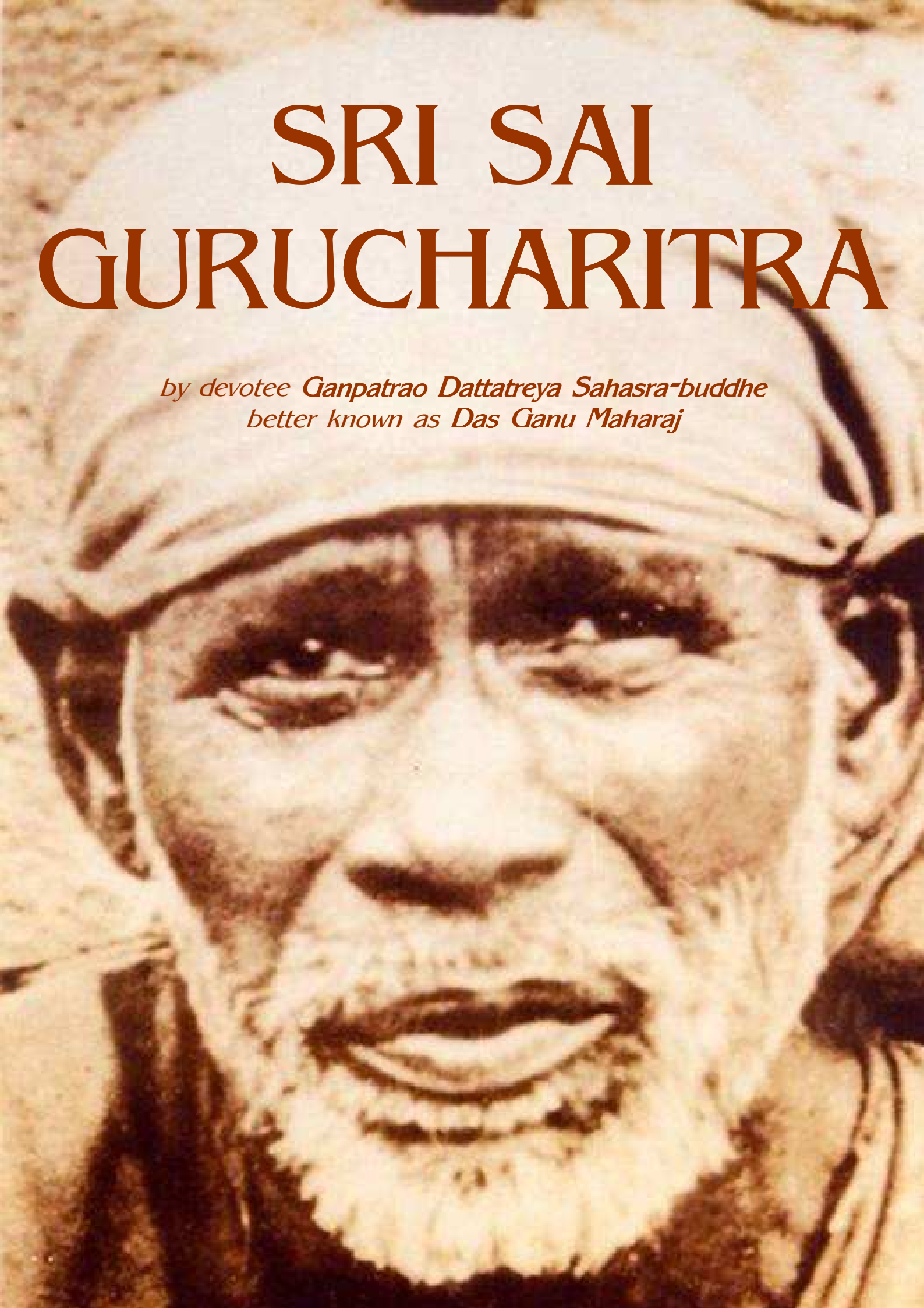


# SRI SAI GURUCHARITRA

*by devotee Ganpatrao Dattatreya Sahasra-buddhe  
better known as Das Ganu Maharaj*



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# Sri Sai Gurucharitra

## Chapter 1

### Introduction



All hail to Sri Ganesha. All hail to the supreme Shiva, the five faced God. All hail to the fire of valour that is Shiva. I pray to you who are the father and mother to the whole universe, not to neglect me, your child. Your abode, the Kailas Mountain is most charming. Even Mahavishnu, the excellent one that meditates upon you at twilight. Oh thou master of all living beings, in the days of yore when Daksha prajapati had insulted you, being angered, you had incarnated as Veerabhadra. Oh thou consort of Parvati, your mission is to save your true devotee. Why then are you neglecting me?

Oh thou mountain of compassion, why are you not heeding to my prayer? Oh thou the holder of the mighty trident, it may be that you are thinking that I am a great sinner and one steeped in ignorance and are not showering your grace on me. Oh the master of Uma, it is you who had presented me, a child, with this bestial nature. I am indeed an insignificant being. Please do not ignore me. It is said that the devotees of Ishwara certainly find eternal happiness in you after death. It matters not the least whether he is the twice born Brahmin or the flesh eating chandala, your devotee becomes equal to Mahavishnu himself after death. There is no room for any doubt in this regard. As the life force shining as a flame in the hearts of all living beings is one, so are His children, all one. The Supreme Being who is the powerful master of the universe is the only truth. Where is the scope for duality in the hearts of those who do not differentiate amongst the people based on caste or creed? I beg you my lord, to protect and cherish such wise ones. Sant Kabir and his son Kamal Das of yore were great devotees. Did the Supreme God discriminate against them as they were of a different religion? Sri Panduranga is ever vigilant to see that no harm befalls those who are devoted wholly to God regardless of their malevolent planetary positions.

It matters not whether they are of low or high caste, whether they are rich or poor, only those who love God with single-minded devotion and rock like faith are the favourites of Sri Hari, the supreme lord.

### Sai Baba of Shirdi

South of the holy Godavari River, about eight miles from Kopargaon is a poor hamlet called Shirdi. The abode of all the merit in this world, Sri Sai Baba arrived in that village one day. The people call him 'Baba' or 'Sai'. He is ever immersed in the bliss of the Satchidananda. No one knows his antecedents or his previous history. What can I tell you of these details when I too am as ignorant as the others are? If anyone asked Baba this question, he would answer, "As the rain falls when the clouds in the sky peal with thunder, I too have fallen on this earth. I have no name or place. I am without any attributes. I have assumed this body due to the inevitable karma, which does its work, immutable and unalterable. I am known everywhere as a body. The whole world is my abode. Brahman is my father- the impenetrable Maya is my mother. It is by their conjoining that I have assumed this body which you see with your eyes." He would ever feel that this world is a transient place. That Sai Maharaj has shown innumerable instances of his divine power at Shirdi. How can this Das Ganu, steeped in ignorance as he is, explain all these leelas?

### We are out of oil

Shirdi was a humble, poverty stricken village. There were very few shops in the village. Those few were mostly the grocers. Sai Baba would daily beg oil from the shopkeepers to

light the lamps at the Masjid. In the same manner he would light lamps in the temples too. He used to conduct the festivals of lighting lamps at these places of worship. The shopkeepers were irritable at his begging for oil everyday from them. One day they all got together and discussed the matter. "From where can we give this man free oil everyday?" They decided not to give him any more oil. When Baba went to beg for oil, he got the same answer everywhere. "There is no stock, we are out of oil" Baba was surprised, "Why do you have to lie for such an insignificant thing?" said he and went back to his Masjid.



It is because of deceit and untruthfulness that people are submerging in the ocean of sorrows and becoming estranged from God. They are being entangled in karma of their own creation and are falling from the right path. The foremost sin is untruthfulness. God's grace is never upon those who tell lies. He is the slave of those who are ever truthful and honest. The sadhanas of japa or penance are nothing when compared to the sadhana of being honest and truthful. Truth is the basis and foundation of all dharma. Truth is the easy way for moksha. Truth is eternal bliss. Never forget truth and ever abide by it.

Sri Sainatha had thus returned to the Masjid without speaking harshly to the merchants who he knew were telling lies. He then did a wonderful thing. He placed the earthen lamps all around the Masjid and placed wicks in them. The whole village had come to know by now and had gathered at the Masjid to watch the fun. They talked amongst themselves. "How can lamps be lit without oil? This Sai seems to be very insane. Does the lifeless seed ever sprout? Does the barren woman ever give birth to a child and fill the household with joy?

Do the wise ever believe these to be possible? This mad man is trying to light lamps without oil. He is indeed without doubt the king amongst mad men and emperor of the insane" The villagers started to heckle Baba thus. Baba took the tin, which had a little oil remaining at its bottom, and went back in to the Masjid. Nanasahab Dengale saw the people making fun of Baba and insulting him. He said, "You people are blind. Do not heckle him and make fun of him in your ignorance. Only the God knows the extent of his power. Do we mistakenly discard in haste the jewel, which has fallen down amongst the rocks? Do not judge him in a hurry. Let us wait a while and see what this fakir will do. Why should we be in such a haste to condemn him?"

All were seated silently in the Masjid. Baba had sufficient oil to light only one lamp in his tin. Baba poured a little water, approximately half the volume of oil, into the tin of oil and closed his eyes in meditation. He took a little of the mixture of oil and water into his mouth and spat it back into the tin after gargling. He poured the mixture in to all the lamps. Incredibly there was sufficient oil for all the lamps now. He lit the lamps and they burned brightly throughout the night. Dengale was wonderstruck at this example of Baba's divine power. He reverently saluted his feet. The people were all stunned by this wonderful miracle of Baba. They exclaimed, "How wonderful is this Baba's leela? Baba is none but God." They all knelt in front of Baba. "Baba, we have committed a great sin by making fun of you. We are all your children. You are our real mother. Please do not be angry with us. Sai Maharaj, Oh! Mountain of compassion, please excuse our mistakes. You are verily the ocean of mercy; you are the effulgent sun shining in the sky of right knowledge. You are the vast sea containing all the good qualities. You are verily the mountain of peace."

They all prayed to Baba not to be angry with them and to protect them. Baba spoke thus, "Hear and heed my words, Oh people. Behave always in the manner pleasing to the almighty. Never tell lies. If you stick to the truth, God will be pleased and stick with you. Do not cause any hardship to anyone. Give to the poor in charity as much as you can. You will

gain merit by such charity and good will happen to you. By such conduct God will be pleased with you and give you his Divine vision at the end. This is the truth. Embed these words of mine in your hearts and follow them always." The people of Shirdi listened very happily to the teaching of Sri Sai Baba and went back to their homes contentedly.

### **Baba sleeps on a plank**



Sri Sai Baba is a great yogi. It is beyond my feeble intellect to describe his divine powers. Fascinated by the divine power of Baba, and his throat trembling in passionate devotion, Dengale described Baba's leelas thus, "Baba's bed is of surpassing wonder. It is a wooden plank about a hand span in width and four cubits in length. He tied it to the roof beams of the Masjid with torn rags of cloth. The Masjid itself is in a dilapidated condition. The plastering of the walls was peeling off and falling down in chunks. The plank thus hung assumed a bow shape and all who saw it were wondering at its shape. Baba used to light lamps and keeping them on the four corners of the plank, would sleep on the plank. It was the power of his yoga that kept the bed aloft. The rags, which

were used to hang the bed, were in such poor shape that it seemed they would be torn asunder at the lightest of weights placed on them. How can I describe the way Baba slept on that wondrous bed? Some people who had heard of this divine play, felt that it was false, a confidence trick. So they would come to the Masjid at night to see for themselves.

Gradually, the number of people increased so much that it was disturbing the peaceful atmosphere at the Masjid. Baba wanted to rid himself of this unwanted intrusion and one day removed the bed and discarded it. Baba's fame had spread to the four corners of the country. People started coming for the darshan of that great mahatma and started making vows for their weal. Shirdi became a great pilgrimage centre. By Baba's power that small village gained fame as a great and powerful pilgrimage centre throughout the country. As the garden soil gains repute by its flowers, as the holes made in the ear ornament gain lustre by the jewels placed in them, as the cloth used to bundle gold gains respect by the gold it contains, so did Shirdi gain name and fame because of Baba. People thronged in the multitudes for the darshan of that mighty saint of infinite power.

### **Eat first and then leave**

One day a group of people came for the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. The first was the son of Govind Chandorkar, Narayana Chandorkar, who was working at the collector's office at Ahmed Nagar as the Chitnis. He was called Nanasaheb by all. The second was a singer of ballads honouring God called Ramadas of Vayi village. The third was Babu Nagarkar and the fourth was Kangaokar. They had all arrived at Shirdi on the day before Hanumajjayanti (the birth day of the monkey God Hanuman, the foremost devotee of Sri Rama). They had all come to Shirdi to have the darshan of the divine Sai and to hear his gospel. Ramadas had to sing the ballad of God on the day of Hanumajjayanti at Ahmed Nagar, situated on the banks of the Seena River. He was hurrying the others of the party to leave immediately after the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. He stated shouting for the cart to take them all to the railway station.

Then Baba told Chandorkar, "You have your food first and only then leave." Nana did not know what to do. He took Kangaokar with him and saw to the food for himself and the others of his party. Ramadas, however, was hurrying them and was insisting on leaving at once for the railway station. Babu Nagarkar said, "What is your hurry?" Ramadas retorted, "I have to sing the ballad of God tomorrow at Ahmed Nagar. We have spent enough time with this

madman. Chandorkar is well off, he has no worries about his next meal. If we do not leave now, I will be losing a lot of money. What do we gain by following this Sai Baba? I will not get even a paisa here. Let us go to the railway station immediately. It is now time for the train to arrive. We have in any case accomplished what we have come for." He prevailed upon Babu Nagarkar to accompany him and they both started for the station. Chandorkar and Kangaokar stayed on at Shirdi as per Baba's instructions.

Baba then said to Nanasaheb, "Have you noticed how people behave? They leave those with them and go away to seek their own selfish interests. That is why we should bring with us those who stay with us till the end of the world as the perfume stays with the flower."

They all finished their meal. Baba said, "Now you can start. Believe in my words. Do not worry that you will miss the train. There is time yet for its arrival." Chandorkar and his friend believed Baba. They listened to his advice and after reverentially saluting his feet, started for Kopargaon. As they reached the station, they found Babu Nagarkar and Ramadas with drawn faces, famished with hunger. They could not find anything to eat at the railway station. They hung their heads in shame as they saw Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Nana said, "Why, you have still not left for Ahmed Nagar? It seems that your train has still not arrived." Nagarkar replied, "Today the train is late by three hours. It is our fate to fast and go hungry today. We have received our just desserts as we have not heeded the instructions of that great saint, Sai Baba." The train arrived and they all boarded it to go to Ahmed Nagar. Sri Sai Baba knows the past, present and the future. His words are never in vain. My obeisance to the great Sai Baba, my only refuge.

### A lawsuit for Appa



Appa was the Kulkarni (revenue official) of the Shirdi village. He was ever immersed in service to Sri Sai Baba. It is the merit of our past lives, which rules our mind and dictates our actions. Now hear what happened once to Appa Kulkarni by the effects of his past Karma. A case was filed against him alleging misappropriation of funds. Only God knows for certain whether he was innocent of the charge or not. The people started vilifying Appa, saying that he was a corrupt man and a troublesome character. Appa heard these gossip of the villagers. He was troubled in his mind whether Sai Maharaj too would hear these rumours and start believing them. The revenue officer superior to Appa issued summons to him to come for an inquiry into the allegations against him. Appa was in a great panic. He was apprehensive that he may not come back to Shirdi again from the inquiry. He went to the Masjid and saluted Baba with reverence. He said, "Oh! Supreme amongst the guru's, you are a saint. You are verily God. A great calamity has befallen me. Baba, I know that you can command time itself. You know whether this calumny is true or not. Oh powerful one! You are omniscient. You know the past, present and the future. What more can I say than this? You are my mother. I turn to you as my refuge and last resort. Only you can save me and my good name from these infamous allegations." Appa grasped Baba's feet and prostrate on the ground, started weeping piteously.

"Baba, if something bad happens to me at the inquiry, it will bring you a bad name and disrepute. Oh powerful one, keep this in mind and remove this affliction. When I have Kubera (the God of riches) with me why should I wander abroad for alms from house to house? Do the children who drink the milk from the overflowing udders of that gem amongst cows, the wish fulfilling Kamadhenu, search elsewhere for milk? When the Kalpa Vruksha which fulfils all one's desires is with one does he seek thorny bushes?

Do the fish leave the vast ocean of milk and seek refuge in mere rivulets? Baba, I have sought shelter at your lotus like feet. You are my mother, my father, please save me from this danger. If you remove me to safety from this danger, all will laud you as the saviour. On the other hand, if I am punished, it will be a black mark on your fame. Sai, please shower your kind, benevolent grace on me." Appa begged Baba piteously for his kind grace.

Baba's heart melted. He said, "There is no need for you to worry anymore. Have faith in me! Go from here to Niwasa Village. There, on the bank of the Pravara River, the God who

plays the part of the unseen director of this whole universe, has taken the form of Mohini. Go thou there. He, to whom Jnaneswar had surrendered when he wrote, the 'Bhavartha Deepika' (commentary on Bhagavat Gita); He who incarnated ten times to rid this world of evil and uphold the dharma; that Allah-Illahi has assumed form there to save these foolish people steeped in ignorance. Go thou there to him. Salute him with reverence and then go to your superior. The all merciful Allah will protect you. Do not fear."

Appa Kulkarni went to the Mohini Raj on the banks of the Pravara River and after paying obeisance went to where the inquiry was scheduled. He kept repeating the holy name of Sri Sai Baba while answering the questions of his superior. The inquiry concluded. The officer said, "It is my belief that you have been falsely accused in this case. I am of the opinion that you have not misappropriated any money. You are free to go." Appa turned towards Shirdi and danced with happiness.

