. One day, like others serving Baba in their own way, this Anna was, one noon standing prone and was shampooing the left arm of Baba, which rested on the kathada (railing). On the right side, one old widow named Venubai Koujalgi whom Baba called mother and all others Mavsibai, was serving Baba in her own way. This Mavsibai was an elderly woman of pure heart. She clasped the fingers of both her hands round the trunk of Baba and was at this time kneading Baba's abdomen. She did this so forcibly that Baba's back and abdomen became flat (one) and Baba moved from side to side. Anna on the other side was steady, but Mavsibai's face moved up and down with her strokes. Once it so

happened that her face came very close to Anna's. Being of a witty disposition she remarked - "Oh, this Anna is a lewd (bad) fellow, he wants to kiss me. Even being so old with grey hair he feels no shame in kissing me." These words enraged Anna and he pulled up his sleeves and said - "You say that I am an old bad fellow, am I quite a fool? It is you that have picked up a quarrel and are quarreling with me". All the persons, present there were enjoying this encounter between them. Baba Who loved both of them equally and wanted to pacify them, managed the affair very skillfully. Lovingly He said - "Oh Anna, why are you unnecessarily raising this hue and cry? I do not understand what harm or impropriety is there, when the mother is kissed?" Hearing these words of Baba, both of them were satisfied and all the persons laughed merrily and enjoyed Baba's wit to their heart's content.

Baba's Characteristics -- His Dependency on Bhaktas

Baba allowed His devotees to serve Him in their own way, and did not like any other persons interfering in this. To quote an instance, the same Mavsibai was on another occasion, kneading Baba's abdomen. Seeing the fury and force used by her, all the other devotees felt nervous and anxious. They said, "Oh mother, be more considerate and moderate, otherwise you will break Baba's arteries and nerves". At this Baba got up at once from His seat, dashed His satka on the ground. He got enraged and His eyes became red like a live charcoal. None dared to stand before or face Baba. Then He took hold of one end of the Satka with both hands and pressed it in the hollow of his abdomen. The other end He fixed to the post and began to press His abdomen against it. The satka which was about two or three feet in length seemed all to go into the abdomen and the people feared that the abdomen would be ruptured in a short time. The post was fixed and immovable and Baba began to go closer and closer to it and clasped the post firmly. Every moment the rupture was expected, and they were all dismayed, did not know what to do, and stood dumb with wonder and fear. Baba suffered this ordeal for the sake of His Bhakta. The other devotees wanted only to give a hint to the Mavsibai to be moderate in her service and not cause any trouble or pain to Baba. This they did with good intention, but Baba did not brook even this. They were surprised to see that their well-intentioned effort had resulted in this catastrophe; and they could do nothing but to wait and see. Fortunately, Baba's rage soon cooled down. He left the satka and resumed His seat. From this time onward, the devotees took the lesson that they should not meddle with anybody but allow him to serve Baba as he chooses, as He was capable to gauge the merits and worth of the service rendered unto Him.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Sri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXV

Damu Anna Kasar of Ahmednagar - (1) Speculations - (2) Amra-Leela

Preliminary

We begin this Chapter with a bow with all our eight limbs to Sai Baba, Who is an ocean of mercy, the God incarnate, who is Para-Brahman and the great Yogeshwara (Lord of Yoga). Victory be unto Sai Baba, Who is the crest-jewel of the Saints, who is the home of all auspicious things, who is our Atmaram (Dear Self), and who is the able refuge of the devotees. We prostrate ourselves before Him, Who has attained the aim and end of life.

Sai Baba is always full of mercy. What is wanted on our part is whole-hearted devotion to Him. When a devotee has got firm faith and devotion, his wishes are soon fulfilled. When the desire arose in the mind of Hemadpant to write the life and Leelas of Sai Baba, He immediately got it written by him. When the order 'to keep the memos' was given, Hemadpant was inspired and his intellect got strength and boldness to undertake and finish the work. He was not, he say, qualified to write the work, but the gracious blessings of Baba enabled him to complete the undertaking; and thus you have this Satcharita which is a Somakant jewel, from which nectar in the form of Sai Leelas oozes out for the readers to drink to their hearts' content.

Whenever, a devotee had complete and whole-hearted devotion to Sai Baba, all his calamities and dangers were warded off and his welfare attended to by Baba. The story of Damodar Savalaram Resane, Kasar of Ahmednagar (now of Poona) alias Damu Anna illustrating the above statement, is given below.

Damu Anna

The readers are aware that a mention of this gentleman was made in the 6th Chapter, regarding the celebration of Rama-Navami festival in Shirdi. He went to Shirdi about the year 1895, when the Rama-Navami Utsava-celebration began and from that time he has been providing an ornamental flag for that occasion every year. He also feeds the poor and the fakirs that come there for the festival.

His Speculations : (1) Cotton

A Bombay friend of Damu Anna wrote to him, that they should do some cotton-speculation business in partnership which would bring them about two lacs of rupees as profit. (Damu Anna says in his statement made about the year 1936 to Mr. B.V.Narasimha Swami that the proposal about speculating at Bombay in cotton was from a broker who was not to be a partner, and that he (Damu Anna) was to be the sole adventurer: - vide P.75 of the Devotees' Experiences Part II). The broker wrote that the business was good and involved no risks and that the opportunity should not be lost. Damu Anna was oscillating in his mind. He could not at once determine to venture in the speculation. He thought about this and as he was a devotee of Baba, he wrote a detailed letter to Shama giving all the facts and requested him to consult Baba and take His advice in the matter. Shama got the letter next day and when he came with it at noon to the

Masjid and placed it before Baba. He asked Shama what the matter was, and what the paper (letter) was about. He replied that Damu Anna of Nagar wanted to consult Him about something. Then Baba said - "What does he write, and what does he plan? It seems that he wants to catch the sky and that he is not content with what God has given him; read his letter". Shama then said, "The letter contains what you have just said now. Oh, Deva you sit here calm and composed and agitate the devotees and when they get restless, you draw them here, some in person and others through letters. If you know the contents of the letter, why do you then press me to read it?" Baba said - "Oh Shama, read it please. I speak at random and who believes Me."

Then Shama read the letter and Baba heard it attentively and said feelingly - "The Shet (Damu Anna) has gone mad; write to him in reply that nothing is wanting in his house. Let him be content with the half loaf (bread) he has now and let him not bother himself about lacs." Shama sent the reply which Damu Anna was anxiously waiting for. Reading it, he found that all his hopes and prospects about lacs of rupees as profit were dashed to the ground. He thought that he had done a mistake in consulting Baba. But as Shama had hinted in the reply that there was always much difference in seeing and hearing and that, therefore, he should come to Shirdi personally and see Baba. He thought it advisable to go to Shirdi and consult Baba personally about the affair. So he went to Shirdi, saw Baba, prostrated himself before Him and sat shampooing His legs. He had no courage to ask Baba openly about the speculation, but he thought in his mind, that it would be better if some share in the business should be assigned to Baba and said in his mind, that if Baba were to help him in this transaction, he would surrender some share of profits to Him. Damu Anna was thus thinking secretly in his mind, but nothing was veiled from Baba; everything past, present and future were clear to Him as an Amalaka fruit in hand. A child wants sweets, but its mother gives bitter pills; the former spoils its health, while the latter improves it. So the mother looking to the welfare of her infant, coaxes it and gives it bitter pills. Baba, kind mother as He was, knew the present and future prospects of His devotees, and therefore reading Damu Anna's mind, He openly spoke to him - "Bapu, I do not want to be entangled in any such worldly things (sharing profits)." Seeing Baba's disapproval Damu Anna dropped the enterprise.

(2) Grain-Dealing

Then he thought of trading in grain, rice, wheat and other groceries. Baba read also this thought and said to him, "You will be buying at five seers and selling at seven seers a rupee". So this business was also given up. The rice in the prices of grains was kept up for some time, and Baba's prophecy seemed to be falsified, but in a month or two there was abundant rain everywhere and the prices suddenly fell down; and, therefore, those who stored grains suffered a severe loss. Damu Anna was saved from this fate. Needless to say that the cotton speculation which was conducted by the broker with the help of another merchant also collapsed with a severe loss to the adventurers. After seeing that Baba had saved him from two severe losses in cotton and grain speculations, Damu Anna's faith in Baba grew strong and he remained a true devotee of Baba till His passing away and even now.