Appa praised Baba, "Sai Baba, thou wish fulfilling Kalpa Vruksha of the devotees! Thou the protector of the devotee! Thou abode of dispassion! You have shown great kindness to me. I have succeeded by your grace. You have upheld my honour, Baba, thou great mahatma."

Appa arrived at Shirdi the next day and hurried to the Masjid. He informed Baba of what all had transpired at the inquiry. Baba heard him out in silence and said, "God is the one who is the doer and the one makes us do action. He is the refuge of the true devotee. Even the impossible becomes possible by his will."

### **Baba knows Pense's thoughts**

One another occasion Baba gave a taste of his power and divine play to Sri Narayana Krishna Pense. Pense's wife was a very pious woman and a devotee. She was very kind hearted. She was eager to have the darshan of Baba ever since she had heard of him. One day she approached her husband and said, "Heed my plea, I have heard that the incomparable, divine Sai Baba is at Shirdi, let us go to that purest of pure places bathed in his effulgence and have the darshan of that great soul. Let us immerse ourselves in the bliss of being near his holy feet." Pense replied, "There is no holy man at Shirdi as you claim. There is only the mad Mohammedan there. He is totally insane. He has settled there with the sole aim of cheating the whole world and relieving poor innocent people of their hard earned wealth. Some innocent people believe that he is God. My love, heed my words, believe what I say. Do not be stubborn in your own belief. What you will get there is not ambrosia but the barren, bitter brine of the salt pan. Can one get gold from base tin? Do not fall into the trap of that mad fakir. He is a mere beggar who begs alms from the houses of Shirdi to fill his stomach." Pense's wife was deeply troubled hearing these blasphemous words of her husband. She was eagerly awaiting her turn to have the darshan of that great mahatma. "When, oh when can I have the great good fortune of seeing the lotus like feet of that gem amongst saints" wondered Pense's wife. Once Pense was to go on an official tour and had taken his wife along. They came to Shirdi on the tour. As Pense was engaged in government work, his wife was free to do as she pleased in Shirdi. She eagerly went to the Masjid and prostrated in front of Baba, that most compassionate saint. She placed her head on his feet, the feet that are the succour and refuge to all devotees. She at once gained great mental peace by the darshan of that most excellent mahatma who mitigates the suffering and the weariness of worldly life.

Later she ecstatically recounted the details to her husband. "I have had the darshan of that ocean of kindness - Sri Sai Baba. He is verily the depository of all merit. I want you to stop criticizing and talking ill of that gem amongst the saints and have his darshan immediately," she said. Pense could not refuse his wife's importuning and went to the Masjid for the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. As Baba saw him he shouted, "Do not come close." He took a stone in his hand and threatened. "Take a step forward and see what happens to you. I will hit you with this stone. I am charlatan and cheat. Why do you need to see me? I am a low caste, and mad man and a Mohammedan to boot. You are a great Brahmin of the highest class. You will suffer from myla even if you enter this Masjid." Pense was struck dumb. He was petrified by the enormity of his impertinence. "This Sai Maharaj is omniscient. He knows the past, present and the future as well as he knows the palm of his own hand. He is a mountain of wisdom. He has recounted all that I have said against him in the privacy of my own home without a single mistake. Verily he is a great saint who can read what is written on the mind



also." He repentantly went to Appa Kulkarni, and through his good offices could finally have the darshan of that perfect Brahman, the greatest of the yogi's -Sai Baba.

### **Appa's death predicted**

Let the devotees now play attention to what happened a few days later. Baba one day told Appa, "Some thieves have entered our village. They are not ordinary thieves. Their methods are entirely different. They enter each house and examine it minutely. They only steal the most valuable things from each house. They are such experts in their vocation that one does not even realize that a theft has happened in one's house. They will first come to your house. You go to your house and see to its security." Appa could not understand Baba's words or their inner meaning.

He hired some people to guard his house and he too joined them standing guard though that night. An hour or so after night fall, Appa started vomiting and had diarrhoea. He was afflicted with that dreadful disease- Cholera. His body lost its temperature and he started twisting in agony. His eyes lost focus and protruded. His pulse was not palpable. The villagers saw the condition of Appa and were saddened, losing all hope of his survival. Appa's wife, fearing the imminent death of Appa, ran at once to the Masjid to that mountain of kindness and the sole refuge of all in this world. She fell on the Baba's feet and pleaded with tears streaming from her eyes, "Baba, my husband is in the last stages of his life, please give my husband some Udi along with your blessings. It will save my husband and bring him back from the doors of imminent death. Please save me from wretched widowhood"

Baba said, "Oh mother, do not cry. All those who are born have to die, someday or the other. To be born, to live and to die are all decided by the almighty. He is in everything and every where. It is not in our hands to change his plans. Who is it that is born? Who is it that dies? Get hold of your self and examine this with dispassion and true knowledge. You will also realize the truth. If the cloth we wear is torn, we throw it aside. We lose whatever liking we had for it too. The all-merciful God has covered the ever living soul with this cloth of a body. That soul is the ever living, infinite, indivisible, attribute less, formless God. Do not show love for the worn out cloth of the body of Appa and try to protect it by applying Udi to it. Do not come in Appa's way and cause him harm. Let him reach his destination as per his destiny. As I have been talking to you here, he has already left behind the worn out cloth of his body. Do not interfere any more.

Appa will achieve salvation. You will not be able to see it with your worldly eye. Let what ever happens happen. Baba consoled her thus and she went home reconciled to Appa's death. By the time she reached home, Appa was dead.

The next day two or three more people died in the village of Cholera. The villagers were all terrified by this scourge and went to Baba who was their sole refuge. They prayed to him, "Baba, cholera is dancing her dance of death in the village. Do something and get her out of the village. What is the use of having you here if we are all to die by cholera?"

Baba replied, "Seven people have to die in the village. After that cholera will go away from here." This turned out to be literally true. Seven people died at Shirdi due to cholera. No further deaths occurred. How wonderful is Baba's knowledge. What he says will happen.

*I will now tell you what happened later. You, the audience are generous people, you are wisdom personified. I am but a child in front of you and you are most generously and lovingly listening to my prattle. Please listen to what I will tell you next with a good and tolerant heart.*

### **The haystack of the marwari**

Kondya (Kondaji) was an ardent devotee of Baba. Baba once told him, "Your haystack at the Kalwadi (the joint place where all the hay of the villagers is stocked) has caught fire. Go and extinguish it and come." Kondya was worried and ran to the Kalwadi. He returned and said, "Baba, you made me run to that place unnecessarily in this burning sun. The only things burnt are my feet from running there in this hot sun. There is nothing burning there as you said." Baba retorted, "I never utter an untruth. Go and see your hay stack again." Kondya turned back to look in the direction of the Kalwadi and saw smoke arising from there. He ran there in panic and saw his stack, which was in the middle of all the stacks burning. It was mid summer. The noontime sun was burning down fiercely with its unkind rays. The wind was



blowing with great speed breaking trees and it looked as if some disaster was looming. The flames of the burning haystack were leaping skywards as if to join the sun. All the villagers came running to Baba in great distress and fell on his feet. They started weeping, "Baba, oh thou ocean of mercy, what is our fate now? The Kalwadi is burning. It is our life. The whole years feed for the cattle is stored there. If it is burnt, what will the cattle eat? They will all die. Please do something and save us from this calamity. You are verily the Hari, the abode of all knowledge." Baba's heart melted seeing the piteous condition of his devotees. He acceded to their prayer graciously and went to the Kalwadi.

He took a little water in his hand and sprinkled it around the burning haystack. He said, "Only this stack will burn and none other." All the other stacks will be safe. Do not trouble yourself unnecessarily by pouring water over them. What I say will happen." It happened as Baba said. Only Kondya's stack was burnt and all the other stacks were safe in spite of the wind, which was blowing at great speed. All the villagers were euphoric as their stacks were safe and the cattle had sufficient feed for the coming year. Baba had kept fire in his control. The nature itself obeys the great saints. Even the creator of the world and the embodiment of satchidananda- Sri Hari is ever busy in the service of such saints.

On one evening, Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was a *tehsildar* (a district official in India in charge of revenues and taxation) by then, had come to Shirdi along with a group for the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. Baba said, "Oh thou good man, son of Govinda, Narayana, the jewel in the family tree of the Chandorkars! Have you seen how selfish the people are these days? Today, the haystack of Bhagchand Marwadi burnt to the ground. He is pestering me about his loss. Births and deaths, profits and loss are all by the will of the almighty. How easily do these blind people forget the almighty? They are happy when they get a profit and cry if they get a loss. Is there any meaning in the word 'mine'? We assume that the haystack is his. But in truth, it is to sustain the cattle by feeding them. It is propagated by the seed, which falls to the ground. After the seed is put in the ground, the clouds release rain, which make it bud. The sun by its gentle rays gives it life and nurtures its growth. The true owners of the seed are those that nourish it- the earth, the rain and the sun. However, these ignorant people boast that it is theirs. By the intensity of the heat of the sun, it caught fire and the fire ate up the hay. The earth suffered the heat patiently. The clouds were unaware of all this. They are like the children of pride. They delight in the evanescent beauty of the lightening and as the foolish lover enmeshed in the beauty of women, have no eyes for good or bad which happens to the others. As the clouds were looking on heedlessly, the sun seized his opportunity and burnt the haystack. The earth gave shelter to the ashes as it had given shelter to the seed or the hay with the same equal eye on all. We are not the masters or the owners of the things of this world. You tell him not to grieve unnecessarily. He has been weeping and coming to trouble me ever since this incident has happened.

The Almighty gives with one hand and takes away with the other. The feeling of happiness or unhappiness which people have as a result of this is born of ignorance." Baba turned to Bhagchand Marwadi who was nigh and said, "Oh seth, go home and sleep without a care. This loss will be set off by a profit in another business. Do not worry." Consoled, the seth went home.

### **Hasten back without losing even a second**

Chandorkar and others were drenched in the happy rain of Baba's instruction. Chandorkar saluted Baba reverently with folded hands and said, "Oh thou the delight of the devotee! Thou full moon who casts his cool rays to give comfort to thy devotees! Thou ocean of all knowledge! Please remove our ignorance and give us knowledge. Who is God? How does he seem? Where does he live? What should we do to achieve his darshan? If this world is evanescent and temporary, why should we be immersed in these day-to-day worldly affairs? Please teach us the secrets behind these seemingly irreconcilable facts." Baba kindly replied, "I will tell you the answers to these questions on another day. Now you must hasten back to your place at once, without losing even a second."

One of the devotees who had accompanied Chandorkar was, Ganesh Vishnu Bere. He was the District Agricultural Officer. He had come to Shirdi especially for Baba's darshan.

His sole desire was to spend some time in Baba's august presence. Chandorkar saluted Baba and conveyed Bere's desire to him. Baba said, "Whatever be the reason for your coming here, you must leave at once. Do not tarry a second. Do not waste any more time. Go post-haste to Kopargaon in a horse cart for your train." Chandorkar and Bere had full faith in Baba's words. They left immediately for Kopargaon in a horse-cart. They hurried the driver of the cart and asked him to drive the horse faster so as to obey Baba's instructions to the letter. On the way, they passed another horse cart wending its way at a leisurely pace. The occupants cried out, "What is your hurry, relax and let the horse go a little slowly. There is plenty of time for the train. Do not run like a deer trying to escape a tiger." Bere did not pay any attention to this but asked his cart man to drive the horse even faster. Chandorkar and Bere soon crossed the Godavari River and reached the railway station.

They later came to know that the horse cart, which was coming slowly behind them, was waylaid by highway robbers. Not only did they lose their money but had suffered injuries too as they were beaten by the thugs. The police too had enquired into the matter. Bere was thankful to Baba on hearing this news. He prayed in his mind, "Oh Sadguru, you have saved me, your child. Now I understood why you hurried us and made us leave immediately." He mentally thanked Baba whole heartedly for saving him from harm.

### **Hari Pant is childless**

There was a Brahmin of the Vasishta Gothra in Poona. His hair had whitened with age. He was rich, of the landed class. He was also of a kindly disposition. He was spiritually inclined and performed his puja regularly with all due ceremony. He was a worshipper of fire and used to daily worship it. His name was Hari Pant. His wife died suddenly. He was worried as to how he was going to do the fire worship without his wife. He did not have any children too. His estate was vast. But he did not wish to marry again as he had crossed fifty years of age. "Please marry again. If you try and search for a good girl you will find one. By the dint of sincere effort one can find even God, say the Shastras," said the villagers to him. Hari Pant also was intrigued by the idea but did not make serious efforts to search for a bride for his second marriage. "To grow a crop without water, to have progeny without a wife - how are they possible," rued Hari Pant. He used to tell all who visited him, "If my prayers fructify and Baba blesses me, I will marry a girl with good qualities. Let the people laugh if they wish at me. I have crossed fifty years of age. I am not certain that I will get a child even if I marry at this age. Even then, I will definitely marry and get progeny if Baba once blesses me."

Once that Brahmin went to Shirdi and had the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. Baba said, "Oh Hari you are indeed a fortunate man. Marry soon. You will get a male child by the grace of that kind almighty. Your wishes will come true. Do not doubt or hesitate. That Bholanath, the God with the trident as his weapon, that God with the moon as an ornament on his head, that almighty is by your side protecting you." Everyone was happy at Baba's words. They said, "It is a good augury for Hari Pant that he got Baba's blessings." Hari Pant said, "If the astrologers too agree, I will marry immediately." He left for his village. The Astrologers too agreed that as per the planetary positions and his birth star the time was propitious for him to marry. He got married as Baba had instructed. By Baba's grace, even the long dead log of wood, fit only for the fire, will again bud and blossom forth. The millet has grown to knee length. If Baba's grace falls in the shape of sufficient rain and under the benign influence of a gentle wind, will the crop not give a good yield? Hari Pant, the orthodox Brahmin, gained full belief in Baba. He saluted the most powerful Baba with reverence and gratitude. Baba is a mountain of mercy. He is the full moon shining gloriously in the sky of pure knowledge. He is the wish fulfilling Chintamani, who grants whatever the devotee wishes for. By the regular remembrance of his holy feet, all dangers and troubles vanish. Do not forget Baba even in your dreams. You will obtain his grace fully. All weal will be yours. That kind Baba will clasp us all to his heart with an embrace of pure love.

Who diligently reads this history of Sri Sai Baba with love, daily will be protected by the almighty lord. This is the truth. The next chapter is very serious, grave and critical. It teaches the essence of the three types of purushartha. You will obtain all the Purushartha's by the serious reading and following of the guidelines set in that chapter. Please listen to the childlike speech of Das Ganu and kneel in reverence in front of Sri Sai Baba. All your desires will be fulfilled by that great mahatma. Das Ganu is singing this song from 'Bhakta leelamrit'

giving you the details of Baba's history without seeking any personal gain. This history is holy. The sins of those who study it are destroyed. The Almighty God will always be by their side to protect and cherish them.

The history of Sri Sai Baba contained in "Bhakta Leelamrit" is very holy. It is the divine ambrosia. The servant of Sri Sai Baba, Das Ganu humbly requests you all to partake of the ambrosia to your hearts' content. Weal be to all.

*This is the end of the chapter 31 of 'Bhakta Leelamrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj.*



## Chapter 2

### How to achieve realisation

My obeisance to Sri Ganesha. Oh thou embodiment of pure consciousness! Oh thou Master of universe! Oh thou gracious one! Thou art effulgent, with no attributes and art in a state transcending all states. Thou art beyond space, time, and causality and art indivisible. Thou art our father and mother and every thing to us. Oh my Lord! Your real form is incomprehensible to us. Even the Vedas are unable to describe your real nature and have been reduced to a piteous state exclaiming neti, neti (not this, not this). Even the great saints such as Vasishtha, Brighu who were the very suns of knowledge and who could dispel ignorance by the rays of the knowledge of the Self found it impossible to describe you. How can I, a mere firefly before them, do it? Oh my lord, I am burning feverishly waiting for your kind grace to descend on me. I will never forget you or forsake your lotus like feet. Please stay for ever in my heart and using me as your pen, have this book written by me.



One day the pure and virtuous Nanasaheb Chandorkar and Nanasaheb Nimonkar came to Shirdi for the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. Nana sahib prostrated at Baba's feet and prayed, "Oh Sai Maharaj, Oh thou able one! No more this worldly life for me. All the Shastras say that this worldly life is futile. Protector of the meek and the downtrodden! Please tear asunder these chains of worldly attachments, which entangle us and hinder our progress. What pleasures we seek are turning into pain to haunt and torment us. Desire is making us dance like puppets at her whim. No matter how far the search, we are unable to find true bliss in this world. I am fed up of this life. I do not want these worldly entanglements any more."

Baba patiently heard what Chandorkar had to say. He said, "From where are you getting these insane ideas? What you say is true to some extent but you seem to have gone off on a

tangent on the whole. You may try to escape from the worldly but it will not let you escape from it. It will always stick by your side. It is not possible for anyone to escape from its clutches. Even I could not escape being entangled in this body of mine. How then can you escape the entanglements? This world has many attributes. Let me explain them to you. When lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and envy are covered by ego the result is worldliness. That is the world. The eyes see an object, the ears hear, the tongue tastes - this too is the world. It is the nature of the body. This world is an admixture of pleasure and pain. They do not leave anyone. No one can escape from their clutches. You feel that wealth, wife and children are the world. You are now weary of this. But they - the wife, children, brothers and sisters, relatives will not leave you even if you wish to leave them. The reason for all this is your prarabdha karma. Know that none in the three worlds can escape it without experiencing it and working it out. Chandorkar heard what Baba said. He replied, "All what you had said earlier was given by God and are his creation, the last - prarabdha is my own creation. I am wearied of this worldliness. Please remove my entanglements and save me some how or the other."