Amra-Leela (Mango miracle)

Once a parcel of about 300 good mangoes was received at Shirdi. It was sent from Goa by one Mamlatdar named Rale to Sai Baba in the name of Shama. When it was opened, all the mangoes were found to be in a good condition. They were given in Shama's charge

and only four were retained and placed in the kolamba (pot) by Baba. He said that, "These four fruits are for Damu Anna, let them lie there".

This Damu Anna had three wives. According to his statement mentioned above, he had not three but two wives only. He had no issue. He consulted many astrologers and himself studied astrology to some extent and found that as there was a 'papi' (inauspicious) planet in his horoscope, there was no prospect of any issue to him in this life. But he had great faith in Baba. When he went to Shirdi, two hours after the receipt of the mango parcel, for worshipping Baba, He said, "Though other people are looking for the mangoes, they are Dammya's. He whose they are, should 'eat and die'." Damu Anna on hearing these words was first shocked, but on Mhalsapati (a prominent Shirdi devotees) explaining to him that death meant the death of the little self or egos, and to have it at Baba's Feet was a blessing, he said that he would accept the fruits and eat them. But Baba said to him. "Do not eat yourself, but give them to your junior wife. This Amra-Leela (mango miracle of 4 mangoes) will give her four sons and four daughters. This was done and ultimately in due course it was found Baba's words turned out true and not those of the astrologers.

Baba's speech established its efficacy or greatness while He was living in the flesh, but wonder of wonders! It did the same even after His passing away. Baba said - "Believe Me, though I pass away, My bones in My tomb will give you hope and confidence. Not only Myself but My tomb would be speaking, moving and communicating with those who would surrender themselves whole-heartedly to Me. Do not be anxious that I would be absent from you. You will hear My bones speaking and discussing your welfare. But remember Me always, believe in Me heart and soul and then you will be most benefited.

Prayer

Hemadpant closes this Chapter with a prayer. "Oh Sai Sad-guru, the wish fulfilling tree of the Bhaktas, Let us never forget and lose sight of Your Feet; we have been troubled with the ins and outs (births and deaths) in this samsar; now free us from this cycle of births and deaths. Restrain us from the outgoing of our senses to their objects and introvert us and bring us face to face with the Atma (Self). As long as this outgoing tendency of the senses and the mind is not checked, there is no prospect of self-realisation. Neither son, nor wife nor friend will be of any use in the end. It is only You, Who will give us salvation and happiness. Destroy completely our tendency for discussions and other evil matters, let out tongue get a passion for chanting Your name. Drive out our thoughts, good or otherwise and make us forget our bodies and houses, and do away with our egoism. Make us ever remember Your name and forget all other things. Remove the restlessness of our mind, and make it steady and calm. If you just clasp us, the darkness of night of our ignorance will vanish and we shall live happily in Your light. That You made us drink the nectar of Your Leelas and awakened us from our slumber is due to Your grace and our store of merits in past births".

Note :- In this connection the following extract from Damu Anna's statement mentioned above, is worth perusal, (Page 76).

"Once when I sat at His Feet along with many others, I had two questions in my mind and He gave answers to both.

(1) There are so many crowding to Sai Baba. Do they all get benefit from Him?

To this, He replied orally - "Look at the mango tree in blossom. If all the flowers brought fruit, what a splendid crop it would be. But do they? Most fall off (either as flowers or as unripe fruits) by wind etc. Very few remain".

(2) The second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how am I to fare then? To this Baba answered that **He would be with me when and wherever I thought of Him. That promise He had kept up before 1918 and has been keeping up after 1918. He is still with me. He is still guiding me.** This was about 1910-11, when brothers separated from me and my sister died, and there was a theft and police enquiry, all of which incidents upset me very much.

When my sister died, my mind was much upset. I did not care for life and enjoyments. When I went to Baba, He pacified me with His Upadesh and made me eat a feast of Pooran Poli at Appa Kulkarni's house and get pasted with sandal.

There was a theft in my house. A thirty year's friend of mine stole my wife's jewel-box, including her auspicious Nathi (nose-ring). I wept before Baba's photo. The next day, the man returned the jewel-box and prayed for pardon.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXVI

Stories of (1) Bhakata Pant (2) Harishchandra Pitale and (3) Gopal Ambadekar.

Preliminary

All the things that we see in the universe are nothing but a play of Maya -- the creative power of the Lord. These things do not really exist. What really exists is the Real Absolute. Just as we mistake a rope of a garland or a stick for a serpent on account of darkness, we always see the phenomena, i.e. things as they outwardly appear, and not the Noumenon which underlies all the visible things. It is only the Sad-guru that opens the eyes of our understanding and enables us to see things in their true light and not as they appear. Let us, therefore, worship the Sad-guru and pray to him to give us the true vision, which is nothing but God-vision.

Inner Worship

Hemadpant has given us a novel form of worship. Let us, he says, use hot water in the form of tears of joy to wash the Sad-guru's feet, let us besmear His body with sandal-paste of pure love, let us cover His body with the cloth of true faith, let us offer eight

lotuses in the form of our eight Sattwik emotions and fruit in the form of our concentrated mind; let us apply to His head bukka (black-powder) in the form of devotion and tie the waistband of Bhakti and place our head on his toes.

After decorating the Sad-guru with all jewelry in this way, let us offer our all to Him and wave chamar of devotion to ward off heat. After such blissful worship, let us pray thus:- "Introvert our mind, turn it inward, give us discrimination between the Unreal and the Real and non-attachment for all worldly things and thus enable us to get Self-realisation. We surrender ourselves, body and soul (body-consciousness and ego). Make our eyes Yours, so that we should never feel pleasure and pain. Control our body and mind as You will and wish. Let our mind get rest in Your Feet".

Now let us turn to the stories of this Chapter.

Bhakta Pant

Once it so happened that a devotee by name Pant, a disciple of another Sad-guru had the good fortune of visiting Shirdi. He had no mind to go to Shirdi, but man proposes one way and God disposes the other. He was travelling in a B.B. & C.I. Rly. train where he met many friends and relations bound for Shirdi. They all asked him to accompany them and he could not say nay. They alighted at Bombay while pant got down at Virar. There he took the permission of his Sadguru for the Shirdi trip and after arranging for the expenses, left with the party for Shirdi. They all reached the place in the morning and went to the Masjid at about 11 A.M. Seeing the concourse of the devotees assembled for Baba's worship, they were all pleased, but Pant suddenly got a fit and fell senseless. They were all frightened, still they tried their best to bring him to his senses. With Baba's grace and with pitchers of water which they poured over his head, he regained his consciousness and sat upright as if he was just awakened from sleep. The omniscient Baba knowing that he was a disciple of another Guru, assured him fearlessness and confirmed his faith in his own Guru, by addressing him as follows :- "**Come what may, leave not, but stick to your Bolster (support, i.e. Guru) and ever remain steady, always at-one-ment (in union) with him.**" Pant at once knew the significance of this remark and thus he was reminded of his Sad-guru. This kindness of Baba he never forgot in his life.

Harishchandra Pitale

There was a gentleman by name Harishchandra Pital in Bombay. He had a son, who suffered from epilepsy. He tried many allopathic and ayurvedic doctors, but there was no cure. There remained only one way of remedy, viz. resorting to the saints. It has been stated in Chapter XV that Das Ganu by his inimitable and splendid kirtans spread the fame of Sai Baba in the Bombay Presidency. Mr. Pitale heard some of these kirtans in 1910 and learnt therefrom and from others that Baba, by His touch and mere glance, cured many incurable diseases. Then a desire arose in his mind to see Sai Baba. Making all preparations and taking presents and fruit-baskets, Mr. Pitale came to Shirdi with family, wife and children. He then went to the Masjid with them, prostrated before Baba and placed his sick son on Baba's Feet. No sooner Baba saw the child than an untoward thing happened. The son immediately revolved his eyes and fell down senseless. His mouth began to foam and his whole body began to perspire profusely and it seemed as if he breathed himself out. Seeing this, the parents became very nervous and excited. The boy used to get such fits very often, but this fit seemed to persist long. Tears began to

flow ceaselessly from the mother's eyes and she began to wail, crying that her condition was like that of a person, who being afraid of the robbers ran into a house which collapsed on him, or like a cow fearing a tiger, ran into the hands of a butcher, or like a traveller, who being tormented by the heat of the sun went to take refuge under a tree, which fell upon him, or like a devout person going for worship into a temple which collapsed upon him. Then Baba comforted her saying - "Do not wail like this, wait a bit, have patience, take the boy to your lodging, he will come to his senses within half an hour." They did as directed by Baba and found that His words came true. As soon as he was taken into the Wada, the boy recovered and all the Pitale family, husband, wife and others were very delighted and all their doubts disappeared. Then Mr. Pitale came with his wife to see Baba and prostrated himself before Him very humbly and respectfully and sat shampooing His legs and mentally thanking Baba for His help. Baba then smilingly said - "Are not all your thoughts, doubts and apprehensions calmed down now? Hari (Lord) will protect him, who has got faith and patience". Mr. Pitale was a rich and well-to-do gentleman. He distributed sweet-meat on a large scale and gave Baba excellent fruits and pan (betel-leaves). Mrs. Pitale was a very Sattwik lady, simple, loving and faithful. She used to sit near the post staring at Baba with tears of joy flowing down from her eyes. Seeing her of an amicable and loving nature, Baba was much pleased with her. Like Gods, Saints are always dependent on their devotees who surrender and worship them with their heart and soul. After passing some happy days in Baba's company, the Pitale family came to the Masjid to take Baba's leave to depart. Baba gave them Udi and blessings and called Mr. Pitale close by and said to him - "Bapu, I had given you before, Rs. two, now I give you Rs. three; keep these in your shrine for worship and you will be benefited." Mr. Pitale accepted these as Prasad, prostrated himself again before Baba and prayed for His blessings. A thought arose in his mind, that as that was his first trip to Shirdi, he could not understand what Baba meant, when He said that He had given Rs. two previously. He was curious to have this mystery solves, but Baba kept silent. When Mr. Pitale returned to Bombay, he narrated to his old mother all that had happened at Shirdi and the mystery about Baba's giving him Rs. two formerly. The mother also did not understand the mystery, but, thinking seriously about that, she was reminded of an old incident, which solved the mystery. She said to her son - "As you now went to Sai Baba with your son, so had your father done when he took you to Akkalkot, for the darshana of the Maharaj there many years ago. That Maharaj was also a Siddha, Perfect Yogi, omniscient and liberal. Your father was pure, devout and his worship was accepted. He then gave your father Rs. two for being kept in the shrine and worshipped. Your father worshipped them accordingly till his death, but thereafter the worship was neglected and the rupees were lost. After some years the memory of these two rupees also disappeared and now, as you are very fortunate, the Akkalkotkar Maharaj has appeared to you in the form of Sai Baba just to remind you to your duties and worship, and to ward off all dangers. Now beware henceforth, leave off all doubts and bad thoughts, follow your ancestors and behave well; go on worshipping the family gods and the rupees, appraise properly and take pride in the blessing of the Saints. Sai Samartha has kindly revived the spirit of Bhakti in you, cultivate it it your benefit." Hearing the remarks of the mother, Mr. Pitale was very much delighted. He came to know, and was convinced about the all-prevasiveness of Baba and the significance of His darshan. From that time he became very careful about his behaviour.

Mr. Ambadekar

Mr. Gopal Narayan Ambadekar of Poona was a devotee of Baba. He served for ten years in the Abkari department in the Thana District and in Javhar state, from where he had to

retire. He tried to get some other job, but he did not succeed. He was overtaken by other calamities and his condition grew from bad to worse. He passed 7 years in this condition, visiting Shirdi every year and placing his grievance before Baba. In 1916 his plight became worst and he decided to commit suicide in Shirdi. So he came there with his wife and stayed for two months. One night while sitting in a bullock cart in front of Dixit's Wada, he resolved to end his life by throwing himself into a well close by. He proposed to do one way but Baba wished to do something else. A few paces from this place, there was a hotel and its proprietor Mr. Sagun, a devotee of Baba, came out and accosted him thus - "Did you ever read this Akkalkotkar Maharaja's life?" Ambadekar took that book from Sagun and began to read it. Casually, or we may say providentially he came across a story which was to this effect. - During the life time of Akkalkotkar Maharaj a certain devotee suffered very much from an incurable disease and when he could endure the agony and pain no longer, he became desperate and to end his miseries threw himself one night into a well. Immediately the Maharaj came there and took him out with his own hands and advised him thus - "You must enjoy the fruit - good or bad - of your past actions; if the enjoyment be incomplete, suicide won't help you. You have to take another birth and suffer again; so instead of killing yourself, why not suffer for some time and finish up your store of the fruit of your past deeds and be done with it once and for all?"

Reading this appropriate and timely story, Ambadekar was much surprised, and moved. Had he not got Baba's hint through the story, he would have been no more. On seeing Baba's all-pervasiveness and benevolence, his faith in Him was confirmed, and he became a staunch devotee. His father was a devotee of Akkalkotkar Maharaj and Sai Baba wanted him to walk into his father's footsteps and continue his devotion to Him. He then got Sai Baba's blessings and his prospects began to improve. He studied astrology and gained proficiency in it and thereby improved his lot. He was able to earn sufficient money and passed his after-life in ease and comfort.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXVII

Favour Shown by Giving Bhagwat and Vishnu-Sahasra Nam - Dixit's Vitthal Vision - Gita Rahasya - Khapardes.

This Chapter describes, how Sai Baba favoured His devotees by granting them religious books after he had touched and consecrated them, for parayana (reading regularly) and certain other matters.

Preliminary

When a man takes a plunge into the sea, he gets the merit of bathing in all the Tirthas and sacred rivers. Similarly when a man takes refuge at the feet of the Sad-guru, he gets the merit of bowing to the Trinity, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and also Para-Brahma. Victory be unto Shri Sai the wish-fulfilling tree and the ocean of knowledge, who gives us self-realisation. Oh Sai, create in us regard for Your stories. Let the readers and audience devour them with the same relish with which the chatak bird drinks the water from the clouds and becomes happy. While listening to Your stories, let them and their families get all the sattvik emotions, viz. let their bodies perspire, let their eyes be full of tears, let their prana be steady, let their minds be composed, let their hair stand on end, let them cry, sob and shake, let their hostilities and their distinctions, great and small vanish. If these things happen, that is a sign of the grace of the Guru dawning upon them. When these emotions develop in you, the Guru is most pleased and will certainly lead you on to the goal of self-realisation. The best way, therefore, to get free from the shackles of Maya is our complete and whole-hearted surrender to Baba. The Vedas cannot take you across the ocean of Maya. It is only the Sad-guru, who can do so and make you, see the Lord in all creatures.

Granting Consecrated Book

The variety of imparting instructions followed by Baba has already been noticed in the previous Chapters. In this, we shall deal with one aspect of it. It was the habit of some devotees to take some religious books, of which they wanted to make a special study, to Baba and to receive the same back from Him, after they were touched and consecrated by Him. While reading daily such books, they felt that Baba was with them. Once, Kaka Mahajani came to Shirdi with a copy of Ekanathi Bhagwat. Shama took that book to read and taking it with him went to the Masjid. There Baba took it from him, touched it and turning some pages here and there gave it back to Shama and asked him to keep it with him. When Shama said that it belonged to Kaka and had to be returned to him. "No, no", said Baba. "As I have given it to you, better keep it with you for safe custody; it will be of use to you." In this way many books were entrusted to Shama. Kaka Mahajani after a some days came again with another copy of the same Bhagwat and gave it in Baba's hand. Then Baba gave it back as Prasad and asked him to preserve it well and assured him that it would stand him in good stead. Kaka accepted it with a bow.