Baba laughed, "Every thing is your creation. What is the use of feeling fed up now? All these are the result of the karma of your previous lives, the result of the prarabdha karma. This prarabdha is the main reason for us to take birth in this world. None can escape the prarabdha. That is why people are born. There are the poor, the middleclass, the rich, the others, the bachelors, the vaanaprasthas, the sanyasis, the high and mighty, the low and such many kinds of people. There are many animals such as horses, cattle, foxes, birds, tigers, wolves, dogs, pigs, cats, snakes, scorpions, the ants and insects. The life inhabiting them all is the same. But they all look different from each other to the casual onlooker. Have you ever thought why this should be so? It is because of their sanchita karma that they are different from each other. They assume the qualities, conduct and the way of life as per their

bodies. What is the purpose of seeing all these bodies and feeling wearied? The tiger eats meat. The pig eats excreta. The wolf digs out the buried human body and eats it with relish. It is the nature of their bodies which makes them do that. The swan eats the tender leaves of the lotus; the vultures eat the stinking decayed meat. One gets the qualities and the habits of the body one is born in. This is the law of the nature. It is in accordance with this law of the nature that the living beings experience their prarabdha karma. Look here Nana! Some lions roam freely in the jungle - the lords of all they survey. Some lions are caged and taken from village to village on show. The rich man's dog sleeps on mattresses of silk. Some dogs keep roaming throughout the day for a few pieces of bread. Some cattle are fed to satiety with hay. The owner gives them sufficient water and oilcakes to feed and takes good care of them. Some cattle keep roaming throughout the day, hungry for food. They do not even get a few stalks of grass to eat and have to nose about the rubbish.

The main reason for these differences is the prarabdha karma. None can escape it without experiencing it to the full. It is the reason for the prosperity of the rich and the poverty of the poor. None can escape its writ without undergoing the full course. What law applies to animals applies to humans too. One is rich, the other poor; one is prosperous, the other in the clutches of wretched poverty. One is an orphan who has to beg for alms. One moves like a prince on horse back. One enjoys all the luxuries of life in kingly mansions. One has nothing to call his own and sleeps naked on the bare ground, the sky itself his roof. Some have progeny. Some have progeny, but they all die. Some women are barren and bear no children. Some women go to much trouble for just for the sake of bearing children." As Baba was saying this, Nana folded his hands in obeisance and said, "Baba! Why then do we have happiness and sorrow? We get pleasure from happiness and heart breaking pain from sorrow. The person who is entangled in the world suffers between both these extremes every second of his life. If this world is the store house of happiness and sorrow; how can one destroy sorrow and achieve happiness without leaving it?"

Baba said, "Happiness and sorrow are delusions. They are the fog which covers up and hides the reality. What we feel are the pleasures of this world are not truly its pleasures. Examine this aspect closely. Many people commit mistakes in understanding these aspects. It is by the prarabdha karma that one gets delicious food to eat while another gets dry bread to eat. The one who gets the stale dry bread may be plunged into sorrow. Another may get merely the dry crust of the stale bread. The man who got the delicious food to eat will think that he has every thing and lacks nothing. One may eat delicious food or one may eat rice with pickle. It is merely to assuage hunger and to fill the stomach. Some may wear costly shawls with jewelled embroidery. Some may cover their skin with rags. It may be a costly shawl or a rag; the purpose is to cover the skin only. Beyond this basic use there no further use for these things".

"It is ignorance to give importance to happiness or sorrow. If the mind is an ocean, the waves of sorrow and happiness are always rising and falling in that ocean. What you feel as sorrow and happiness are not real. They are mere delusion caused by your infatuation with the body. You may have a doubt here. Waves are present if only water is present. Light is present if only a lamp is present. So there must be a causative factor for the birth of these notions such as happiness and sorrow. What is it? It is the six enemies such as lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and envy which is the basis for the experience of happiness and sorrow in this world. The form of the waves is delusion. It makes the truth seem a lie; and a lie seems as the truth. When a poor man sees gold in the hand of a rich man, he feels envious. Then the wave of envy starts in his mind. He gets the feeling, "That gold should be in my hand." The moment he gets this feeling, another wave of greed starts in his mind. Nana, how many more examples can I give you of this? First, we have to conquer our six enemies. Once they are conquered, they cannot do anything to start these waves our mind. To tell the truth we cannot fully conquer these six enemies but we can make them our slaves. We should place our knowledge as the superior officer over these six enemies. Over knowledge, we should place discrimination as the supervising officer. If we successfully achieve this, there will be no further pain of happiness and sorrow for us."

"Alright, now I will tell you what the true happiness and sorrow are. Mukti (Emancipation, salvation) is true happiness. To take birth and die is true sorrow. Any other happiness or

sorrow but for these, is a result of mere delusion. Now I will tell you how to live in this world. Listen to me with diligent care. We should happily experience what ever has been our lot as the result of the prarabdha karma.

We should not be envious of others who are in a better state (due to their prarabdha karma) and hanker after their riches etc. Oh Nana, as the tree heavily laden with fruit is bent as if in humility so should one, who is heavily laden with wealth, be humble. But humility does not work with the wicked. Because there is the danger that the wicked will misuse the humility of the rich. One should behave ruthlessly with the wicked. The rich should be humble and be respectful towards the sadhu's and good people. The rich are like the cool shade trees in the burning mid-noon sun. The rich, intoxicated by their prosperity, should not cause any harm to any one. They should give alms and give to charity in accordance with their station in life. They should not take loans and make unnecessary expenditures. Even though this world is delusion, prarabdha is true. Money is essential to journey through this life. As the gall bladder is essential to life so is wealth essential in this world. One should not totally involve himself in making money. One should not be miserly but give to charity generously. Too much generosity is also dangerous. If our hard earned money is spent and exhausted no one will come to our rescue. It is a portent of disaster if a man is generous and a spend thrift too. One should see the qualities and qualification of the person before giving in charity. One should give handsomely to the physically handicapped, those in ill health, to the orphans and where it is useful to the public. One may spend money to take care of the scholars and for the childbirth expenses of women who have none to look after their welfare. Annadanam (the feeding of people) is of three kinds-Visesha karanam (for special reason), Nitya karanam (daily) and Karya karanam (occasional causes). When circumstances go one's way and one gets a windfall profit, he may do such Visesha Annadanam. One may feed even a thousand people.

One should not stop to see the high, low, good, or bad when one is doing annadanam. All are qualified to receive annadanam. One should do annadanam in the choultries too. However, one should never take money on loan to do annadanam. I will now tell you who are qualified to receive nitya annadanam. The wayfarer, the person engaged in penance, the sanyasi and the hungry are all qualified to receive nitya annadanam. One should do nitya annadanam even to those who do not accept cooked rice or those who study; eating at different houses every day of the week. The karya annadan is done on occasions such as marriage, the thread ceremony and other such ceremonial occasions. On such occasion, one should liberally feed friends, well wishers, relatives, and those of ones gotra. I have now explained to you the various annadanams and who are qualified to receive it. The regulations regarding vastra dan (the gift of apparel) are the same. Do not forget these regulations. One should try to ameliorate the sorrow of others. One should not misuse one's power or the wealth one has. One should not accept graft when one is in the seat of justice and do wrong. One should complete any given task in an excellent manner. One should not dress ostentatiously but only as much as demanded by modesty. One should not wear excess make up or go for excessive decoration of one's person. Do not insult any one. Recognise the wicked, keep them in mind and be wary of them. The wife, children, the servants have all come to us by prarabdha. Be courteous and loving towards them. Never assume for a moment that they are your people. That will had to further entanglement, further prarabdha karma and more births and deaths. We should try to experience and finish the prarabdha in this life only. We should try not to have any thing left over to take with us when we die. Whatever we get is a result of prarabdha.

The friends, relatives, wife and children all are limited only to this particular life. Each person and his relationship to you are limited only to this life. Who knows who will be entangled with you in your forthcoming birth? It is our vasanas (proclivities) which keep us entangled forever without letting go of us."

"It is the vasanas which are the seed bed of the next birth. That is why, if one does not increase his infatuation with the own karma; one would gain immeasurably in the hereafter. One stays for a day or two in one choultry and then moves on towards his destination without forming my association or infatuation with it. In the same manner, one should look upon this world as a choultry and not form any attachments. Thus, one should continue to do one's

duty and recognize and revere the almighty that is the form of satchidananda (existence, knowledge and bliss). He is the one who causes one's son and another's son to be born. But the responsibility of looking after one's son is one's own. It is necessary to earn money and keep it for the sake of looking after one's own. But one should never have the feeling, 'I am saving money, I am keeping it for them, I am looking after them'. One should do one's duty and present the result as well as the feeling of being the doer to the almighty and be untouched by it all. One should use one's knowledge to seek to know the good and bad about every thing. One should be able to accept the good and leave the bad. Try to do good works and complete them ably with determination. One should live in such a manner that one's fame lives on in this world even after one's death. One should perform one's duty without harboring the feeling 'I am the doer. This is purushartha. How much more can I tell you of this? The ego felt by the feeling 'I am the doer' should be offered to God. When one gets just reward for one's labours one should be humble. As long as one is alive, one should take care of the body. But it is a waste of time to think of or worry about death. This body is on loan to you from the panchabhutas (sky, wind, fire, water and earth). As life leaves it the body returns to panchabhutas. The air joins air. The energy joins the energy. The panchabhutas go where they came from.

The body is a part of the earth. It is futile to cry for it when it dies. In the same manner, it is futile to feel happy at birth. One should be content thinking that it is but the law of nature. The earth shelters the seed. The clouds rain water. The plants are born by sun's light. Does the earth, clouds, or sun dance with joy at the sight of the plants sprouting? Let the plant become a great tree or let it die as a sapling, the earth or clouds or the sun neither express happiness nor sadness. In the same way, the wise are beyond these feeling of happiness or sadness. We should also be like that. Where then, is the scope for happiness or sorrow? Oh, scion of the Chandorkar family! It is mukti or liberation to have equally neutral feelings about happiness or sorrow. I will tell you the rest of the story later. Now you continue to do your duty."

Nanasaheb Chandorkar heard the words of wisdom which fell pearl like from the lips of Baba. He prostrated at his feet and embraced them eagerly as the child does his mother. His eyes filled with tears, his body hair stood on end showing extreme passion of devotion. He said "Oh perfect one! You have saved me. By the rain of your teaching you have rid me of the dust of ignorance completely. How can I forget this good turn you have done me?" Nanasaheb Nimonkar was also by and enjoyed being immersed in the bliss of Baba's teaching. They both paid obeisance to Baba and returned home.

The devotees who daily read these sentences with devotion and faith will not suffer from the troubles of this world. The teachings contained in "Bhakta Leelamrit" are verily a rain of Sadguru's teachings. It is Das Ganu's desire that all of you are drenched fully in that rain and gain full benefit from it.

*Here completes the 32nd chapter of 'Bhakta leelamrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj.*

### **Notes and references**

Did Baba ever teach thus? It is natural to the readers of the 32nd and the 33rd chapters of 'Bhakta leelamrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj to have a doubt whether Baba ever made such longwinded speeches. Baba never made any such speeches about spirituality. It was his manner to seize the moment to teach in small sentences and words the wonderful truths of spirituality. Some of his teachings are available to us in the form of aphorisms. He never explained the spiritual truths in the style as was shown in these chapters. What about the teachings contained in these chapters? Das Ganu gave the explanation himself on another occasion.

"The teachings I have attributed to Baba as having been told to Nanasaheb Chandorkar is not a verbatim transcription. Nana told me of some spiritual truths revealed to him by Baba. I used my imagination to enlarge and expound upon these matters. Baba had merely taught the essence."

It is therefore evident that the long passages attributed to Baba in Das Ganu's books or in later histories of Baba are not verbatim transcripts of his teachings.



A detailed explanation of this aspect may be seen in the introduction to this book in page-----  
written by Pujyasri Sainathuni Sarat Babuji

### About Karma -continued



All hail to Sri Ganesha! Ganesha! Thou art beyond the trigunas! Thou art also the embodiment of the trigunas! Thou art filling all the corners of this world! Thou art also beyond the confines of this world! Thou art the embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss! Thou art the start of all activity! Thou art the creator of sound, and also the embodiment of sound! Oh able one! Thou art the one who talks and who makes us talk. Without thy kind grace if I try to say anything, I am struck dumb. Thou the embodiment of all auspiciousness! Thou art the creator of all auspiciousness! When I am in your lap what inauspicious can befall me? There is no need to even talk about the inauspicious.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar, devotee of Sri Sai Baba, came again to Shirdi, after a few days for the darshan of Baba. He prostrated in front of Baba and clasped his feet. He said, "Baba, please teach me what you promised to teach the last time I came here". Baba was pleased at Nana's eagerness to learn. He said "Pay careful heed to my words. The destruction of the entanglements caused by happiness and sorrow is liberation (mukti). Follow my

teachings to reach that state of liberation. When you are afflicted by prarabdha you should be ever vigilant to inquire in to its nature by the right thought. One should not relax this vigilance at any cost. What ever happens to us in our natural state occurs as a result of prarabdha. What happens to us as a result of karma (action) is not happening by prarabdha. For example, some people commit theft. They are caught and punished. This punishment is a result of karma but not of prarabdha. One dies upon consuming poison. It is a result of karma. The servant may cheat his master of money and may become rich. This too is a result of karma. As the servant becomes rich, he may buy houses, carriages and horses and think that he is happy. But the resultant karma of cheating his master will follow him relentlessly.

This is called the sanchita karma which he has to under go in the next life. Rebirth is inevitable when sanchita karma is prevailing. The wise understand this and model their behaviour to avoid it. The foolish do not know and do not bother about it." "By the prarabdha he got the situation of a servant in this life. That has now become the cause for another birth. If we question as to what he has achieved in this life, he has only laid the seed or foundation for another life. How can we escape from this relentless march of births and deaths? Some achieve high posts and use their power to dominate others. Some roam the world teaching spiritual truths. Some become yogis. Some become merchants and set up shops. Some become teachers and teach children in schools. Teacher, shopkeeper, yogi, spiritual teacher and official - all these are holders of posts and stations in life. Can you tell me how they have all got these different posts? All this is the result of prarabdha. They are not due to karma."

Chandorkar was puzzled. He said, "Baba, you say that the person committed theft and becomes a thief. You say that it is due to karma. You again say that the rest in the result of prarabdha. I am at a loss to understand your meaning. Could you please elucidate further the distinction between these?"

Baba, the kindness incarnate, heard the question of his beloved Nana. Now hear with all your attention to how Baba answered him. Do not waste time. Baba said, "Narayana! Rein in your mind from wandering and then question. Some commit theft and cleverly escape from justice. Some are adjudged guilty and imprisoned. Some escape altogether and roam about

as if they were gentlemen of means. You let me know what is the result of karma in all this? It is all the result of prarabdha. Both have committed theft. One is caught and jailed, the other escapes. The prarabdha is beyond karma. The thief who escaped imprisonment has not got away scot-free. His karma will make him take the next birth. That is why I say that one should be vigilant to follow the canons of dharma when one is undergoing the effects of prarabdha. This means that one should cultivate the company of the good and spend time with them. One should avoid even the shadow of the bad, the wicked and the atheists in the society. Do not eat forbidden foods. Do not give room to arguments and rivalry. Always stick to the truth. God will be happy with you. If you give your word to any one; back it up. God is distanced from those who give their word and fail to back it up."

"Narayana, when sensual desire is beguiling you, you should indulge in it only with your wife. Do not see beautiful women and feel passion from them even in your mind. Do not be too desirous of even your own wife. Do not be over sensual. Those who are slaves to the frailty of the sensual do not achieve salvation. This frailty of sensual desire is very strong. It does not let our mind stay in peace. Of the six enemies to us, this is the strongest. So one should yoke a restraint called discrimination and wisdom to it and keep it under control. We should not become a slave to it. Those who conduct themselves thus are the wise of this world.

When one is experiencing the result of the prarabdha one should use the six enemies to salvation in moderation only. One should forever keep chanting the holy name of the almighty. One should not let one's mind wander towards sinful activities. One should be eager for salvation and emancipation from this cycle of birth and death. One should repent of sin, recanting from such life, turn the mind towards the spiritual, and try to make the almighty his own. One should not give place so pride. One should listen to the stories of the holy persons and saints. One should respect and take care of the wise with a pure heart. One should give due respect and take good care of one's parents. One should respect one's mother with the respect due a thousand holy places of pilgrimage and respect one's father as a God. Such people are deserving of respect by all. One should love one's brothers and sisters and treat all with impartiality. One should love one's wife but should not be under her control. Take her advice, regarding the running of the household as far as it is practical. Do not show any differentiation between your son and daughter-in-law. Do not enter their presence when they are alone. Do not engage in horseplay or joking with the children. Limit those activities to your friends. Do not show a spirit of equality with your servants. Do not engage in giving or obtaining dowry.

Do not marry your daughter to an old man seeing his money or his status. The son-in-law should be well suited to your daughter. This is the dharma pertaining to men. Those who know this and conduct their life accordingly will not be entangled in the worldly" "The woman should be modest and humble. She should not display her body immodestly. She should not talk to visitors alone when her family members are not present. Even if the visitor is her own brother - she should not talk to him alone. The position of the woman in the house is a matter of great delicacy.

As the goat is a food for the fox, so is the woman a food for the sinful. As we fence and protect the goat from harm, so should we fence the woman with restrictions and be ever vigilant in her protection and care. So oh Nana! Be very careful in dealing with women." "The women should teach the children good qualities. She should teach them morals and the right conduct by telling them stories and looks after them. The only right training for the children is one which keeps them virtuous. The woman should not dislike her mother-in-law or father-in-law or the other relatives in her husband's home. She should have a loving disposition towards the other wives of her husband, should he have any. She should a model of rectitude and of right conduct".