Shama and Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam

Shama was a very intimate devotee of Baba and Baba wanted to favour him in a particular way by giving him a copy of Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam as Prasad. This was done in the following way. Once a Ramadasi (follower of Saint Ramadas) came to Shirdi and stayed for some time. The routine he followed daily was as follows : He got up early in the morning, washed his face, bathed and then after wearing saffron-coloured clothes and besmearing himself with sacred ashes, read Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam (a book giving a thousand names in praise of Vishnu, and held second in importance to Bhagwad Geeta) and Adhyatma-Ramayana (Esoteric version of Rama's story) with faith. He read these books often and often and then after some days Baba thought of favouring and initiating Shama with Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam. He, therefore, called the Ramadasi to Him and said to him that, He was suffering from intense stomach-pain, and unless He took Senna-pods (Sona-mukhi, a mild purgative drug) the pain would not stop; so he should please go to the bazar and bring the drug. The Ramadasi closed his reading and went to the bazar.

Then Baba descended from His seat, came to the Ramadasi's place of reading, took out the copy of Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam, and coming to His seat said to Shama- "Oh Shama, this book is very valuable and efficacious, so I present it to you, you read it. Once I suffered intensely and My heart began to palpitate and My life was in danger. At that critical time, I hugged this book to My heart and then, Shama, what a relief it gave me! I thought that Allah Himself came down and saved Me. So I give this to you, read it slowly, little by little, read daily one name at least and it will do you good." Shama replied that he did not want it, and that the owner of it, the Ramadasi who was a mad, obstinate and irritable fellow would certainly pick up a quarrel with him, besides, being a rustic himself, he could not read distinctly the Sanskrit (Devanagari) letters of the book.

Shama thought that Baba wanted to set him up against the Ramadasi by this act of His, but he had no idea of what Baba felt for him. Baba must have thought to tie this necklace of Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam round the neck of Shama, as he was an intimate devotee, though a rustic, and thus save him from the miseries of the worldly existence. The efficacy of God's Name is well-known. It saves us from all sins and bad tendencies, frees us from the cycle of births and deaths. There is no easier sadhana than this. It is the best purifier of our mind. It requires no paraphernalia and no restrictions. It is so easy and so effective. This sadhana, Baba wanted Shama to practise, though he did not crave for it. So Baba forced this on him. It is also reported that long ago, Eknath Maharaj, similarly, forced this Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam on a poor Brahmin neighbour, and thus saved him. The reading and study of this Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam is a broad open way of purifying the mind, and hence Baba thrust this on His Shama.

The Ramadasi returned soon with the Seena-pods. Anna Chinchankar, who was then present and who wanted to play the part of Narada (the Celestial Rishi who was well-known for setting up quarrels between Gods and demons and vice versa), informed him of what had happened. The Ramadasi at once flared up. He came down at once on Shama with all fury. He said that it was Shama who set Baba to send him away under the pretext of stomach-ache for bringing the medicine and thus got the book. He began to scold and abuse Shama and remarked that if the book be not returned, he would dash his head before him. Shama calmly remonstrated with him, but in vain. Then Baba spoke kindly to him as follows - "Oh Ramadasi, what is the matter with you? Why are you so turbulent? Is not Shama our boy? Why do you scold him unnecessarily. How is it that you are so quarrelsome? Can you not speak soft and sweet words? You read daily these sacred books and still your mind is impure and your passions uncontrolled. What sort of a Ramadasi you are! You ought to be indifferent to all things. Is it not strange that you should covet this book so strongly? A true Ramadasi should have no 'mamata' (attachment) but have 'samata' (equality) towards all. You are now quarrelling with the boy Shama for a mere book. Go, take your seat, books can be had in plenty for money, but not men; think well and be considerate. What worth is your book? Shama had no concern with it. I took it up Myself and gave it to him. You know it by heart. I thought Shama might read it and profit thereby, and so I gave to it him."

How sweet were these words of Baba, soft, tender and nectar-like! Their effect was wonderful. The Ramadasi calmed down and said to Shama that he would take 'Panch-ratni' Geeta in return. Shama was much pleased and said - "Why one, I shall give ten copies in return".

So the matter was ultimately compromised. The question for consideration is "Why should the Ramadasi press for Panch-ratni Geeta, the God in which he never cared to

know, and why should he, who daily read religious books in the Masjid in front of Baba, quarrel with Shama before Him?" We do not know how to apportion the blame and whom to blame. We only say that, had this procedure been not gone through, the importance of the subject, the efficacy of God's name and the study of Vishnu-Sahasra-Nam would not have been brought home to Shama. So we see that Baba's method, of teaching and initiating was unique. In this cases Shama did gradually study the book and mastered its contents to such an extent, that he was able to explain it to Professor G.G. Narke, M.A. of the College of Engineering, Poona, the son-in-law of Shriman Booty and a devotee of Baba.

Vitthal-Vision

One day, while Kakasaheb Dixit was in mediation after his morning bath in his Wada at Shirdi he saw a vision of Vitthal. When he went to see Baba afterwards, Baba asked him - "Did vitthal Patil come? did you not see Him? He is very elusive, hold Him fast, otherwise He will give you the slip and run away". Then at noon a certain hawker came there, with 20 or 25 pictures of Vitthal of Pandharpur for sale. Mr. Dixit was surprised to see that the form of Vitthal he saw in his mediation exactly tallied with that in the picture and he was also reminded of Baba's words. He therefore, bought one picture most willingly and kept it in his shrine for worship.

Geeta-Rahasya

Baba always loved those who studied Brahma-vidya (metaphysics) and encouraged them. To give an instance - Once Bapusaheb Jog received a post-parcel. It contained a copy of Geeta-Rahasya by Lokamanya Tilak. Taking it under his armpit he came to the Masjid and prostrated himself before Baba, when the parcel fell at Baba's Feet. Baba enquired what it was. It was opened then and there and the book was placed in Baba's hand. He turned some pages here and there for a few minutes and took out a rupee from His pocket placed it on the book and handed the same with the rupee to Jog and said to him - "Read this completely and you will be benefited".

Mr. and Mrs. Khaparde

Let us close this Chapter with a description of the Khapardes. Once Dadasaheb Khaparde came with his family and lived in Shirdi for some months. (The diary of his stay has been published in English in the Shri Sai Leela Magazine first Volume.) Dadasaheb was not an ordinary man. He was the richest and the most famous advocate of Amraoti (Berar) and was a member of the Council of State, Delhi. He was very intelligent and a very good speaker. Still he dared not open his mouth before Baba. Most devotees spoke and argued with Baba off and on, but only three, viz. Khaparde, Noolkar and Booty kept always silent. They were meek, modest, humble and goodnatured. Dadasaheb, who was able to expound Panchadashi (A well-known Sanskrit treatise on the Adwaita Philosophy by the famous Vidyananya) to others, said nothing or uttered no word when he came to the Masjid before Baba. Really a man, however learned he may be even in Vedas, fades away before one, who was realised Brahman and become one with it. Learning cannot shine before Self-reaisation. Dadasaheb stayed for four months, but Mrs. Khaparde stayed for seven. Both were highly pleased with their Shirdi stay. Mrs. Khaparde was faithful and devout, and loved Baba deeply. Every noon she brought naivedya herself to the Masjid, and after it was accepted by Baba, she used to return and take her meals. Seeing her steady and firm devotion, Baba wanted to exhibit it to others. One noon she

brought a dish containing Sanza (wheat-pudding), purees, rice, soup, and kheer (sweet rice) and other sundry articles to the Masjid. Baba, who usually waited for hours, got up at once, went up to His

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXVIII

Sparrows Drawn To Shirdi

(1) Lakhamichand - (2) Burhanpore Lady - (3) Megha

Preliminary

Sai is not finite or limited. He dwells in all beings, from ants and insects to the God Brahma. He pervades all. Sai was well-versed in the knowledge of the Vedas, as well as in the science of Self-realisation. As He was proficient in both these, He was well-fitted to be the Sad-guru. Any one, though learned, but not able to awaken the disciples and establish them in Self-realisation, does not deserve to be called a Sadguru. Generally the father gives birth to the body, and death invariably follows life; but Sadguru does away with both life and death, and so he is more kind and merciful, than any body.

Sai Baba often said that-let His man (Devotee) be at any distance, a thousand koss away from Him, he will be drawn to Shirdi like a sparrow, with a thread tied to its feet. This Chapter describes the stories of three such sparrows.

Lala Lakhamichand

This gentleman was first serving in the Railways and afterwards in Shri Venkateshwar Press in Bombay and thereafter in the firm of Messrs. Ralli Brothers as a munshi (clerk). He got the contact of Baba in 1910. One or two months before Christmas he saw in his dream at Santacruz (a suburb of Bombay) an old man with a beard, standing and surrounded by his Bhaktas. Some days later he went to the house of his friend. Mr Dattatreya Manjunath Bijur to hear the kirtan by Das Ganu. It was always the practice of Das Ganu to keep Baba's picture in front of the audience while making the kirtan. Lakhamichand was surprised to see that the features of the old man he saw in his dream, tallied exactly with those in the picture and thus he came to the conclusion, that the old man, he saw in his dream was Sai Baba himself. The sight of this picture, Das Ganu's kirtan and the life of the Saint Tukaram on which Das Ganu discoursed, all these things made a deep impression on his mind and he pined to go to Shirdi. It is always the experience of the Bhaktas that God always helps them in their search for Sad-guru and other spiritual endeavours. That very night at 8-00 p.m. a friend named Shankarrao knocked at his door and asked him whether he would accompany him to Shirdi. His joy knew no bounds and he at once decided to go to Shirdi. He borrowed Rs.15/- from his cousin and after making due preparations left for Shirdi. In the train, he and his friend Shankar Rao did some Bhajan (sang religious songs) and enquired about Sai baba with some fellow passengers-four Mahomedans, who were returning to their place near Shirdi.

They all told them that Sai baba was a great Saint living in Shirdi for many years. Then when they reached Kopergaon he wanted to buy some good guavas for offering to Baba, but he was so much enrapt with the scenery and sights there, that he forgot to purchase them. When they were nearing Shirdi, he was reminded of the guavas; just then he saw an old woman with a guava-basket on her head, running after the tanga. The tanga was stopped and he gladly purchased some select fruits, when the woman said - "Take all the rest and offer them on my behalf to Baba". The facts viz. that he had intended to purchase guavas, but that he had forgotten to do so, the old woman's encounter and her devotion to Baba, all these were a surprise to both the friends; and Lakhamichand thought in his mind, that the old woman might be some relation of the old man he saw in his dream. Then they drove on and came near Shirdi and seeing the flags on the Masjid they saluted them. With Puja materials in hand, they then went to the Masjid and worshipped Baba with due formality. Lakhamichand was much moved and was extremely happy to see Baba. He was enrapt with Baba's Feet as a bee with a sweet smelling lotus. Then Baba spoke as follows :-

"Cunning fellow, he does bhajan on the way and enquires from others. Why ask others? Everything we should see with our own eyes; where is the necessity to question others? Just think for yourself whether your dream is true or not? Where was the necessity of the darshan by taking a loan from a Marwari? Is the heart's desire now satisfied?"

Hearing these words Lakhamichand was wonderstruck at Baba's omniscience. He was at a loss to know how Baba came to know about all the things that had happened enroute from his house to Shirdi. The chief thing to note in this respect is that Baba never liked people to run into debt for taking His darshan, or celebrating any holiday or making any pilgrimage.

Sanza

At noon when Lakhamichand was sitting for meals he got some sanza (wheat-pudding) from a devotee as Prasad. He was pleased to have it. Next day also he expected it, but got nothing. So, he was anxious to get it again. Then on the third day at the noon Arati time, Bapusaheb Jog asked Baba, what naivedya he should bring. Baba told him to bring sanza. Then the Bhaktas brought two big potfuls of sanza. Lakshamichand was very hungry and there was some pain in his back. Then Baba said to him - "It is good that you are hungry, take sanza and some medicine for the pain in the back." He was again wonderstruck to see that Baba again read his mind and spoke out what was passing therein. How omniscient was He!

Evil eye

On this occasion, he once witnessed one night the procession to the chavadi. Baba then suffered much from cough. He thought that this suffering of Baba might be due to somebody's evil eye. Next morning when he went to the Masjid Baba spoke to Shama as follows - "I suffered last night from cough; is it due to some evil eye? I think that somebody's evil eye has worked on me and so I am suffering". In this case Baba spoke out what was passing in Lakshamichand's mind.

On seeing these proofs of Baba's omniscience and kindness to His Bhaktas, he fell prostrate at Baba's Feet and said - "I am much pleased with your darshan. Ever be kind and merciful to me and protect me always. There is no other God to me in this world

except Your Feet. Let my mind be ever rapt in Your Bhajan and Feet. Let Your grace protect me from the miseries of the world and let me ever chant Your name and be happy".

After getting Baba' Udi and blessing he returned home with his friend, much pleased and contented and singing Baba's glory on the way. He remained a staunch devotee of baba afterwards and always sent garlands of flowers, camphor and Dakshina with any person of his acquaintance bound for Shirdi.

Burhanpore Lady

Now let us turn to another sparrow (Baba's word meaning devotee). One lady in Burhanpore saw in her dream Sai Baba coming to her door and begging khichadi (rice cooked with dal and salt) for His meals. On awakening she saw no body at her door. However, she was pleased with the vision and told it to all including her husband. He was employed in the Postal Department and when he was transferred to Akola, both husband and wife, who were devout, decided to go to Shirdi. Then on a suitable day they left for Shirdi and after visiting Gomati Tirth on the way, reached Shirdi and stayed there for two months. Every day they went to the Masjid, performed Baba's worship and passed their time happily. The couple came to Shirdi to offer Khichadi as naivedya but for the first 14 days, somehow or other, it could not be offered. The lady did not like this delay. Then on the 15th day she came at noon to the Masjid with her khichadi. There she found that Baba and others were already sitting for meals, and that the curtain was down. Nobody dared enter in when the curtain was let down, but the lady could not wait. She threw up the curtain with her hand and entered. Strange to say that Baba seemed that day, hungry for khichadi and wanted that thing first and when the lady came in with the dish, Baba was delighted, and began to eat morsel after morsel of khichadi. On seeing the earnestness of Baba in this respect, everybody was wonderstruck and those, who heard the story of khichadi, were convinced about His extraordinary love for His devotees.

Megha

Now let us go to the third and bigger 'sparrow'. Megha of Viramgaon was a simple and illiterate Brahmin cook of Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe. He was a devotee of Shiva and always chanted the five syllabled mantra 'Namah Shivaya'. He did not know the Sandhya nor its chief mantra, the Gayatri. Rao Bahadur Sathe was interested in him, got him taught the Sandhya and the Gayatri. Sathe told him that Sai Baba of Shirdi was the embodied form of the God Shiva and made him start for Shirdi. At the Broach Railway station he learnt that Sai Baba was a Moslem and his simple and orthodox mind was much perturbed at the prospect of bowing to a Moslem, and he prayed to his master not to send him there. His master, however, insisted on his going there and gave him a letter of introduction to his (Sathe's) father-in-law, Ganesh Domodar, alias Dada Kelkar at Shirdi, to introduce him to Sai Baba. When he reached Shirdi and went to the Masjid, Baba was very indignant and would not allow him to enter. "Kick out the rascal!" roared Baba, and then said to Megha - "You are a high caste Brahmin and I am a low Moslem; you will lose your caste by coming here. So get away." Hearing these words Megha began to tremble. He was wondering as to how Baba had come to know about what was passing in his mind. He stayed there for some days, serving Baba in his own way, but was not convinced. Then he went home. After that he went to Tryambak (Nasik District) and stayed there for a year and a half. Then again he returned to Shirdi. This time, at the intercession of Dada Kelkar, he was allowed to enter the Masjid and stay in Shirdi. Sai

Baba's help to Megha was not through any oral instruction. He worked upon Megha internally (mentally) with the result that he was considerably changed and benefited. Then Megha began to look upon Sai Baba as an incarnation of Shiva. In order to worship Shiva, bela leaves are required and Megha used to go miles and miles every day to bring them and worship his Shiva (Baba). His practice was to worship all the Gods in the village and then come to the Masjid and after saluting Baba's gadi (asan) he worshipped Baba and after doing some service (shampooing His Legs) drank the washings (Tirth) of Baba's Feet. Once it so happened that he came to the Masjid without worshipping God Khandoba, as the door of the temple was closed. Baba did not accept his worship and sent him again, saying that the door was open then. Megha went, found the door open, worshipped the Deity, and then returned to Baba as usual.