"I have now told you about the right conduct for the men and women. By following this, men and women will escape entanglement"

"Now I will tell you about the characteristics of the **entangled person**. Listen to me with a concentrated mind. The one who does not know what is the right conduct and wrong conduct, one who does not revere God and one who does not have the right feelings in his heart may be considered to be entangled or bound. The one who commits sin, the one who

behaves deviously and commits sin talking harshly may also be considered as fettered. Those who are forever immersed in worldly activities without taking care of saints are also bound. Those who are rich but do not give to charity and indulge in frivolous and fallacious arguments are also bound. The one who spends other people's money and the one who does not take care of saints and good people are also bound."

"Some people seek to increase their fame by defaming others. They act as if they are good and virtuous people while conducting themselves sinfully. This worldly life is the sole object of their endeavour. This world is their God. Their concentration is always on this world. They are also the entangled. The one who hates his friends, has enmity towards his guru, and has no belief in the words of the guru is also bound. He who does not attain a purified mind even after reading many good books is also bound. The bound do not get the company of the virtuous or a good ending. They suffer from great sorrow and go to hell after death".

"Now I will tell you of the qualities of the sincere seeker of truth (**mumukshu**). Listen to me with diligent care. He who hates his state of entanglement, who is ever thinking to remove his bad qualities by right thought and is ever burning with eagerness and working hard for the darshan of the Almighty, is a mumukshu. He who is interested in the company of the virtuous or satsang and hates this world as being of no account is a mumukshu. He who lives the life granted to him by prarabdha with no discontent is a mumukshu. Know that such a person is a mumukshu who is ever fearful of committing sin and always speaks the truth. He who sincerely repents of his mistakes is a mumukshu even if he be fallen. He who believes in God, has a humble and respectful attitude towards sadhus and who respects the right conduct and puts it in to practice is a mumukshu."

"He who does not leave the company of the virtuous and pious even for a second and constantly repeats the holy name of God is a **sadhaka**. He who considers the worldly matters as poison and is ever eager to learn about spiritual is a sadhaka. He who is always meditating on the almighty and lives in solitude -know that his is the stage of sadhaka. He whose throat parches and words form indistinctly in happiness at hearing the name and attributes of the almighty is a sadhaka. He who forgets the worldly entirely and is ever involved in the service to the saints and keeps God constantly in his mind is a sadhaka."

"He who regards praise and blame as one; who regards individuals and God as one and has an equal disregard for fame or blame, is a **siddha** -a realized person. He who is influenced not a whit by the six enemies such as lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and envy is a siddha. He who has no place for desire or doubt and no differentiation between I and you - know that he is a siddha. He who knows that the body is impermanent and that he is verily Brahman, he who accepts as equal happiness as well as sorrow - know that he is a siddha."

"Think and analyze the above four states with care. The God is every where in this universe. There is no place, where God is not. But his divine maya or delusion confuses and confounds us. The maya suppresses our desire to know and realize God."

## Chapter 3

### Follow what you have studied



"I, you, God, truth, in the same way Maruti, Vittoba of Pandarpur, Mahalsapati, Kashinath, Adkar, Sathe, Haripant, Kaka, Thatya, Ganesh Bere, Venu, Balachandra- all are God's forms. That is why we should not hate anyone. God lives in all beings. Do not forget this. The feeling of universal love will spring in the heart on its own. Once that feeling prevails in the heart one can achieve every thing. Till such time one should try to keep his mind steady under control".

"As the fly revolves around the fire and goes away; so does the mind go everywhere but runs away on seeking Brahman. Unless we concentrate the

mind on Brahman we cannot escape the cycle of births and deaths. Narayana, we must first escape from all this. We can have no better opportunity to do this than this birth in human form. This birth as a human presents us with an invaluable chance. The worship of God with form (murti puja) has been started to help us concentrate the mind."

"One should worship the statue or representation of God with the firm feeling that God is residing in it. By doing worship of the murti with devotion and faith one achieves concentration of the mind. Without concentration, the mind does not get stilled. So one should do worship, study spiritual texts, remember what one has studied and meditation. One should try to follow what one has studied or one has heard from the saints. Spiritual learning is the foremost of all learning. As the five-headed Shiva is the foremost in knowledge, as the Meru mountain, is the foremost among the mountains, in the same way liberation (mukti) comes by itself to one who has realized his self. The almighty God will become his servitor. The steps leading to the realization of self are most difficult. However, this is the easiest way to achieve Moksha. Let me explain this in even more detail.

You, Maruti, Haripant, Bere, Kaka, Thatya and the others are all following this path. Surrender whole heartedly to God keeping in mind what I have told you and Nimonkar earlier. Visit and have the darshan of mahatmas frequently. One should follow the moral way of life punctiliously and do only those actions which brings merit. By such conduct your heart will be pure at the end of your time. Do not be deluded at your end by increasing your love or being infatuated by any person or object. Call upon God with a mind stilled in concentration. Meditate upon your Ista. By such meditation, you will achieve samipyta mukti at the end. Recently a lady called Bannu had left her body and achieved this state in Bodhegaon. In the same way Adkar and Venu will also achieve mukti". Baba concluded his discourse and kept his right hand on Chandorkar's head in benediction. Chandorkar was overcome with happiness. He prostrated and with his hands folded in reverence said, "Baba, Oh siddha of siddhas! Mountain of mercy! Thou art the father and mother and everything to me. Oh manifestation of the perfect eternal Brahman! Oh the receptacle of all auspiciousness in this world! Oh thou most munificent one! Oh thou who would enable us to cross this dangerous ocean of worldliness! Thou hast taught me the divine knowledge and hast taken me, an ignoramus, forward towards salvation! May your kind grace fall on us thus forever." Baba said firmly, "I will never let my devotee fall from grace. You need have no doubt about this. This is my promise. May the all merciful Allah-i-llahi bless you".

Dear listeners! The devotees prostrated at Baba's feet in devotion remembering Baba's infinite greatness in their minds. Their devotion is so great that we are not even equal to the dust of the dust of their feet. Baba is the mother and father of us orphans. He has incarnated

in this world with the mission of leading us forward towards salvation. Baba and his devotees met today in that Maharaj's royal court. Baba has cooked with his own hands the delicious dishes of devotion, knowledge and dispassion to serve to his devotees. Let us all partake freely of that meal. Eat to your heart's content taking what you will. Enough, for now. Let us repair to that great saint - Sri Sai Baba. Let us wait like dogs at his door sill for the crumbs of knowledge from his table. We would achieve salvation if we can get even a single crumb from him. Our life would not have been spent in vain. Come, we may not get such a chance again. The merit of a thousand yajnas is obtainable here.

May all those who reverently read this chapter; or those who listen to it with concentration even once; achieve salvation. The history of that great saint Sri Sai Baba given in the three chapters of 'Bhakta leelamrit' is like the three holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. Come, gain the merit of bathing in the holy confluence of the three rivers by immersing yourself in the holy teaching of Baba given in these three chapters. May all weal be to you.

*This is the end of 33rd chapter of 'Bhakta Leelamrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj.*



## Chapter 4

### Introduction



My obeisance to Sri Ganesh! Most auspicious amongst the auspicious! Oh thou long bellied one! Oh thou embodiment of knowledge! Thou art foremost among gods! Oh gracious one! Hold my hand in yours and destroying all impediments and obstacles on the way, make me write this book. This 'Sant Kathamrit' is like the mango tree in the first flush of spring. The writings in this book are like the tender shoots of mango. The teachings contained herein are the delicious mango's which adorn the branches. Come eat them to your hearts content. If this book be the sacred lake Manas at the feet of Kailas, the abode of that five headed Shiva; the contents are the pure water of that lake. The sacred lotus born in those pure waters is this 'Sant Kathamrit'. Sri Sai Baba's teachings flow from that lotus like the pure and delicious nectar. Come have your fill of the nectar.

In the 31st, 32nd and 33rd chapters of the 'Bhakta Leelamrit' I have told you about Sri Sai Baba. He is the kalpavriksha which grants all that his devotees seek.

He is most munificent. He is a vast ocean of mercy. He is ever is vigilant in the care of his devotees and is a mountain of knowledge. He is the ark who conveys his devotees safely across the dangerous sea of worldliness. Once, a few devotees came for the darshan of that most able Sadguru. It was the month of Pushya. They came on the day when the star Dhanush was in the transition phase. You may have a doubt as to why they had come on such a day. You know that it is the hoary tradition in the month of Dhanush to offer food to sun at dawn and then to eat it. In the same way, to prevent the cold of sorrow, the devotees have worn a warm inner cloth of devotion and came for the darshan of their Sadguru. Shirdi is the abode of that sun of knowledge. The sun who rose there is Sri Sai Baba. That is why the devotees had assembled there. Baba's kind grace is the rosy dawn which promises a glorious day.

They had bathed in the Ganges of faith and diligent devotion to purify themselves before coming to the august presence of that jewel amongst Sadguru's. The most able Baba had prepared a meal of right knowledge and had already placed the eating plates for his devotees. That is the month of Dhanush I was talking of. Many devotees had come to Baba at this holy time to partake fully of that meal of wisdom which he had so lovingly prepared for them.

#### **How to realise God - to Nana Chandorkar**

Narayana Chandorkar, the son of Govinda was a pious man. He had taken birth in the family of Chandorkars. He was blessed by the grace of Sri Sai Baba and like Hari pant was meticulous in performing his religious duties. He conducted himself morally, following his dharma. Bere, Lakshman, Maruti and other devotees were also present there. How can I describe that magnificent scene? All were seated in the Masjid looking at Baba to their hearts content, as a child lovingly gazes at his mother when they meet, after she had been gone for a long time. They were deeply immersed in happiness and lost all count of time.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar then joined his hands in supplication and said, "Baba, you are not giving us a reply no matter how many times we ask you. Why are you annoyed with us? You are verily the almighty. If you are angry with us where else can we find shelter in this universe?"

Baba smiled, "I am never angry with anyone. You are all my children. On whom should I show my anger? I never feel anger against any one. I am as you are in front of the almighty Venkusa. Why indeed should anyone be annoyed and show anger towards any one else?"

Baba continued, "Keep remembering what I have told you before and pay careful heed to what I am going to reveal to you now. Nana, if you have embedded what I have told you earlier carefully in your heart, you would have understood the greatness of the four-fold sadhana. The person who is diligent in the practice of the four-fold sadhana will realize the Brahman easily. Sadhana is the efforts one makes towards one's salvation and towards achieving the ever pure knowledge of self. Sadhana is of four kinds.

The **first** is the wise discrimination of the permanent and the impermanent nature of things.

The **second** is dispassion.

The **third** is the six practices of Shama- mental restraint.

1. Dama- the control of the body and the senses.
2. Titiksha- forbearance, bearing all with equality.
3. Uparati- withdrawal or abstaining from the sense objects.
4. Shraddha- faith in one's guru and Vedanta.
5. Samadhana - concentration of the mind on scriptural or other elevating truths.

The **fourth** is mumukshu, the quality of the active quest for knowledge. This is a complicated thing to learn, so listen to me carefully."

"Let me tell you first about the discriminate wisdom of permanence and impermanence. The firming up of the belief that Brahman is the permanent truth and the world is an impermanent lie, until it is a rocklike like foundation of all thought is the discriminate wisdom of permanence and impermanence. Many try to talk about this discrimination and the knowledge of permanence and impermanence and make an exhibition of their foolish ignorance. Many go in groups to Pandharpur begging for alms on the way. Not one of these has come to know the Brahman.

Who is Brahman? What does he look like? Where does he stay? Who knows these things?"

"Those who go in groups to Pandharpur merely to boast to the others that they too had performed the pilgrimage are not the true devotees. Some read many books on spirituality. They give instruction to the others about morals and the right conduct, but they themselves are not pure. As long as one's heart is impure, what is the use of books or of teaching? They are like the frogs in the lake of knowledge, who instead of drinking deeply of the nectar of knowledge flowing from the lotus which is Brahman; eat instead greedily the mud of barren arguments lying on the bed of the lake."

"Those who speak criticizing others will stay on in the mud. They will not gain wisdom. Those who indulge in barren arguments and those who always criticize others will not gain the knowledge of the Brahman. He who has no desires for either the worldly or the spiritual is the man of true dispassion. Nana! Know this to be the truth."

"Nana! Shama, dama, titiksha, uparati, sraddha and samadhana are the six sadhanas. Shama is to possess mental restraint towards sensory objects. Dama is to forcibly restrain the body and the senses from seeking sensory enjoyment. Titiksha is forbearance. It is to bear with equanimity all that is happening one as a result of prarabhda karma. Uparati is the withdrawal of the senses so that one does not fall into the maya of considering woman, gold, children, relatives and friends as true. Sraddha is the faith and devotion to one's guru. Now I will tell about the last Samadhana. Listen to me carefully."

"To look at happiness or misery with an equal eye with the heart bearing steady is samadhana. The one who has the strong desire for moksha in his heart, and disregarding everything else; searches sincerely for the path to achieve the knowledge of the Brahman is a mumukshu. I have described the qualities of a mumukshu earlier. Moksha is not Kailash, the abode of Shiva or Vaikuntha, the abode of Vishnu. Moksha is a very difficult thing to achieve. The path to moksha has many obstacles and pitfalls. Nana! Pay close attention. To conjoin with the pure consciousness which is the basis and the foundation of this universe is moksha. To reach that everlasting stage is the object of human endeavour (purushartha). All else is a waste."



"Nana heard the able one with joy. He joined his hands in supplication and asked, "Baba, what is pure consciousness? What are its characteristics? Where does one find it?"

"Baba replied patiently, "What is the basis for this universe; what is existing in all living and non living creation and is still left over; what is the life force which is the foundation of the universe is the pure consciousness. In what the universe again merges at the end of it, all is pure consciousness. What is visible to our eye in the entire universe is that Brahman. The pure consciousness shines without interruption in all in the form of, "I am ", "I am". This is a constant experience of all living beings. You asked me where the pure consciousness is. You tell me where it is not. You may search everywhere in this universe and out side it; you will never find a place where it is not. Everything is pure consciousness. It has no name and no form. As the air is beyond shape or form or colour or other attributes so is pure consciousness. That is pure consciousness or Brahman. Never forget this truth. The saints who have realized themselves are always in the direct experience of the Brahman. The various animal life, plant life and humanity are all its forms. The seer, the seen, the look, the knowledge, the energy - pure consciousness is the basis or the foundation for all this. It is omnipresent. It is pure bliss. It is the true knowledge. The form of that pure consciousness is Brahman."

"Nana was still not clear in his mind. He joined his hands in supplication and said, "Baba, Oh complete and able Sadguru! You say that the Brahman is everywhere; you say it is pure bliss and it is one. If it is one, how is that visible to us in so many forms in this universe? You say that the pure consciousness is filling everything in the animate and inanimate world. And you say that its form is pure bliss. Why then is there so much misery in this world? I am not able to understand this. How can one born blind in both eyes appreciate beauty? In the same way, how can pure consciousness which is the truth abide in this world which is an illusion? If you say that the soul is the pure consciousness, how are there so many souls when the consciousness is one? Each soul has its own experience of pleasure and pain; happiness and misery. How can you say that a single pure consciousness abides in all and everywhere? The soul abiding in each body is different from the others. How can you say that the pure consciousness is the soul? I believe that they are different. Please clear my doubt."

"Baba patiently replied, "Oh Nana, you are making a mistake here. Still your mind in concentration and peacefully listen do what I say. Take some pots of water and mix white, black, yellow, green, red, pink, green and magenta colours in the water. They all look different from each other. But the water is the same in all pots. The water seems red in the red pot and yellow in the yellow pot. If the mixed colours are removed somehow from the water, the same water remains. In the same way, the soul is one. The hearts are many. It is only when the soul and the heart are joined in one place that the happiness or sadness is experienced. Know this well, Nana."

"The Atman has no difference or division. It is the same everywhere. This is the truth. Happiness or sadness is the dharma relating to the heart. The heart gets the consciousness only when it is conjoined with the soul. Let me explain this in more detail so that you can understand it easily. This consciousness shines in the beings in the form of paramardhaka, vyavaharika and pratibhasika depending on the progression and spiritual maturity of the beings. Oh Narayana, even though the body is one it has the various forms of youth, maturity and old age. It is the same case with the consciousness."

"The paramardhaka consciousness may be seen only in the saints. Those who model their conduct as enjoined by the sastras and know what is to be retained and what discarded and progress towards salvation are the vyavaharikas. Those who believe the untruth to be the truth and whose intellect is steeped in ignorance are the pratibhasika. You should know that the pratibhasika are the ignorant, the vyavaharika are the wise and the paramardhaka are saints. Even so, the same Atman shines in all. The king, his officer, and his emissary are all part of the same kingdom. The basis and the foundation of their power is the constitution of that country. Even then, there are differences amongst them. One rides in state on the elephant and sits on the throne. He moves about as he fancies. All the people follow the constitution. It is the duty of every one to follow it without demur. The king, his officialdom,

the servants, and the people are all different but they all follow the same constitution. The king may die but the constitution lives on. The successor to the king obtains his power from that. That constitution is not a thing to be purchased or sold commercially but all weal is available because of it. By which constitution the king sits on throne, by the same constitution the servants serve him and look after his every comfort. The king gets the greatest benefit from it; his officialdom gets lesser benefit, his servants even less benefit and the common people the least benefit. In the same manner he who has realized and experienced that his soul and the Brahman are one; gets the Brahman in its full form." Nana heard what Baba said. He was still perplexed. He asked, "Baba how does the constitution which is one for all change to so many forms to benefit people in different ways? By such division does not its unity get disturbed?" Well asked Nana," said Baba, "The constitution is a unified whole. It is indivisible.