Ganges-Bath

On one Makar-Sankranti day, Megha wanted to besmear the body of Baba with sandal-paste and bathe Him with Ganges water. Baba was first unwilling to undergo this operation, but at his repeated requests, He consented. Megha had to traverse a distance of eight koss (going and returning) to bring the sacred water from the Gomati river. He brought the water, made all preparations for the bath at noon and asked Baba to get ready for the same. Then Baba again asked him to be freed from his bath saying that, as a Fakir He had nothing to do (or gain) with Ganges water; but Megha did not listen. He knew that Shiva is pleased with a bath of Ganges water and that he must give his Shiva (Baba) that bath on that auspicious day. Baba then consented, came down and sat on a pat (wooden board) and protruding his head said - "Oh Megha, do at least this favour; head is the most important organ of the body, so pour the water over that only-it is equivalent to the full or whole bath." "Alright" said Megha and lifting the water pot up, began to pour it on the head but in doing this he was so much overwhelmed with love that he cried out 'Har Gange' and emptied the pot on the whole body. He kept the pot aside and began to look at Baba, but to his surprise and amazement he found that Baba's head was only drenched but the body quite dry.

Trident and Pindi

Megha worshipped Baba in two places; in the Masjid he worshipped Baba in person and in the Wada, Baba's big picture, given by Nanasaheb Chandorkar. This he did for 12 months. Then in order to appreciate his devotion and confirm his faith, Baba gave him a vision. Early one morning when Megha was still lying down on his bed with eyes closed but internally awake, he saw clearly Baba's Form. Baba knowing him to be awake threw Akshata (rice-grains marked red with Kumkum) and said, "Megha, draw a Trident" and disappeared. Hearing Baba's words, he eagerly opened his eyes but did not see Baba, but saw only rice grains spread here and there. He then went to Baba, told Him about the vision and asked permission to draw Trident. Baba said - "Did you not hear My words asking you to draw Trident? It was no vision but direct order and My words are always pregnant with meaning and never hollow." Megha said - "I thought you woke me up, but all the doors were closed, so I thought it was a vision". Baba rejoined - "I require no door to enter. I have no form nor any extension; I always live everywhere. I carry on, as a wirepuller, all the actions of the man who trusts Me and merges in Me."

Megha returned to the Wada, and drew a red Trident on the wall near Baba's picture. Next day a Ramadasi Bhakta came from Poona, saluted Baba and offered Him Pindi (an image of Shiva). At this time Megha also turned up there. Baba said to him - "See,

Shankar has come, protect (i.e., worship) Him now." Megha was surprised to see Pindi following Trident immediately. Then also in the Wada, Kakasaheb Dixit was standing with a towel on his head after having taken his bath, and was remembering Sai, when he saw a Pindi before his mental vision. While he was wondering about this, Megha came and showed him the Pindi presented to him by Baba. Dixit was happy to know that the Pindi exactly tallied with the One he saw a few minutes before in his vision. In a few days after the drawing of the Trident was complete, Baba installed the Pindi near the big picture which Megha was worshipping. The worship of Shiva was dear to Megha and by arranging the drawing of the Trident and the installation of the Pindi, Baba confirmed his faith therein.

After continuous service of Baba for many years, doing regular worship and Arati every noon and evening, Megha passed away in 1912. Then Baba passed His hands over his corpse and said - "**This was a true devotee of Mine.**" Baba also ordered that at His own expense the usual funeral dinner should be given to the Brahmins, and this order was carried out by Kakasaheb Dixit.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXIX

Stories of (1) Madrasi Bhajani Mela - (2) Tendulkars (Father and son) - (3) Dr. Captain Hate - (4) Waman Narvekar.

This Chapter described other interesting and wonderful stories of Sai Baba.

(1) Madrasi Bhajani Mela

It was in the year 1916 that a Madrasi Bhajani Mela (Party of the Ramadasi Panth) started on a Pilgrimage to the holy city of Banaras. The Party consisted of a man, his wife, daughter and sister-in-law. Unfortunately their names are not mentioned. On their way, the party heard that there lived at Shirdi in Kopergaon Taluka, Ahmednagar District, a great sage named Sai Baba, who was calm and composed, and who was very liberal and who distributed money every day to His Bhaktas and to skilful persons, who went and showed their skill there. A lot of money in the form of Dakshina was collected daily by Sai Baba and out of this amount, He gave daily one rupee to a three year old girl Amani, the daughter of a Bhakta Kondaji and Rs. 2 to 5 to some, Rs. 6 to Jamali, the mother of Amani and Rs. 10 to 20 and even Rs. 50 to other Bhaktas as He pleased. On hearing all this the party came to Shirdi and stayed there. The Mela did very good bhajan and sang very good songs, but inwardly they craved for money. Three of the party were full of avarice, but the chief lady or mistress was of a very different nature. She had a regard and love for Baba. Once it so happened, that when the noon-day Arati was going on, Baba

was much pleased with her faith and devotion, and was pleased to give her darshan of her Ishtam (Beloved Deity). To her Baba appeared as Sitanath (Rama) while to all the others the usual Sainath. On seeing her beloved Deity, she was very much moved. Tears began to flow from her eyes and she clapped her hands in joy. The people began to wonder at her joyful mood; but were not able to guess its cause. Late in the afternoon she disclosed everything to her husband. She told him how she saw Shri Rama in Sai Baba. He thought that she was very simple and devout, and her seeing Rama might be a hallucination of her mind. He poohpoohed her, saying that it was not possible, that she alone should see Rama while they all saw Sai Baba. She did not resent this remark, as she was fortunate enough to get Ramadarshan now and then, when her mind was calm and composed and free from avarice.

Wonderful Vision

Things were going on like this, when the husband got a wonderful vision in his dream one night as follows :- He was in a big city, the police there had arrested him, tied his hands with a rope, and put him up in a cage (lock-up). As the police were tightening the grip, he saw Sai Baba standing quiet outside, near the cage. On seeing Baba so near, he said in a plaintive tone - "Hearing Your fame I came to Your Feet and why should a calamity befall me when You are standing here in person?" Baba said - "You must suffer the consequences of your action" He said - "I have not done anything in this life which would bring such a misfortune on me." Baba said - "If not in this life, you must have committed some sin in your past life." He replied, "I do not know anything of my past life, but assuming that I did commit some sin then, why should it not be burnt and destroyed in Your presence, as dry grass before fire?" Baba - "Have you got such faith?" He - "Yes." Baba then asked him to close his eyes. No sooner did he shut them than he heard a thumping sound of something falling down, and opening his eyes, he saw that he was free and the police had fallen down, bleeding. Being much frightened he began to look at Baba who said - "Now you are well caught, officers will now come and arrest you." Then he begged - "There is no other saviour except You, save me anyhow." Then Baba again asked him to close his eyes. He did so and when he opened them, he saw that he was free, out of the cage and that Baba was by his side. He then fell at Baba's Feet. Baba then asked him - "Is there any difference between this namaskar and your previous ones? Think well and reply." He said "There is a lot of difference; my former namaskaras were offered with the object of getting money from You, but the present namaskar is one offered to You as God; besides, formerly I thought resentfully that you, being a Mahomendan, were spoiling us, the Hindus". Baba "Do you not believe in your mind in Mahomendan Gods?" He said "No". Then Baba said - "Have you not got a Panja (Emblem of Hand) in your house and do you not worship the same in Tabut, i.e. Moharum festival? Also there is in your house another Mahomedan Deity by name Kadbibi, whom you propitiate and appease on your marriage and other festivals. Is it not so?" He admitted all this. Then Baba said, "What more do you want?" Then a desire arose in his mind to get the darshan of his Guru Ramdas, when Baba asked him to turn back and see. And when he turned, lo, Ramadas was in front of him. No sooner did he begin to fall at His Feet, Ramadas vanished. Then he inquisitively asked Baba, "You look old. Do You know Your age?" Baba - "What! Do you say I am old! just run a race with Me and see." Saying this Baba began to run and he too followed. Baba disappeared in the dust raised by His foot-steps while running and the man was awakened.

After awakening he began to think seriously about the dream-vision. His mental attitude was completely changed and he realised the greatness of Baba. After this, his grabbing

and doubting tendencies disappeared and true devotion to Baba's Feet sprang in his mind. The vision was a mere dream, but the questions and answers therein were most significant and interesting. Next morning when all the persons assembled in the Masjid for the Arati, Baba gave him as prasad two rupees' worth sweetmeats and also two rupees from His pocket and blessed him. He made him stay there for a few more days and gave him His blessing, saying, "Allah (God) will give you plenty and He will do you all good". He did not get more money there, but he got far better things viz. Baba's blessing which stood him in good stead all along. The party got plenty of money afterwards and their pilgrimage was successful as they had not to suffer any trouble or inconvenience during their journey. They all returned home safe and sound, thinking of Baba's words and blessings and the Anand(Bliss) they experienced by His grace.

This story illustrates one of the methods, which Baba followed (and is following even now) in some cases to improve and reform His devotees.

(2) Tendulkar family

There lived in Bandra (a suburb of Bombay) a Tendalkar family, all the members of which were devoted to Baba. Mrs. Savitribai Tendulkar has published a Marathi book named "Shri Sainath Bhajan Mala" containing 800 abhangas and padas describing the Leelas of Baba. It is a book worth reading by those who are interested in Baba. The son, Babu Tendulkar was studying hard day and night and wanted to appear for the medical examination. He consulted some astrologers. Examining his horoscope they told him that the stars were not favourable that year and that he should appear for the examination next year, when he would be certainly successful. This cast a gloom over him and made him restless. A few days afterwards his mother went to Shirdi and saw Baba. Amongst other things she mentioned the gloomy and morose condition of her son, who was to appear for the examination in a few days. Hearing this Baba said to her, "Tell your son to believe in Me, to throw aside horoscopes and predictions of astrologers and palmists and go on with his studies. Let him appear for the examination with a calm mind, he is sure to pass this year. Ask him to trust in Me and not to get disappointed". The mother returned home and communicated Baba's message to her son. Then he studied hard and in due course appeared for the examination. In the written papers he did well, but being overwhelmed by doubts he thought that he would not secure sufficient marks for passing. So he did not care to appear for the oral examination. But the examiner was after him. He sent word through a fellow- student, stating that he had passed in the written examination and that he should appear for the oral. The son being thus encouraged appeared for the oral examination and was successful in both. Thus he got through the examination that year successfully by Baba's grace, though the stars were against him. It is to be noted here that doubts and difficulties surround us just to move us and confirm our faith. We are tested as it were. If we only hold on steadily to Baba with full faith and continue our endeavours, our efforts will be ultimately crowned with success.

The father of this boy, Raghunathrao was serving in some foreign mercantile firm in Bombay. As he grew old, he was not able to attend to his work properly and so he had to take leave and rest. As he did not improve during the period of leave a further extension of leave or retirement from service was inevitable. The Chief Manager of the firm decided to retire him on pension as he was an old and a reliable servant. The question regarding the amount of pension to be given was under consideration. He was getting Rs.150/- p.m. and his pension i.e. half the amount viz. Rs. 75/- would not be enough to meet the expenses of the family. So they were all anxious about this matter. Fifteen days

before the final settlement, Baba appeared to Mrs. Tendulkar in her dream and said, "I wish that Rs. 100/- should be paid (settled) as pension, will this satisfy you?" She replied "Baba, why ask me this? We fully trust in You". Though Baba said Rs.100/- still he was given ten Rupees more i.e. Rs.110/- as a special case. Such wonderful love and care did Baba exhibit for His Bhaktas.

(3) Captain Hate

Captain Hate, who was staying in Bikaner, was a great devotee of Baba. Once Baba appeared to him in his dream and said "Did you forget Me?" Hate then immediately held Baba's Feet and replied, "If a child forgets his mother, how could it be saved?" Then Hate went into the garden and took out fresh walpapadi vegetables, and arranging 'shidha' (ghee, wheat-flour and dal etc.) and Dakshina, was about to offer all this to Baba when he was awakened and came to know that the whole thing was a dream. Then he decided to send all these things to Baba at Shirdi. When he came to Gwalior some days afterwards, he sent Rs.12/- by money order to a friend, with instructions that Rs. 2 should be spent in buying shidha articles and walpapadi vegetables, and those should be offered to Baba with Rs. 10 as Dakshina. The friend went to Shirdi and purchased the things mentioned, but walpapadi was not available. In a short time a woman turned up with a basket on her head, which curiously enough contained the vegetables. It was purchased and then all the things were offered to Baba on behalf of Captain hate. Mr. Nimonkar prepared the 'naivedya' (rice and walpapadi vegetables) next day and offered the same to Baba. All the people were surprised to see that Baba while dining, took and ate walpapadi, and did not touch rice and other things. Hate's joy knew no bounds when he heard of this from his friend.

Consecrated Rupee

At another time Captain Hate wished that he should have in his house a coin of rupee consecrated by Baba with His touch. He came across a friend who was bound for Shirdi. With him Hate sent his rupee. The friend went to Shirdi and after the usual salutation gave first his Dakshina which Baba pocketed. Then he gave Hate's rupee, which Baba took in His hand and began to stare at it. He held it in front, tossed it up with His right thumb and played with it. Then He said to the friend, "Return this to its owner with the Prasad of Udi, tell him that I want nothing from him, ask him to live in peace and contentment." The friend returned to Gwalior, handed over the consecrated rupee to Hate, and told him all the happened at Shirdi. This time Hate was much pleased and realised that Baba always encouraged good thoughts, and as he wished intently, Baba fulfilled the same accordingly.

(4) Waman Narvekar

Now let the readers hear a different story. A gentleman, named Waman Narvekar loved Baba very much. He once brought a rupee. On one side (obverse) of it were engraved the figures of Rama, Laxman and Sita and on the other (reverse) side was engraved the figure of Maruti, with folded hands. He offered it to Baba with a hope that He should consecrate it with His touch and return it to him with Udi. But Baba immediately pocketed it. Then Shama spoke to Baba, regarding Wamanrao's intention and requested Him to return it. Then Baba spoke in the presence of Wamanrao as follows :- "Why should it be returned to him? We should keep it ourselves. If he gives Rs.25/- for it, it will be returned." Then, for the sake of that rupee, Wamanrao collected Rs.25/- and placed them before Baba.

Then Baba said, "The value of that rupee far exceeds 25 Rupees. Shama, take this rupee, let us have it in our store, keep this in your shrine and worship it." No one had the courage to ask Baba why He followed this particular action. He only knows what is best and most suitable to each and all.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter XXX

Drawn To Shirdi

(1) Kakaji Vaidya of Vani - (2) Punjabi Ramalal of Bombay.

In this Chapter the story of two more devotees that were drawn to Shirdi, is narrated.

Preliminary

Bow to the Kind Sai Who is the Abode of Mercy and Who is affectionate towards His devotees. By His mere darshan, He does away with their fear of this 'bhava' (samsar) and destroys their calamities. He was first Nirgun (formless), but on account of the devotion of His Bhaktas, He was obliged to take a form. To give liberation - self-realisation to the Bhaktas is the mission of the saints, and for Sai - the Chief of them, that mission is inevitable. Those who take refuge in His Feet have all their sins destroyed and their progress is certain. Remembering His Feet, Brahmins from holy places come to Him and read scriptures and chant the Gayatri mantra in His presence. We, who are weak and without any merits, do not know what Bhakti is but we know this much, that though all others may leave us, Sai won't forsake us. Those whom He favours get enormous strength, discrimination between the Unreal and the Real and knowledge.