But it looks as if it is divided and applied differently to different individuals. The same applies to pure consciousness too. Pure consciousness is not divisible but the individual obtains only what he grasps. Let us take the example of pots of various sizes filled with water. The same sky one sees in the mighty river is seen in the pots too. The pot may be big or small; the sky reflected in the water contained in the pots or the river is the same. In the river one sees the biggest reflection of the sky. The sky in each pot seems smaller or larger depending on the size of the pot. Has the sky been divided? In the same way is the case with pure consciousness. This world is an illusion (*maya*). Brahman and maya have joined together to create this world."

Nana then asked, "How has this maya originated? Who originated it? When did it arrive and from where? You said that pure consciousness is the basis and foundation of this world. You also said that the entire universe is nothing but pure consciousness. Whence sprang this maya?"

Baba, that kindness incarnate patiently replied to Nana. "I will let you know whence this maya came. Listen to me with concentrated attention, Oh son of Govinda. The energy contained in pure consciousness is maya. Maya encloses pure consciousness. As how one cannot separate sugar and its sweetness, as one cannot separate the sun and its light; in the same way are the maya and the Brahman. The sun and the sunlight are two different words. But it is only by a conjoining of the both that the form of the sun visible to us. We distinguish and identify the sun by its form, the heat and the light it radiates. In the same way is maya and Brahman. But there is an end to maya and there is no end to pure consciousness. Pure consciousness has no beginning too. It just is. It is by maya or prakriti or nature that this whole world has formed. The detailed explanation of purusha (Brahman) and prakriti (maya) may be seen in the book 'Amritanubhava' written by Jnanadev in the Mohiniraj temple at Niwasa village. Let me tell you its secrets in brief."

"Those who enter the cave of Self realisation do not revert to ignorance. They take the form of that cave and dance in the joy of infinite bliss. The reason for all this is eternal Brahman. Maya is his creation. Oh Narayana, the power of this maya is as the limitless ocean of unplumbed depths. The feeling, 'I am such and such' is formed by maya. This is an untruth. Once maya casts its net of deception on us, we cannot know and recognise either the truth or untruth. Maya has two principal qualities. Know you what they are! What is visible and true is hidden by maya. What is not visible and is untrue is shown by maya.

All people are mesmerised by maya and are victims of illusion. A servant gets a dream that he has become a king. By this dream maya has shut out his true state of servant hood. In addition even if he was not the king, he fell in to the illusion of believing himself to be the king by the power of maya in the dream. In this manner, maya hides the true Brahman and shows the world which is illusory. In truth, this world is not. It is only the universal consciousness which fills all. But due to maya we are able to see only this world. All things visible to us in this world are mere illusion but we are deluded in to thinking that they are true by the power of maya. If we succeed in removing the covering of maya by discriminate knowledge, we will be able to see and realise the Brahman. You will then realise that you are the world. When the pollutants are removed from the water one gets pure water. In the same, way when the maya is removed pure consciousness is visible. Oh Narayana, you think of, pray for and

seek the truth. Atman is the truth. I tell this to all. To recognise, realise the atman and to be immersed in it is the sole objective of all spiritual endeavour."

All those who heard these words of true wisdom from the holy lips of that repository of all knowledge, Sri Sai Baba; prostrated at his feet in gratitude. Vaidya, Sathe, Chandorkar, Nimonkar, Bere, Nana, Maruti, Lakshman, Nulkar and other devotees were present there. Baba looked at all of them with love shining from his eyes. He said, "Keep this instruction safe in your heart. Let it be ever alive to lead you on the right path." They all assented eagerly and clasped his feet again and again in gratitude. When the sun of knowledge rises, can the darkness of ignorance remain? Oh my master, Sri Sai Baba, please put me in your lap. Please give a small place for this child of yours in the shade of the great tree of your grace.

*This 'Sant Kathamrit' is the rain of true knowledge which has rained down on all of us from that great cloud - Sri Sai Baba. All this is dedicated to his service.*



## Chapter 5

Hail Sri Ganesha! Oh Keshava! Oh Panduranga! Thou art without beginning and end! Thou art the creator! Thou art the embodiment of complete perfection! Even the Vedas are unable to describe you and are exclaiming helplessly 'not this', 'not this'. How can I do it? Oh kindness personified! As the common fire fly before the bedazzling sun, as the small rivulet before the mighty ocean, am I in front of you. Oh ocean of mercy. Thou art the Kalpataru which grants whatever is asked by the devotee! Thou art residing in the hearts of all! Thou art the embodiment of everlasting bliss! Thou art the expert in the sixty four arts! Thou assume the human form to secure the weal of your devotees. Thou greatest of beings, thou the succour of orphans, I have heard of your divine power and have come running to your door for succour. Oh Madhava! If you turn me away it will be a blot on your blemish-less fame. So, place your hand quickly on my head and bless me. My Vittala, who is as a mother to me! Oh the lord of Pandharpur! Who else but you, the master of all siddhi's is there to heed me and protect me?

### The life of Venkusa

"In the state of Maharashtra, in a small village called Jambavavi, lived a householder named Kesavarao. He was of the Srivatsa gotra; Aswalayana sutra. He was diligent in the performance of his religious duties and had the Vaishnava signs tattooed on to his body as a mark of his undying adherence to the faith. His only desire was for a child to bless his household. He used to constantly pray to Lord Venkateswara for his grace in granting him progeny. He performed many yajnas and religious austerities to get a child. While so, once he had a dream.

The one who is dark as the rain bearing cloud; the one with his eyes shaped like lotus leaves; the one who is tall and who has the mark of Srivatsa decorating his broad chest; the one with the a smiling face; the one wearing the auspicious yellow silk cloth; the one who has the auspicious red mark of saffron on his forehead; that supreme being with the conch shaped neck; the one shining in the shimmering glare of the jewels such as the famous Vyjayanti etc; the one who is armed with the mace, discus and conch in his hands; the one whose right hand always open and raised in benediction to show that it is his mission to grant boons to his devotees - that God of Gods - Sri Mahavishnu blessed Kesavarao in his dream with his darshan. He said, "Child, do not despair that you have no son. Ramananda who had gained fame in Kasi in the past as a repository of wisdom will be born to you as a son with the mission of saving the world." He thus gave the boon of progeny to Kesavarao. But Kesavarao was not fully satisfied. He said, "My lord, what is the use of having a child who will soon become a sanyasi? How is my family going to thrive? Your boon seems to be as useless as a tree without fruit, a pond without water, a night without the moon or musk without its perfume. To that the almighty replied, "Do not worry; your son will be a householder. That is his mission for this birth. As was Eknath in Paithan, as was Damaji in Dhana, so will your son be a very rich man." He gave a coconut as his prasada to Kesavarao and vanished.

"Kesavarao awoke in the morning. He called his wife and said, "My wife, the Lord Venkateswara has at last taken pity on us. He has blessed me with his darshan in a dream last night and gave me this coconut as his prasada. Eat this with reverence. The infamy you had gained as a barren woman will be removed soon. You will soon give birth so a beautiful boy who will be a great devotee of God." The husband and wife devotedly ate the coconut mentally repeating the holy name of the lord Venkateswara.

"Kesavarao's wife was soon with child. The supreme amongst sadhus, Ramananda had entered her womb. As she neared her seventh month, she used to say to her husband, "Let us go to the king and ask him for some wherewithal for our sustenance. We must do annadanam at our house. Let us give to charity and proffer the accumulated merit to God. We must bear all these expenses." After nine months were completed, Ramananda was born in Jambuvavi village. He was named as Gopala. The lord Panduranga had already made arrangements for the upkeep of that boy. In due course of time Gopala married and became

immersed in the dharma of a grihastha, looking after the guests and the destitute. He would always be thinking as to how he could be of more use to the others of the world. Once he went to a village called Selawadi. He could not find a decent enough place to stay there. There were only a few dilapidated huts there. The villagers approached him and said, "Maharaj, we have no way of knowing whether you are a rich man or a prince. But there is no place to stay in this village for folks such as you. A person with your stature requires mansions, carriages, horses, servants, carts and many more. None of them is available here. Bhagavan Sri Krishna resided happily in a cow shed. He thus changed the fortunes of Gokula. In the same way we request you to reside here and change the fortunes of this wretched village. You are aptly named after Sri Krishna as Gopalrao.

Your stature and the lustre in your face tell us that you must be either a prince or his representative. You are our only hope. Your stepping into this small wretched village bespeaks of a change in our fortunes. From now on you and only you are our master." Gopalrao liked their speech and sincerity. He decided to build either a fort or a stronghold there. As he wanted to reside there, he got people of eighteen trades such as Brahmins, carpenters, blacksmiths, potters and cloth weavers etc and provided them with sufficient land for their houses and grants. Who else but a rich lord can do all this? As the parijata, the foremost among the flowers, makes us happy with the pleasure of its perfume, so does the king protect and cherish his people. Gopalrao then changed the name of Selawadi to Selu (or Sailu) and by the might of his shoulders made it a principality (Desmukh Jagir) of the Zintur State. He became its jagirdar (administrator whose responsibility is to collect the revenue on behalf of the king and provide law, order and protection to the people) and was henceforth known as Gopalrao Desmukh.

### **Gopalrao guards his purity**

Those days, the jagirdars were rapacious men of no morals. They were despotic bandits. They usually had many wives and concubines and using money for their many pleasures used to live with no regard for God. Their houses were more like shops with only the talk of money day in and day out. Even when sunk in the morass of debt, they were blind with pride and sin and used to behave as they willed. Gopalrao was unlike these people. He was the personification of all the good qualities and humility was his only ornament. He used to have a kindly disposition towards all and would look upon all with an equal eye.

Once, an event of great importance occurred in his life at Selu. I will tell you what it is. One day, Gopalrao was walking about the turrets of his fort. A woman of the farmer class, aged about 25, came on some work and sat a little distance away from him. It is not necessary for me to describe the beauties of her body to you. It was evening. Dusk was falling. The cattle were returning from the forest to their biers after having had their fill of grass. Gopalrao, who was seated in the turret of the fort, started drinking in the beauty of the woman with his eyes. As Shiva was once infatuated with a Bhil (tribal) woman so was Gopalrao infatuated by the beauties of the woman displayed in the soft lights of the dusk. Immediately he realized his mistake in looking at someone else's woman with his eyes filled with desire. "Oh cupid! How cruel is your shaft! Who knows when you will take us unaware?" cried he in anguish. He rushed to the room where he did his daily worship.

He sat before his God, the lord Venkateswara and taking two needles in his hand pierced his eyes with them, destroying his sight. "Oh manifested form of the universe! Oh invincible one! Oh Brahman! Oh Raghava Rama! Oh, succour of devotees! Oh Venkatesa! Oh, the one as dark coloured as the rain bearing cloud! How sinful are these eyes of mine! Oh, Consort of Kamala! I am falling in to sin and maya by the deceit of these eyes. Oh Deva! Could one steeped in sin ever realize you? I had no alternative but to destroy these eyes which were leading me astray. Oh my mother! Oh Vittala! You are the directing force of all my organs from now on. Oh, consort of Rukmini! You are the lord of my mind. We are all puppets in your hand. Oh embodiment of mercy! My sensory organs, intellect and mind are always in your service. How can he, who is enmeshed in this impermanent, evanescent worldly life ever, reach you- who is the embodiment of the truth? This great boon of human birth has been granted to us to realize you, not to sink in the morass of sensual enjoyment. You, who have given us this life granting us a chance to reach you, have shown great kindness towards us

all. But, I have wasted this opportunity given by you. Oh Panduranga! Will I never get a human birth again?" He started weeping piteously at his fall from grace.

The news that Gopalrao had blinded himself spread throughout the village. All the villagers rushed to see him. Some said, "Maharaj, why have you done such a deed? Why have you pierced your eyes? This world has now become a very dark place to you now. The world and its sights and beauties which we enjoy so much have become non-existent for you." They started weeping seeing his condition. His wife and son came to know of the blinding and came running beating their breasts in anguish.

They cried, "What is this tragedy? Why did you get the volition to do this awful thing to yourself?" Gopalrao replied, "Look at the way the people conduct themselves. They are leaving aside the truth and accepting the lie. These dastardly deceitful eyes of mine were trying to destroy me. That is why I have punished them thus." Some said, "This desmukh has gone mad. Is it dispassion to pierce one's eyes?" In this manner, each expressed his own opinion.

While this was so, God in his infinite kindness granted enough sight to Gopalrao that he could read the spiritual texts and the mantras when he sat for his daily puja. God also granted him the strength to read these books day and night. He became famous as a saint and his fame spread far and wide. People started coming from far off places for his darshan. As Pandharpur, as Paithan, Selu too became famous because of Gopalrao.

One day a woman came for his darshan to Selu. She prostrated in front of him and clasping her hands prayed, "Oh able one! I am blind since birth. There is none who protects me. I will deem it a great boon if you can grant me the sight even in one eye. Even if this world is present for the fortunate - to me it is as if it is absent; because I do not have even one eye to see this beautiful earth. They say that of all the organs the eye is the foremost. But that unkind almighty has seen fit to leave me sightless. All the sastras say that the mahatmas are greater than the almighty. That is why I have come to you for succour. Please take pity on me Oh saint. Present me with the boon of sight. I will not leave your feet till you grant me what I seek." The Maharaj heard her patiently. He said, "I will give you the boon of sight if you will tell me what you will do when you get your sight back."

That woman joined her palms in respect and said, "I will be able to lead a better family life. My husband is neglecting me now as I am blind." The Maharaj laughed with wonder, "How interested are the men and women in the life of a householder." He obtained some chilli powder from a servant who was grinding chillies in the courtyard and applied the chilli powder with his own hands to the eyes of the blind woman. She could see immediately! Wonder of wonders! How can one see if the eyes are rubbed with chilli powder? How powerful are these mahatmas? It is certain that the mahatmas are the very forms of God in this age of Kali. In this way, Gopalrao used to cure many diseases. I cannot describe them all. The eight siddhis were Gopalrao's servants. However, he never cared for them and would always be meditating on that Murari who was existence- knowledge- bliss incarnate and who was always in the heart of Gopalrao. As Janaka the father of Sita resided at Videha so did Gopalrao reside at Selu.

### **Pilgrimage and announcement of Baba's coming**

Once the Maharaj started with his family on a pilgrimage to Kasi. The vast entourage of the palanquin carriers, cooks, servants, family friends and the vast number of relatives, friends who were his dependents, pundits and priests also accompanied him on the pilgrimage. En-route they had to stay at a village for the night. The villagers provided them with a house, which had all the facilities for comfortable stay. But it happened to be a haunted den of the devil. All had finished their evening meal and slept. It was approaching midnight. The sky was moonless and dark. At that time, suddenly a grotesque shape came and stood in front of the Maharaj. It had vermilion smeared on its forehead and had long fangs. It had uncombed hair falling in a disorderly manner to its waist. It was pitch black in colour and it was making obscene gestures with its hands and shouting and jumping about. The Maharaj was seated in silence on a wooden plank and was immersed in contemplation of the almighty. The devil could not summon up the courage to approach him. From afar, it shouted at the Maharaj, "Why had you come to my house?" The Maharaj replied, "Where indeed is your house. It is

your ego and the feeling of mine which has brought you to this dismal state. This house has been constructed with wood, mud and stone. Please let me know what have you created among these? Why are you claiming something which is not yours and in which you have nothing to be attached to?" The devil was annoyed by the words of the Maharaj. It took a burning brand in its hands and started raving and ranting. The Maharaj took some holy water, in which the god's images have been bathed, in his palm and threw the water on to the devil.

The devil immediately regained the memory of its past and clasping the Maharaj's feet begged him, "Maharaj, please release me from this state. I was a rich moneylender in the past. In the pride of my wealth, I never used to care for anyone.

I was a miser and did not give even a paisa to charity. I had my wife aborted and I drove her away from the house fearing that it would be an additional expenditure to care for the children if she bears them. I was such a miser I drove my wife many times to her parents house fearing the expense of feeding and clothing her. I had a younger brother. I did all sorts of harm to him. I did not even want to spend for the ceremony of my father's death anniversary and made a big scene about it. In this way I earned a lot of money, hid it all in a pot, and died a miserable death craving for more and more money even in my last hours of life. I had entangled myself in that whirlpool of thirst for wealth and became a devil like this. Please save me from this miserable ending." The devil showed Maharaj the money it had hidden and requested him to use that vast wealth for charity and in doing good works. It said, "Maharaj please save me or it will be a black mark against your own fame. If one bathes in the vast ocean and body is still dry how insulting is it to the ocean? If the fragrance of musk does not spread to the dust too on one's body will it not besmirch its fame as a perfume?" The Maharaj took pity on the devil. He consoled the devil and promised to spend the vast hoard on charity and thereby grant it relief from its wretched existence. He got all that buried treasure put in carts and readied for the journey the next morning.

The villagers all came the next day and were surprised to find the Maharaj and his entourage still alive. They said, "Any one who stayed in this house had travelled straight to Hades the very night." "How has the Maharaj managed to stay alive," they wondered. They concluded that he was not an ordinary man but a great saint who had realized his Self and fell at his feet. Maharaj recounted to them the story of the devil and the villagers were happy that they were going to be rid of the devil very soon.

The Maharaj used all the money for charity at Kasi and released the devil from its wretched existence. The Maharaj visited Kasi, Prayag and later went to Ayodhya located on the banks of the Sarayu River. From there he went to Kurukshetra, Brindavan, Gokulam, Mathura, Dwaraka, Somnath, and Paithan and went to Junagarh to have darshan of Mehta. Later he went to Ahmedabad and had the darshan of Surag Shah's dargah. The history of Surag Shah has been written by Mahipathi in 'Bhakta Leelamrit' in chapter 43. I will relate to you the divine leela which occurred when the Maharaj visited Surag Shah's dargah.

As the Maharaj neared the dargah, the dargah started sweating, and then proceeded to speak. It said, "Salaam alaikum. You were Ramananda Maharshi in your past life. Oh ocean of kindness you have not forgotten me. I have been able to recognize you even though you are the desmukh of Selu village in the Nizam kingdom. About 10 miles from Selu village is the village Manawat. Your disciple Kabir has taken birth there as the son of a fakir. This is the truth. The Selu village is blessed by your residing there." The keepers of the dargah were surprised as to from where the words were coming. They realised later that it was a conversation between two mahatmas. The Maharaj started from there and visited Dakur pattan and Sidhapura and later reached Selu.

By the time he reached home, the Maharaj's son Lakshmanrao was dead. Gopalrao's wife and daughter-in-law were weeping as if their hearts would break. Gopalrao was unmoved. He told in his daughter-in-law, "My girl, a bubble has burst. It is futile to cry about it in this manner. We paint the walls of the house and over time, the paint fades. Do the wise cry because the paint has faded? Can any one assuage his thirst from a mirage? This world is a mirage. Sheer delusion is this world. What you see all around you is purely temporary. This is all a magic show. In truth, who is born and who dies? All the relationships that we have, all these entanglements are the illusions in the city of magic located in the world of our dreams. As a lake dries up, the reflection of the sun in it vanishes. Does it prove that the sun is non-



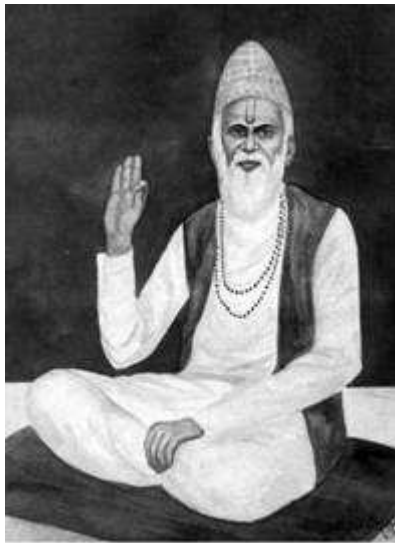
existent? This too is the same. Cease this futile sorrow and tears. Look after your son Khanderao. There is no use of further tears." His daughter-in-law was comforted by these words of wisdom. The last rites of Lakshamanrao were performed.

That Maharaj was the abode of all good qualities such as shama, dama, the restraint of mind and organs and uparati. As his fame spread far and wide, many people came for his darshan. Some of them had long standing stubborn diseases cured by his darshan. Some got wealth and some were put on right moral path by the Maharaj.

### **Baba coming to Venkusa**

Once, a fakir's wife came from the Manawat village for a darshan of the Maharaj. Now listen to that tale with patience. She was old and was dressed in a bedraggled old dress which was darned and repaired many times. She would have been over fifty. She had a cloth bag slung over one shoulder for alms as the fakirs do, and wore green bangles. On her back she was carrying a five year old boy. He was Kabir in his past life. He was eagerly eating a piece of roti. For the poor the roti gives more happiness than sweetmeats. The Maharaj was sitting in his royal court at that time.

The soldiers who were the sentries did not allow the old woman to enter the august presence of the Maharaj. It is the nature of the soldiers to be harsh. These were the soldiers of the great Maharaj who was a *desmukh*. So they used to behave like the monkeys on a tree which harass all passers by to no purpose other than their own amusement. The old lady put the boy down and prostrated to the Maharaj from the door itself. She joined her hands in sincere supplication and said, "Maharaj, it is five weeks since my husband died. I am a widow now. You are my only succour." Before dying my husband said, "Go to Selu. There lives the Maharaj who is the succour to all those who have none to look after them. He will look after you till the end of your days."



*Kabir*

The Maharaj heard her with happiness. He said, "Kabir's mother has brought Kabir to me." He stood up from his seat and hurried to her side. He held her with both his hands and consoled her as if she was his own mother. He said, "Mother, I have been looking forward eagerly for your arrival. You and your child can stay happily in my house." On seeing the Maharaj the child started speaking in words, which were at once childish and mature, "Why should my mother bear the responsibility for me now? Since I have come here, she has neither the responsibility nor the authority of a mother over me. I am no longer hers. I am yours in all respects." The fakir's wife was given a room in the house. The Maharaj started showing great love and affection for the boy. As a result of this, the entire household started becoming hostile to the boy. They developed jealousy and envy that the boy had become such a favourite of the Maharaj in such a short time. By the time the boy was twelve his mother had died.

### **The jealousy of the others**

One day in the evening, the Maharaj took the boy to the nearby forest and stayed on there for four months. This caused great perturbation in the minds of Maharaj's relatives and intimates. They started rumours that the fakir's wife knew black magic and was an expert in the black arts. They said that she had applied some mantra on the Maharaj, which made him develop unwarranted love and affection for the boy. That is why the Maharaj is showing such great infatuation for the boy and not leaving in him alone for even a second. They said, "The Maharaj is a brahmin. He is of the aswalayana gotra and is a holy Vaishnava; this boy is a mere Muslim low caste. One is the holy Godavari; the other a mud hole. The Maharaj is as the famous parijata tree, whose fame has spread its fragrance far and wide; the boy is a thorn bush. The Maharaj has realized his Self and is verily the consort of Rama- Vishnu himself; the boy is a devil. One is the seat of knowledge which shines forth leading the people to illumination while the other is a heap of fetid manure. Why has the Maharaj developed so much love for this undeserving boy? In addition to this is the propaganda that

this wastrel was Kabir in his last incarnation! This is intolerable. Let us kill that boy in the forest and be done with him. The Maharaj will have no alternative but to forget him and come back to us. It is because of this worthless wretch that the Maharaj is becoming the subject of malicious gossip." They secretly got together and went into the forest one night. The Maharaj and the boy were sleeping. The Maharaj was sleeping in front while the boy was sleeping behind. They wanted to kill the boy so one of the party took a brick and taking aim at the head of the boy hurled it with great force. The brick however struck the Maharaj. His head was wounded and his face was full of blood. The Maharaj felt great pain. The Maharaj sat up and applying lime to the wound tied a bandage to it.

The person who threw the brick was dead the same instant. Those who seek to harm the mahatmas are harmed themselves. The boy wept in fear on seeing the bloodied head of the Maharaj. He cried, "Maharaj, you are very devoted and pious. You have great merit. Despite all the merit that you have, you have been subjected to this pain because of me. Please send me away at least now. In the past Samarth Ramadas Swami of Sajjan garh has sent away one of his disciples from Kalyan to Domaga as the others developed enmity towards him. Send me away to some far off place in the same way." The Maharaj said, "I will be on this earth only for a few hours now. I will not go to Selu until I give you all that I have. Only then will these fools realize your powers and ability. Do now as I say. In that village located nigh, a lambadi (tribal) man has a cow of tawny colour. Tell him I want some milk from that cow. Milk that cow and bring the milk to me. I will become well again if I drink that milk. Do not tarry any longer. Go soon and bring the milk." The boy immediately went to the lambadi owner of the cow and telling him of Maharaj's order requested him to let him milk the cow. The lambadi's name was Ahulla. He said, "This cow is barren. It does not yield milk. I am using it as a draught animal in my farm work in the place of oxen." He immediately took that cow to the Maharaj and said, "Swami! Oh able one! This cow does not give milk. There is no purpose in pressing its udders. This cow has been with me for fifteen years and has never given even a drop of milk until now. I have brought her here just to show you the truth in what I say."

The Maharaj who was a mountain of merit heard the lambadi patiently. He said, "You are a fool. You do not know about this cow's udders. This cow has kept her udders secret from you for these many years. Give me that vessel. I will myself milk this cow." That mahatma put his hand on the back of the cow. The moment the mahatma's hand touched her back, the milk started spouting thickly from the udders of the cow. The cow, which did not give any milk for 15 years, gave three litres of milk! That milk was rich, thick and sweet. The Maharaj held the hand of the fakir boy and said, "Drink this milk. Do not stay any where in these parts. Go west wards along the southern shores of Godavari, far away from this area."

He removed the bandage around his head and wrapped it around the head of the boy. He said, "This piece of cloth which I have given you is your entire fortune. The three litres of milk which I have given you are Karma, Bhakti (devotion) and Jnana (discriminate knowledge). I have written holy mantras in that milk. Drink the three litres of milk. You will get true wisdom." The fakir boy knelt at the feet of the Maharaj and drank the milk. As he finished drinking the milk, he saw the entire world filled with Brahman. This is the grace of Guru. The Maharaj clasped the boy to his heart. He said, "My boy, you were Kabir in your previous life. Now you have assumed this body in this life. In your past life you had given away your wife wholeheartedly to the bania. That is why you had stayed a continent bachelor and gained merit. Do not see the world and God as different from each other. Keep your mind always on the almighty. You will always be immersed in bliss. I am Ramananda. I was your Guru in our past lives in Kasi. I have not taken sannyas in this life only for your sake. In your past life as Kabir you used to write poetry. Maintain silence in this life or talk very briefly. Stay in one place and lead all those who surrender fully to you to salvation.

I will now go to Selu and enter samadhi. My work in this life is now finished." He looked at the people who were nearby. He said, "Why are you hiding your faces in shame from me?" they ran to his feet and prostrated. "Maharaj, please forgive us. Please give life back to our companion who had thrown the brick at you. Or it will be a black mark against your fame." They prayed to him most earnestly. The Maharaj replied, "I have no powers left with me. Beg this boy if you wish your companion to live." They immediately went to the boy and prayed to him, "Baba, you are the full moon of knowledge. Please do not delay any longer. Please

make this dead man live again." The orphan heard their request but he did not know what to do. He looked in askance in the direction of his guru, the Maharaj with a feeling of pious devotion. The Maharaj inclined his head in assent and made a sign to give life back to the corpse. He declared, "As far as the people are concerned, from now on you are my child, my representative." The fakir boy took some dust from the feet of his Guru, the Maharaj and applied it to the forehead of the corpse. Immediately life rushed back in to the dead body and he sat up. They were all very happy and took the Guru and disciple in a procession to Selu. The next day was the Ekadasi day of the Margasira month. The Maharaj ordered all his disciples to near him and said, "Today I am going to Vaikuntha, the abode of Sri Hari. A fig tree will come up in the place of my funeral pyre. If you dig at its foot to a depth of five feet you will find a grey coloured statue of the four shouldered lord Venkateswara. Consecrate the idol there itself and build a temple. Look upon that temple as my samadhi. Do not build another samadhi for me." He told each of his devotees their duties and responsibilities and after his bath did the worship of sandhya. He formally read the Bhagavad-Gita. He asked every one to repeat the holy name of Narayana. He kept looking at the fakir boy. He took off the cloth covering him, threw it to the boy, and made a sign of leave taking. He immediately said loudly,  
*Jaya Jaya Narayana Sri Hari!*  
*He Venkatesa! Putanari!*  
*Pahimam! Pahimam! Murari.*

He said this three times loudly and left his mortal coil. Every thing happened as forecast by the Maharaj. The disciples of Maharaj followed his instructions. They constructed the temple and consecrated the statue of lord Venkateswara with all the due ceremonies. The construction of the temple and the consecration ceremonies were conducted with great pomp. That temple has become very famous as a temple of great power.

The fakir boy wore the cloth presented to him by the guru as a kafni and left the area. It is my firm belief that the boy is none other than Sri Sai Baba. Presently, the fifth generation of Gopalrao Desmukh's family are at Selu. His name is Srinivasarao. The people of Selu visit Maharaj's samadhi every Friday with devotion and perform an utsav there. I salute the fakir boy blessed by Gopalrao Maharaj with devotion and faith. I prostrate in front of that excellent saint. Those who cannot go to Tirupati to may go to Selu to have the darshan of that great God, the granter of all boons, lord Venkateswara. May they obtain all weal from that munificent lord.

Das Ganu prays to the almighty to grant salvation to all devotees who read this 'Bhakti Saaramrit'. This book is offered to Hari and Hara. May the almighty bless all.

*Here ends the 26th chapter of 'Bhakti Saaramrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj!*

### **Notes and references**

*It is the custom to call Mahatmas and Sadhus as Maharaj in Northern India. This is the first fictional story, which tells us of Sri Sai Baba's birth and antecedents. There is no authentic proof to the facts narrated in this. Das Ganu Maharaj himself revealed this subsequently. In the 31st chapter of "Bhakta Leelamrit" he says, "No one knows his antecedents or his previous history. What can I tell you of these details when I too am as ignorant as the others? If anyone asked Baba this question, he would answer, "As the rain falls when the clouds in the sky peal with thunder, I too have fallen on this earth. I have no name or place. I am without any attributes. I have assumed this body due to the inevitable karma, which does its work, immutable and unalterable. I am known everywhere as a body. The whole world is my abode. Brahman is my father- the impenetrable Maya is my mother. It is by their conjoining that I have assumed this body which you see with your eyes."*

*Later Sri Das Ganu had, under the urging of the muse, for the needs of singing his ballads more effectively has, in 1925; or 7 years after Baba's mahasamadhi written this Selu story in 'Bhakti Saaramrit'. This chapter has not been read as a pothi in the presence of Sri Sai Baba in the Masjid*

## Chapter 6

### Introduction



All hail to Sri Ganesha! Supreme of the universe! Thou endless one! Thou Brahman! Thou almighty! Thou who art greater than the maya which humbles all lesser gods! Thou Panduranga! All hail to you! All Shastras are singing about you who is the master of the universe. Oh Thou ancient one! There is nothing in this world, which is impossible for you. The Vedas hail you as the Brahman. The Mohammedans hail you as Allah-i-llahi. The Jains pray to you as 'Arihant'. But Thou art all these. Thou whose mission is the salvation of all worlds! Thou Master of the universe! Thou hast assumed form for the sake of thy devotees and stood on a brick in Pandharpur. I surrender to the divine feet of that Pandarinatha and beg him to protect me. Oh Thou provider of succour to the pious! Thou, the friend of the meek and the weak, save us always from the vicissitudes of life.

I beg you dear listeners, to now listen to a new ballad. Whose name; the mere hearing of which, burns away all our sins; whose name, the mere hearing of which, will turn our minds away from the worldly to the spiritual- I will now tell you the stories of that mahatma; the

incomparable Sai Baba. The histories of mahatmas are of the utmost purity and of the utmost power. They act as the steps to lead us to Vaikuntha, the abode of that master of the universe, Sri Vishnu. The mere hearing of the name of the mahatmas will still our minds and turn it to the virtuous path. A great mahatma had come to Shirdi. Was he born in that village? Did he come from elsewhere? What are his antecedents? I will give a detailed answer to all these questions in this chapter.

### The horse of Chandubhai Patel



Sri Sai Baba was a great mahatma as were Suka, Vasishta and Jaimini. Obeying his Guru's order, he left Selu and journeyed westwards. He journeyed on in stages and reached the Aurangabad area. There he found a place in the forest, which was to his liking and stopped there. That land was earlier governed by the Yadava kings. It was near Daulatabad (Dev giri) where Janardhana swami, the Guru of Eknath Maharaj, had once lived. Sri Sai Baba was living alone with a feeling of utter dispassion. He was immersed day and night in the enjoyment of the incomparable bliss of constant communion with the Brahman.

While this was so, one day, a Moslem called Chandubhai came to the forest searching for his horse, which was lost. He was startled to see Sri Sai Baba, who is as the mother to orphaned children, staying all-alone under the shade of a tree in that thick forest. He felt in his mind, "This is certainly not a man. He must be a celestial being, or a demon or a devil or worse. Why else will he be staying happily alone, unconcerned, in this thick forest where no man treads and indeed men fear to venture about, unless propelled by dire need? I am able to see him very clearly. What should I do now? Shall I run away? Or shall I search for my horse? What should I do?" All these thoughts flashed through his mind. He thought that discretion was the better part of valour and turned to run. Baba's voice stopped him. "My brother! I am not a devil or a demon nor a celestial

being. I am just a poor fakir who lives here in this forest. Do not fear. Have no apprehensions in your mind. Come here and have a puff of this chillim," said Baba.

Chandubhai's mind quietened on hearing Baba speak. He slowly drew near Baba and sat. Baba was readying the chillim for smoking. Chandubhai took the chillim from him and after powdering the tobacco leaf, packed it firmly into the chillim. He said, "Oh Sai! I have filled and readied the chillim. But there is no fire. I have left my flints at home. What are we to do now?" Baba laughed on hearing Chandubhai. He said, "Chandubhai, your eyes and brain are struggling breathlessly entangled in the worldly. Fire is the basis and foundation of the entire world. It is spread all over the universe.

Why are you lamenting that there is no fire?" Baba took his satka (stick) which was constantly with him and smote the ground. Instantly the fire was visible on the ground. Baba placed a twig on the fire and lit the chillim with the burning twig. He threw the twig away after the chillim was well lit and drawing satisfactorily. Chandubhai was stunned by this display of Baba's power. He immediately placed his head on Baba's feet in devotion and respect. He said, "Maharaj, your power is great. You are none other than the Paigambar (God). It is the accumulated merit of my past lives which has given me the great good fortune of your darshan. I have been searching without food for the last four days for my horse which was lost. It was a valuable, pedigreed horse from Turkey. It has an excellent gait. It had gone for feeding and lost its way. After I lost that excellent horse I have lost all taste for food. I have searched the whole forest many times but I have not been able to trace it. Even this chillim will not be to my taste, If I cannot find the horse." Sai Baba said, "Why do you worry so for such a small thing? Go and see beside that thicket. You will see your horse feeding on grass there. Do not worry so about the horse. This is manner of all those who constantly think only of the worldly. If the child is missing, they search all over for him weeping and wailing. If the wife leaves them and goes away, they hold their heads, sob, and weep. If the house is burgled, if the house catches fire they beat their breasts and wail saying that they are the most unfortunate beings in this world. What is the use of crying over spilt milk? Oh you madman! Look at the maya which is every where. Keep remembering the Allah-I-Ilahi who protects and nourishes all of us. He is the foundation and basis for the world. He is the repository of all happiness. He is the truth. If you do not seek to find him, pleasure, pain, and profit and loss are inevitable to you.