Sai knows fully the desire of His devotees and fulfills the same. Hence they get what they want and are grateful. So we invoke Him and prostrate ourselves before Him. Forgetting all our faults let Him free us from all anxieties. He who being overcome with calamities remembers and prays Sai thus, will get his mind calmed and pacified through His grace.

This Sai - the ocean of mercy, says Hemadpant, favoured him and the result of this, is the present work - Sai-Satcharia. Otherwise what qualifications had he and who would undertake this enterprise? But as Sai took all the responsibility, Hemadpant felt no burden, nor any care about this. When the powerful Light of knowledge was there to inspire his speech and pen, why should he entertain any doubt or feel any anxiety? Sai got the service in the form of this book done by him; this is due to the accumulation of his merits in the past births and, therefore, he thinks himself fortunate and blessed.

The following story is not a mere tale, but pure nectar. He who drinks it will realise Sai's greatness and all-pervasiveness. Those who want to argue and criticise, should not go in for these stories. What is wanted here, is not discussion but unlimited love and devotion. Learned, devout and faithful believers or those, who consider themselves as servants of the Saints, will like and appreciate these stories, others will take them to be fables. The fortunate Bhaktas of Sai, will find the Sai-leelas as the Kalpataru (Wish-fulfilling Tree). Drinking this nectar of Sai-leelas, will give liberation to the ignorant Jivas, satisfaction to the house-holders and a sadhana to the aspirants. Now to the story of this Chapter.

Kakaji Vaidya

There lived in Vani, Nasik District, a man named Kakaji Vaidya. He was the priest of the Goodness Sapta-Shringi there. He was so much overwhelmed with adverse circumstances and calamities that he lost peace of mind and became quite restless. Under such circumstances one evening he went into the temple of the Goodness and prayed unto Her from the bottom of his heart and invoked Her aid to free him from anxiety. The Goddess was pleased with his devotion and the same night appeared to him in his dream and said to him, "You go to Baba and then your mind will become calm and composed". Kakaji was anxious to know from Her who that Baba was, but before he could get any explanation, he was awakened. Then he began to think as to who might be that Baba, to whom the Goodness has asked him to go. After some thinking, he resolved that this Baba might be 'Tryambakeshwar' (Lord Shiva). So he went to the holy place 'Tryambak' (Nasik District) and stayed there for ten days. During this period, he bathed early in the morning, chanted the 'Rudra' hymns, did the 'Abhishekam' (pouring unceasingly fresh cold water over the Pindi) and did other religious rites; but with all that, he was as restless as before. Then he returned to his place and again invoked the Goddess most pitifully. They night She again appeared in his dream and said - "Why did you go to Tryambakeshwar in vain? I mean by Baba - Shri Sai Samarth of Shirdi."

The question before Kakaji now was 'How and when to go to Shirdi and how to see Baba? If anybody is in real earnest to see a Saint, not only the Saint but God also, fulfills his wish. In fact the 'Sant' (Saint) and the 'Anant' (God) are one and the same; there is not the least difference between them. If anybody thinks that he will go himself and see a Saint, that will be a mere boast. Unless the Saint wills it, who is able to go and see him? Even the leaf of the tree won't move without his bidding. The more anxious a Bhakta is for the saint's visit, the more devout and faithful he is, the more speedily and effectively is his wish satisfied to his heart's content. He who invites anybody for a visit, also arranges everything for his reception, and so it happened with Kakaji.

Shama's Vows

When Kakaji was thinking his visit to Shirdi, a guest came to him at his place to take him to Shirdi. He was no other than Shama, a very close and intimate devotee of Baba. How he came to Vani at this juncture, we shall just see. Shama was severely ill when he was very young and his mother had taken a vow to her family Goddess Sapta-Shringi at Vani, that if the son got well, she would bring and dedicate him at Her feet. Then after some years the mother herself suffered much from ring-worms on her breasts. At that time she again took another vow to her Deity that if she got all right, she would offer Her two silver breasts. These two vows remained unfulfilled. At her death-bed she called her son Shama to her and drew his attention to the vows and after taking a promise from him that he would fulfill them, she breathed her last. After some time, Shama quite forgot about

these vows and thus 30 years elapsed. About this time a famous astrologer had come to Shirdi and stayed there for a month. His predictions in the case of Shriman Booty and others came true and everybody was satisfied. Shama's younger brother Bapaji consulted him and was told that his mother's vows, which his elder brother promised to fulfill at her death-bed, were not yet fulfilled; hence the Goddess was displeased with them and bringing troubles on them. Bapaji told this to his brother Shama who was then reminded of the unfulfilled vows. Thinking that any further delay would be dangerous, he called a goldsmith and got a pair of silver breast prepared. Then he went to the Masjid, prostrated himself before Baba and, placing before Him the two silver breast, requested Him to accept them and free him from the vows as He was to him his Sapta-Shringi Goddess. Then Baba insisted upon him to go himself to the temple of Sapta-Shringi and offer them in person at the feet of the Goddess. Then after taking Baba's permission and Udi, he left for Vani and searching for the priest came to Kakaji's house. Kakaji was then very anxious to visit Baba and Shama went there to see him at that very time. What a wonderful coincidence is this!

Kakaji asked him who he was and whence he had come, and on learning that he came from Shirdi, he at once embraced him. So overpowered was he with love! Then they talked about Sai-leelas and after finishing the rites of Shama's vows, they both started for Shirdi. On reaching the place, Kakaji went to the Masjid, and fell at Baba's Feet. His eyes were soon bedewed with tears, and his mind attained calmness. According to the vision of the Goddess, no sooner did he see Baba, that his mind lost all its restlessness and it became calm and composed. Kakaji began to think, in his mind, "What a wonderful power is this! Baba spoke nothing, there was no question and answer, no benediction pronounced; the mere darshana itself was so conducive to happiness; the restlessness of my mind disappeared by His mere darshan, consciousness of joy came upon me - this is what is called 'the greatness of darshan'." His vision was fixed on Sai's feet and he could utter no word. Hearing Baba's Leelas, his joy knew no bounds. He surrendered himself completely to Baba, forgot his anxiety and cares and got undiluted happiness. He lived happily there for twelve days and after taking Baba's leave, Udi and blessings returned home.

Khushalchand of Rahata

It is said that a dream, which we get in the small hours of the morning, generally comes out true in the waking state. This may be so, but regarding Baba's dreams there is no restriction of time. To quote an instance :- Baba told Kakasaheb Dixit one afternoon to go to Rahata and fetch Khushalchand to Shirdi, as He had not seen him since long. Kakasaheb accordingly took a tanga and went to Rahata. He saw Khushalchand and gave him Baba's message. Hearing it, Khushalchand was surprised and said that he was taking a noon nap after meals when Baba appeared in his dream and asked him to come to Shirdi immediately and that he was anxious to go. As he had no horse of his own nearby, he had sent his son to inform Baba; when his son was just out of the village-border, Dixit's tanga turned up. Dixit then said that he was sent specially to bring him. Then they both went in the tanga back to Shirdi. Khushalchand saw Baba and all were pleased. Seeing this Leela of Baba, Khushalchand was much moved.

Punjabi Ramalal of Bombay

Once a Punjabi Brahmin of Bombay named Ramalal got a dream in which Baba appeared and asked him to come to Shirdi. Baba appeared to him as a Mahant (Saint), but

he did not know His whereabouts. He thought that he should go and see Him, but as he knew not His address, he did not know what to do. But He Who calls anybody for an interview makes the necessary arrangements for the same. The same happened in this case. The same afternoon when he was strolling in the streets, he saw a picture of Baba in a shop. The features of the Mahant, he saw in the dream, exactly tallied with those of the picture. Then making enquiries, he came to know that the picture was of Sai Baba of Shirdi. He then went soon after to Shirdi and stayed there till his death.

In this way Baba brought His devotees to Shirdi for darshan and satisfied their wants, material as well as spiritual.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all