In any case without pain there is no value for pleasure. The idea of rain will be sweet as nectar to the man burning in the heat of midsummer. So, even pain is essential to us to really appreciate pleasure. You are worrying and beating your breast about a mere horse but are not even thinking of the almighty God. Reflect on your conduct a little. How abhorrent it is that you give so little value to God and so much to a horse? Chandubhai heard these words of Sri Sai Baba and hung his head in shame. "Oh able one! You are the embodied form of all the knowledge of the world. How is it possible for me, a poor unlearned man, to know all this?" He saw the horse and ran to catch it. As the husband is happy on hearing of his wife's arrival after a long absence; Chandubhai was ecstatic with happiness seeing his horse again after a long time. He caught the horse with one hand and neared Sri Sai Baba. He said, "Baba! Please sit in my cart and come to my house. My household and I will be blessed by your arrival." Baba smiled, "What am I, a poor fakir, to do with a horse and a cart, my son? I cannot come today to your house in any case. Let us see, I may come either tomorrow or the day after. Do not unnecessarily force me to come today." Chandubhai saluted Baba's feet and riding his horse went home elated at finding his horse again. All his intimate friends were very happy seeing that he had found his horse. They all questioned him as to how he could find the horse again. Chandubhai replied, "I found a great aulia (Moslem saint) in the forest. He has great powers. It is by his kind grace that I could find the horse. He beat the ground with a stick and brought out fire. That mahatma of great merit has promised to come to our house tomorrow. It is by the kindness of Allah that I could have the darshan of that most excellent one!"

### **Arrival in Shirdi**

Oh listeners! On the second day, Sri Sai Baba went to Chandubhai's house in Dhupkheda village. All the people of Dhupkheda went and had the darshan of Sai Baba. They wondered,



"Is he a Hindu? Is he a Moslem?" Each who saw him formed his own opinion as to his religion. The Muslims thought he was an aulia. The Hindus considered him a siddha. Both the groups had a common feeling towards Baba-devotion. They all prostrated at his feet and paid him their respects.

Chandubhai's brother-in-law's marriage was arranged with a girl from Shirdi village. Baba too joined the marriage party, which went to Shirdi from Dhupkheda village. As he stepped on to the soil of Shirdi, that village was blessed. Shirdi is the surely equal to Gokula. Krishna was born in Mathura but lived in Gokula. In the same way, Selu or Manawat is Mathura. Shirdi is Gokula. Sri Sai Baba stayed on in Shirdi purifying it and

it has now become a great pilgrimage centre. As he entered Shirdi, he met the pious devotee Mahalsapati. As he reached the Khandoba temple, Mahalsapati said, "Oh Sai! It is not seemly that you come here. This is a temple for the Hindus. You look like a Moslem to me. You better go to the Masjid or the Thakiya."

The able Sai was surprised by the words of Mahalsapati. He said, "It is one God who has created both these people. Hindu, Moslem are mere words - know this to be the truth. The sadhaka should never feel that religion has any importance. He should not differentiate between people based on their religion. Never show intolerance towards people of other religions. Reform your self. Try to see the God who is one for all of us. He is Allah-Illahi. He is the Maha Vishnu reclining on the serpent Adishesha! There is nothing which is other than your Khandoba, my son. Know clearly as to who the real Khandoba is! Those who know the truth care not a whit for these differences based on religion. There are temples in this world and there are masjids too.

God has not constructed any of them. Oh pious one! Do not think that these temples or the masjids are the only ones to lead you to God. I will not trouble you. I will respect your feelings and have the darshan of Khandoba from afar. I hope you have no objection to that? Your Puranas tell a tale. There was a low caste man called Chokha Mela who was very dear to Panduranga. He was a hundred times better person than those high caste Brahmin priests who did the daily ceremonial worship of Panduranga. Know you, that all those who sincerely try to reach the lotus feet of the almighty keeping their minds and hearts pure are the high castes. All others are low caste irrespective of the caste they were born in. Whose interior is pure is pure everywhere."

Mahalsapati was ecstatic with happiness on hearing these words of wisdom from Sri Sai Baba. He prostrated at his feet and saluted him with devotion. He said, "You are truly the embodiment of wisdom. It is the accumulated merit of my past lives which has led me to you." He prayed, "Please stay on in our Shirdi village." Baba agreed to do so. They both entered the village. Sri Sai Baba settled in the Masjid. He stayed for many days in the shade of the Neem tree, which was close by. Sri Sai Baba liked to be alone. He would light the Dhuni and resting his elbow on the right knee and placing his palm on his ear would gaze at the fire for hours together with half closed eyes. He used to smoke the chillim. He was never in a hurry. He was always looking inwards and his mind was steadfast. He was always immersed in the bliss of constant communion with God. He would go to five houses for alms every day. He would ask for alms and stand at the door for a very short time. He would go to Vaman, Sakharam, Ganapati, Kumar Tatyaba, Nandu and Sawairams houses for alms. How fortunate are they, who had the merit of giving alms to that embodiment of wisdom?

### **Dispassion**

One day a Gosai called Devidas requested Baba to instruct him about dispassion and freedom from all desire. Baba said, "In the path of dispassion, the main danger is from woman and the frailty of the sensual. See what a miserable state was reached by that great sage Viswamitra because of the frailty of the sensual. Even if one leaves the family and goes

far away, one should be careful about the frailty of the sensual. Dispassion will never come to those who have a tendency to show off and love ostentation. One should keep the mind turned inward enjoying the bliss of self and meditate upon the almighty constantly. The ego should be annihilated".

### The Neem tree



Let us now see how that venerable saint spent his time under the shade of that fortunate Neem tree. The holy tale will lead us to salvation. Baba lived under that Neem tree for a long time. His abode had no walls. The East, West, North and South were the walls of his abode. The fallen leaves of the Neem tree were his seat. His abode was of such a nature. Raja Bhartrahari described once the dwelling of a one who had no desires. Such an abode was Sri Sai Baba's at Shirdi. The almighty incarnated to save the whole world. The whole world was his family.

But his family is of a surpassingly strange nature. It is an entirely different variety of family.

None of the members of that family is ever visible to us. But if we carefully think, it will not be appropriate to say that Baba is alone too. Courage is his father; forgiveness his mother. Peace is his wife. Kindness is his sister. The right thought is his brother. He was ever immersed in the bliss of communion with his self with the earth as his bed. As Gautama Buddha, he was always in meditation of the almighty. The wind swept four directions was his golden shawl. The stars twinkling in the sky were the embroidery done on his shawl by the adroit hands of God. He was ever drinking the nectar of the knowledge of Brahman. Wisdom and dispassion were to steps to his house. He had girded the sword of virtuous conduct to his waist and wore a shawl of love of moderation. Only those who felt that Baba's house is verily the gateway to everlasting weal and moksha were his ministers. Any one; no matter how great he is temporally had to stand in patient waiting in front of him with his hands folded in supplication. Sri Sai was such emperor. He was the greatest Yogi amongst all yogis. Fear and ostentation ran far away at the mere mention of the name of this emperor amongst mahatmas. As darkness runs in fear on seeing the Sun, so did sinful conduct run southwards to Hades on seeing him. The thorn skinned crooked hypocrisy is the wife of ostentation. The couple ran away in fear when they saw that incomparable Sant Maharaj. As the dog runs in fear on seeing the lion, cupid ran away along with his friends such as bad conduct etc. Even before the people heard of this news, the six enemies- lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and envy ran away as the hay cannot stand in front of fire. Miserliness knows neither modesty nor shame. It is the most dangerous vice. If we want to sit and do meditation in Khandoba temple, ostentation will also get ready to sit there before we do.

But Khandoba is a most awesome figure as is Shiva. He would give a kick and drive away all these vicious people. On seeing that incomparable emperor amongst saints, mind gave up the ghost and shaving her head, sat silent as a widow. Unrestrained hedonism is her son. He saw his recently windowed mother and anguished was walking around purposelessly far from Baba and his Neem tree. Finally, he too saw that it was no use and along with his sister, desire, ran far away. Bad proclivities were his other sister. She came ringing the bell of anger and because there was no one of her people there ran away too. The six enemies to salvation, gathered their leader, immoral conduct and maya and taking care to see that even their shadow was not visible to that Yogi Maharaj, and fearing that if he saw them, he will destroy them and remove their pernicious influence from this world once and for all - ran for their lives to Hades - Southwards. The pig living in Hades hates the spot where purity prevails, it takes its feed of excreta to a place which is polluted and feeling at home in that pollution; eats the excreta there. All the wicked, sinful, devilish plagues of humanity thus left



the august presence of that incomparable saint, the emperor amongst Saints- Sri Sai Baba and good conduct, piety and wisdom prevailed.

In the book 'Shiva Leelamrit' it is told how the sin of the king Dasarna leaves him and flies away in the form of a crow. In the same way, the bad qualities of the people listening to the holy, pious story of Sri Sai Baba left them and ran away south to the Hades. In the south are the abodes of the God of death - Yama and the worlds where the ancestors stay. That is why miserliness, ostentation and bad conduct stay in that direction. I am a poor man of inadequate learning. I cannot find suitable words to describe the indifference of Sri Sai Baba to the worldly attachments. Outwardly he looks like an ordinary person. But he is the pure embodiment of wisdom.

### **Gangagir**

If I decide to describe him as poor, it does not suit because Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth sits waiting on his doorsill. If I decide to describe him as rich, it does not suit too as he begs alms to fill his stomach every day.

While so, one day, Sai Maharaj was bringing water from the well to water the plants. Gangagirbua was passing by and happened to see him. Gangagir is a great sadhu. He was a monk who was a true saint. Though he was of the warkari tradition, he was wearing the rudrakshas of the Shaiva tradition. The warkari tradition does not venerate rudrakshas which are dear to Shiva. 'Dasabodha' is not included in their books of reading. Gangagir had no place for religious intolerance or bigotry based on creed. He was a personification of wisdom. Such a great person as Gangagir told the people of Shirdi, about Sri Sai Baba, "Why don't you understand? Why are you leaving this jewel and running after other sadhus? Is there any one as foolish as to keep many sweet meats at home and still run from house to house for alms? Is there any one who is so foolish that they go to the banks of the holy Ganges and do not bathe there? You have an incomparable, priceless diamond such as Sai Baba here and you are still running to other places in search of saints. In the sky of spirituality, this Sai Baba is as the Sun. He is the Himalaya amongst hills. He is the shining diamond fit only for the head of the mahatmas. You villagers are doing yourself great harm by not knowing this and subjecting this great soul to inhospitable conduct. Where the Sai Maharaj is, can sorrow stay for a second? Serve him well and obtain all weal in this world and the next. If you do not serve him, that incomparable one, well and to his satisfaction; there will be no end to your miseries." Gangagir gave this wise counsel to the people of Shirdi and went to the Masjid. He had the darshan of Sri Sai Baba and was filled with happiness.

Their meeting was as if Ganges and Godavari had met, as if Vishnu, the consort of Rama had met Shiva, the consort of Uma; as if the sages Gautama and Vasistha had met; as if Indra the head of gods and Kubera the god of wealth had met. They both were very happy in the company of each other.

As Gangagir entered the Masjid, Baba smiled, "So, the mandir has come to the Masjid, very good". He invited him with all courtesy into the Masjid. After Gangagir sat, Baba said, "We are both from the same family. We were happily staying with God in his abode in Vaikuntha. Hari sent us to convince the people of the futility of wrong conduct and put them on the right, moral path. But it seems that the people are not going to change their ways even by an inch in these days. Wherever one looks, one sees the liquor taverns full of people. The prostitutes are brought here in the month of Phalguna to dance in the Chavadi. As the horse breaks free of the reins and gallops away, all classes of people are stopping work and galloping, without even bothering to see if they are properly clad to see the dance of the prostitute. Here it is all immodest behaviour. They put red powder on each other as if it was a festival and dance about singing songs and playing loud music. In this age and in these days Hari has sent us here with pots of milk on our heads and asked us to convince the people to drink the milk. But every one who sees me laughs in derision and throws stones at the pot of milk on my head. Some put on devilish faces and laugh at me. Some bring presents for me. Some say, "I have got the Sai Fakir's spirit in me now, so (as he has no power now) listen to me. Come and listen to my words of wisdom - drink the liquor to your hearts content. Drink as much as you want to and make merry." The moment they hear the word liquor the majority of people run there. Not many people prefer milk to liquor. Only some have come to me and have

drunk the milk. But of these some have the madness of Vedanta. So the world has termed all those who have taken milk from me as mad. The tendency of these people addicted to liquor is such. See how they are all saying, "All hail to the liquor Maharaj." This world is a strange place. I seek to give them nectar, they prefer poison.

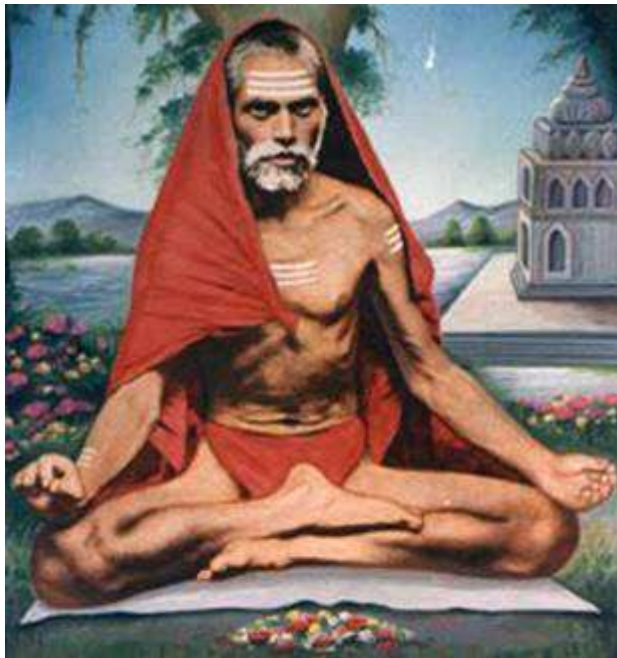
They are losing the respect and confidence in the truth. They prefer the lie to the truth." Gangagir heard what Baba said. He said, "Maharaj, my experience is also the same as yours. I have tried to put at least a few people on the true path but I have failed. They have all decided that I am a madman and pay no heed to what I say. I have seen this happening and I have stopped even trying to change the people." Baba heard Gangagir saying these words with a voice that was dejected, the result of a lifetime of ridicule and rejection. Baba was saddened. He said, "Those that go will go to perdition. Those that will abide by us will abide by us. Let us seek no recompense and help with a pure heart all those who come to us sincerely."

They discussed many more matters. If I start to detail those matters here, that itself will become as big a book as the Mahabharata. After a while, Gangagir took leave of Baba and went away from the Masjid. Baba continued to sit there in contemplation.

See how clearly and lucidly Baba has described the present day circumstances in this age of Kali? Baba has described this age of Kali as Phalguna month. Liquor is his term for bad habits and bad proclivities. The true path of wisdom and dharma is the milk which he wishes to give us.

Sri Sai Maharaj's method of teaching is unique and exhilarating. It is beyond me to explain them. Baba talks casually of some thing and the doubts plaguing the jijnasu are cleared in a second. No one has the expertise in teaching wisdom and the true knowledge as he had. His devotees, be they even so far away, continually experience his kind grace.

### A coconut for Baba



While this was so; Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati (Tembye Swami) the great mahatma was staying at Rajamahendravaram on the banks of the holy Godavari at that time. He was going from place to place in the country and teaching the right path of the karma to the people. He was a great scholar.

The Rigveda would stand in respect when he entered. His knowledge was the fruit of long experience and not mere book learning. He was a self-realized man. He needed none to illumine him or teach him. Pundaleekarao of Nanded and others went to Rajamahendravaram for his darshan. Rajamahendravaram (Rajahmundry) is a beautiful town situated on the banks of the holy Godavari River. At a place nearby called Dhawaleswaram, Godavari splits into seven streams and is called Saptamukhi.

With the musical sound of the water flowing brimful along the banks; the various calls of the birds residing in the huge trees which had grown thickly on its banks; with the rhythmic utterance of mantras such as "Imam me ganga" chanted by the Brahmins who come there for their ritual bath; with the colourful display of males and females who come to bathe in that holy river; that place is beautiful beyond description at dawn.

At such a dawn, Pundaleekarao of Nanded<sup>1</sup> and his friends, had visited Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati and prostrated in front of him with devotion. The Swami received them with kindness and asked about their welfare. It was natural for the name of Shirdi to crop up in the

<sup>1</sup> This is Das Ganu himself; out of modesty he called himself Pundaleekarao

conversation that followed. As he heard the word Shirdi, Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati exclaimed happily, "Sri Sai Baba may be a Mohammedan. But he is my elder brother." He continued, "Although we are Brahmins by birth, the Moslems are our own - says the ancient saying. In the olden days, our mahatmas used to reach thus. If we follow their teachings, we will not face any difficulty until the end of the world. In truth, where is the difference between Hindu and Moslem? All these differences have been invented and setup by us. These are mere differences in perception and only outward differences but they are not the truth. He who sees merely these outward differences, and thinks that they are true is ignorant. Do the Hindus have three ears and the Moslems three and a half ears? It is by the peculiarity of attire and such outward differences that one recognizes the religion. Do not be surprised that I call Sri Sai Baba, a Muslim my brother. Well even if you go once to Shirdi and have the darshan of that great incomparable Maharaj, it will do you a world of good. If however you do not feel like having his darshan (with the feeling that he is a Moslem) please do not speak to me too. What Pundaleekarao, do you agree?"



Pundaleekarao joined his hands in supplication. He replied softly, "We will definitely visit Sri Sai Baba in this month." As he heard this, the swami was pleased. He said, "Very good. Do not show any negligence in this matter. Go and have the darshan of that mahatma as soon as you can." He gave a coconut to Pundaleekarao and said, "As soon as you visit Baba, please put this coconut in his hand and tell him that it was offered by me to him.

Please convey my prostrations to him. I may be a sanyasi and it is not a tradition for sanyasis to prostrate before each other; but Sri Sai Baba is an exception to that rule. He may seem a common fakir to the outward eye but he is verily the sun of knowledge. There is no place for discussion of any nature about seemliness or unseemliness or tradition in his respect.

Pundaleekarao obeyed the swami and took the coconut. They all started within a month for Shirdi. They travelled by train and got down at Manmad railway station. There was some delay before the next train to Kopergaon was due, so they decided to eat a light meal. They all went to a well nearby and ate the chivda they had brought with them. The chivda was very hot as it had an excess of chilli powder in it. So they broke some coconuts, which they had with them and scraping the sweet meat of the nut, mixed it with the chivda to make it less hot. By mistake one of those coconuts was the one given by Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati to be offered to Baba. They started from Manmad and reached Shirdi by the afternoon.

When they had the darshan of Sri Sai Baba, he told Pundaleekarao "Is this seemly? Does one give one's word and fail to keep it? My brother sent me a coconut through you. You have used it for yourself. Bring me my coconut." Baba assumed anger, "By your carelessness you have lost my property. It is the bad company you keep which is responsible for this." Pundaleekarao turned pale with embarrassment and fright. His throat refused to co-operate in talking. He bent his head in shame and said softly, "Maharaj, it is true that we have eaten your coconut at Manmad along with the chivda. A great sin has been committed by me. Please show me kindness and excuse my impertinence. If you agree I will bring another coconut in place of that one and will offer it to you." He tried to stand to go out and get another coconut.

Baba caught his hand, preventing him from rising and with a pleasant countenance said, "I do not want another coconut. Will it equal the coconut which my brother Vasudeva has sent me? Does the water of the common well equal the holy water of the swift flowing Godavari? Alright, what has happened has happened. You are all my children. Why will I be angry with you?"

These days we talk proudly of telegraph and wireless. But, in the past, the mahatmas knew everything without needing them. They did not have any use for wireless or telegraph. The one who has eaten the food of his house including sweetmeats- does such a one need to beg for alms?



Listeners, by what I have told you now you must have realized that the mahatmas were embodiments of total and complete love and that they had feelings of affection for each other. He who has neither love nor knowledge in his heart and tries to show off, he is the one who harbours envy, hatred, argumentativeness and dishonesty.

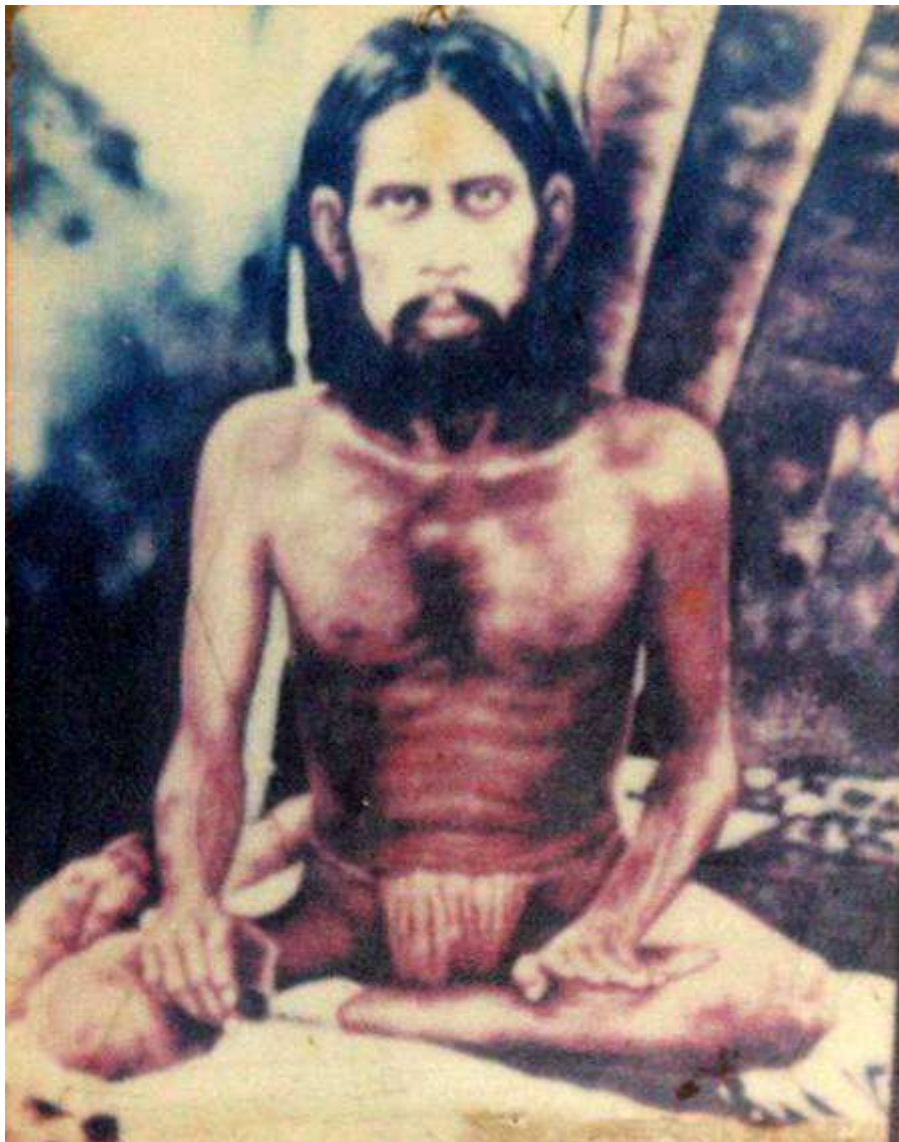
The almighty cannot be seen, he has no form. The almighty we can see and who has form is Sri Sai Baba. He is a walking, talking God. He is the embodiment of pure satchidananda. He is the almighty who has incarnated to save his devotees and make them walk the right path. He is the embodiment of love, the repository of kindness and grace who is ever vigilant in the protection of his devotee. He always has his kindly eye on the devotees to protect them from harm.

Oh able one! Oh, perfect guru! Oh Sai Maharaj! This Das Ganu always remembers you in his heart. Please let your glance of kind grace fall on him always.

Oh listeners! This 'Bhakti Saraamrit' is pure nectar. Drink your fill of this history of mahatmas, which teaches you the right way of life.

This book is offered to Hari and Hara. Weal be to all.

*This is the end of the 52nd chapter of 'Bhakti Saraamrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj*



## Chapter 7



Hail to Sri Ganesha! Hail oh manifest almighty!  
Hail Oh thou unconquered, ever-victorious one!  
Thou art the indivisible Brahman! Thou art the  
complete Brahman! Pandarirama! Panduranga!  
It is totally beyond my capacity to describe you  
or to sing about the extent of your divine power.  
Oh Deva! I am not a great learned man! I am not  
a rich man with money, gold, houses and  
carriages. I have made mine, all the bad  
qualities of the world. I am rich only in the bad  
qualities that I have. Oh Sri Hari! How will you  
bless with your grace such a sinner as I am? No  
one wishes to even go near dilapidated houses,  
which have been deserted for a long time. But  
that is the nature of the common ignorant men.  
Oh, consort of Rama! Your nature is totally  
opposite to this. Oh Govinda! The guilty are  
punished everywhere, but in your royal court, the  
guilty are given succour and shelter. Oh Deva!  
The limitless kindness shown by you, to the

unfortunates who have none else in this world is unprecedented. See, Shankara wears Bilva leaves with pleasure. But no matter how much we examine them we cannot find even an iota of fragrance in those leaves. But Shiva regarded that blemish of little account. Oh Saviour! In Gokula you had eaten the stale bread given by your friend, a common Yadava herder, called Pendya with great relish as if it was a hundred times tastier than ambrosia. When the demons and gods were churning the ocean of milk, the world destroying poison Halahala originated. When all had run far away in terror to avoid it, Shiva kept it ensconced in his throat. So Oh Narayana! If you do not protect your good name (by casting you kind grace on me) it will be a black mark on your fame.

### The Gurusthan

Listeners! Pay attention to the Ambrosia of the story of Sri Sai Baba! Pay close heed for your weal.

Sri Sai Baba had thus stayed under the Neem tree for some time. Later Nanasahab Dengale prayed to him to stay in the Masjid. Baba acceded to his request and started living in the Masjid from then on.

Once when Baba was living under the Neem tree, a remarkable thing happened. Some devotees were sitting in front of him with their hands joined in respect. Sri Sai Baba said, "There is a samadhi here. Harm will accrue to those who dig it out. Let no one dig here ever." One amongst those who was seated there said, "Baba, this is the burial ground of Muslims. There will be many samadhis here. What is so surprising about it?" Another said, "This is not the burial ground of the Muslims. That is a little far off." Another said, "No, even this place is a part of the burial ground. In the past there may have been some samadhis here too. Recently when this place was dug one grave was found here." In this manner, the people these started arguing with each other. Sri Sai Baba stopped them from arguing with each other and said, "Let us leave arguments and discussions to those interested in the study of logic and philosophy. Nothing accrues from argument. Arguments have no place in the pure path of devotion. Fire and water mixed and as a result this earth was created. A part of the almighty became the life. All the living beings in the world come from the earth. That earth again becomes earth on joining the earth. It could be here or there; the soil of every place must have had the body of some man or animal, which must have formed it after their death. In this way one may say that this vast earth itself is a burial ground. Remember this truth." In the past, Kabir the great mahatma left his body on the banks of the holy Ganga. At that time the Hindus and Moslems had great differences of opinion about his burial. Each claimed

that great mahatma as their own and began to fight for the honour of burying him in accordance with their own faiths. Kabir thought of an idea to solve this impasse. He made his body change into basil leaves, Jasmine flowers and the leaves of the millet. The wit of the mahatmas devoted to the almighty is such that they can satisfy everyone.

The Hindus took away the basil leaves that they consider sacred, for burial as a representation of Kabir's body in a procession. The Moslems took the millet and jasmine away in a procession for burial. This has been elaborated in the books "Bhakti Mala" and 'Bhakta Vijayam' written by Mahipati. It may be the will of the almighty that the last rites, which were not done properly or completely in that incarnation, should be done properly in this incarnation.

What a great mahatma was Kabir who had the same reverence for Sri Rama Chandra, Allah-Illahi and Parvardhigar.

The Hindus who had taken the basil leaves as representative of Kabir's body, took them in a procession and in accordance with the Hindu sastras mixed them in the water of the holy Ganga. We see even today this practice being continued. It is not the custom to build a samadhi for one whose body has been immersed in the Ganga. This is why we do not see a samadhi for Kabir on the banks of the Ganga.

The Jasmine flowers and millet leaves taken by the Moslems were taken all over the country and samadhi's were built for Kabir in those places keeping the leaves and flowers in them.

In the days of Kabir the whole country was covered by Moslem states both big and small. The Nawabs were governing the country from Hastinapur. That Hastinapur is the present day Delhi. At that time, a Moslem of these parts had gone to Delhi on some work. On his return, he went to Varanasi on some other work. At the time he reached Kasi the dispute about the last rites of Kabir was raging between Hindus and Moslems. He too joined with the Muslims and took one millet leaf as a prasad of Kabir. He brought it here and built a samadhi for Kabir. Do not doubt what I say, "The one who looked upon Hindus and Muslims with an equal eye - the incomparable Kabirdas is my Guru. I know very well what happened at that time. That is why I have decided to live near this samadhi. It is beyond my capacity to describe the extents of the divine power of this samadhi. Who so ever cleans this place on Thursdays and Fridays and applies fragrant incense will be blessed by the almighty," said Baba!

The many incidents, which happened after this, have been described in "Bhakta Leelamrit" in 31st, 32nd and the 33rd chapters. So I am not repeating them here. I will tell you of some of the incidents, which happened later in a concise form, because the history of Sri Sai Baba is, like the vast ocean. I am unable to see its far shore. Can an insect such as I cross the vast mountain of Sai Charitra?

### **Dixit sees Panduranga**



Now hear the experience of Haribhau Dixit. The delusion in your hearts will be destroyed by listening to this story.

This Haribhau is a Brahmin of the nagara branch. He is a highly educated man and is well versed in English. As the bee makes the lotus its shelter, he had made the lotus feet of Sri Sai Baba his shelter and stayed on in Shirdi. By the grace of Sai Baba, his personality underwent a radical change. His earlier combativeness and hardheartedness gave way to a soft and placid temperament.

One morning Haribhau was sitting in his room and meditating. Suddenly his heart filled with a vast happiness and his eyes closed by themselves. That incomparably beautiful, blue coloured, Sri

Hari, adorned with a basil leaf garland gave him his divine darshan, with his arms on his waist standing on a brick in the form of Panduranga Vittala. He was wearing the auspicious yellow dress. His head was adorned by the peacock feather and his body was smeared with the fragrant sandal. His darshan was at once beautiful and majestic.

As he got this divine vision, Haribhau was immersed in surprise and happiness. He thought, "It is due to the kind grace of Sri Sai Baba that I could have the great good fortune of this divine vision. Even though I had no qualification or right for a darshan of the almighty, Baba in his kindness has given me this darshan. What is there left to the desired in this life than such a divine experience?" He at once went to the Masjid for the darshan of Baba.

As Baba saw him he said, "Well Kaka? Has your desire been fulfilled today? Did you see Vittoba Patil? He is a Patil (officer) of the mahatmas. The Vedas themselves were unable to describe that one who saves the world." Kaka joined his hands in supplication and said, "Baba! Your divine play cannot be described. Who else but you can know their meaning? Only the mother knows what her children need and what is good or bad for them. When you, our mother, is with us why should we worry about our weal? We are your children. What more can I say than this? It is enough to have rock like faith in your feet. I pray to you to present me with such a faith. The darshan of Panduranga Vittala is your leela. Is it proper to see the puppet show and forget the puppeteer? There is no better puppeteer or magician than you. Even that almighty is but a puppet in your hands. Even he has to work as per your dictates. You are the form of this universe. You are a mother to me. The only thing that this child asks its mother is to let me see your form, wherever my eye falls." Baba replied, "That too will come to pass in its time, Kaka. Do not be in a hurry. Have a little patience."

Haribhau Dixit was an even more ardent devotee of Sri Sai Baba than Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He had turned his eye inwards and had done a lot of sadhana. He believed that the divine vision he got was a result of the devotion he had for his guru. Why will he, towards whom the guru is well pleased, not get the vision of the almighty? Does one not get sugar cane juice to drink in a sugar cane field ready for harvest? When one has the Ganga will one face a shortage of drinking water? When one has good quality saffron in one's hand is there a lack of fragrance?

### **Megha**

There was one Gujarati Brahmin called Megha. He was a wise man. He used to diligently chant the Gayatri mantra regularly. He was well built. His hair was matted and long. Day and night, he would chant "Shiva, Hara Hara." He was a bachelor who diligently performed all the religious activities daily. He had come to Shirdi with Hari Vinayak Sathe.

Megha used to get up before dawn and have a cold water bath. He would apply ash to his body and apply the horizontal marks of the devotees of Shiva to his forehead with sandal paste. He would sit on a deer skin to meditate. His body used to have an otherworldly shine by the dint of his devotional exercises and he looked like a latter day Jalandhara. He would go for the darshan of Sri Sai Baba three times a day to the Masjid. He saw Shiva in Baba. To him it seemed that it was Shiva himself who was ensconced in royal court at the Masjid. So he would chant the panchakshari, 'Om Namah Shivayah' while keeping his head Baba's feet. He would worship the holy feet of Baba with Bilwa leaves said to be a favourite of Shiva. He would also go 5 miles to the distant Godavari River everyday and bring the water from there to perform the abhishek (ritual bathing) of Baba. If any one questioned him; he would say, "Who do you think Baba is? He is that Shiva himself. He has to be bathed only with the water of Godavari. Ordinary water will not do." Sri Sai Baba was pleased by the devotion of Megha. He presented him with a Shiva ling (the symbol of Shiva) for his regular daily worship. This is the concise story of Megha. The able Sai Maharaj showers his grace on his devotees in the same form that they worship him. I have told you this story to illustrate this.

Sri Sai Baba's leelas are wonderful and beautiful. He appears as Shiva to the devotees of Shiva, as Vishnu to the devotees of Vishnu and as Parvardhigar to the Muslim devotees. One the one hand he would look like the Panduranga Vittala standing on a brick and on the other he would look like Sai Baba. His love for his devotees was limitless.

### **The brick**

Baba had with him an old well baked brick with him. He used to love that brick more than he did his life. He would use it every day as his pillow when he slept. Nanasaheb Chandorkar saw this and said, "Baba why do you use that brick as a pillow? I will have a nice pillow stitched for you. Please throw that brick away." Baba then replied, "Even if you bring a hundred thousand pillows they will not equal this brick. This was presented to me by my Guru. This is more valuable than the whole world to me. This is my meditation as well as the object of my meditation. Nobody can estimate its value. It is breaks; my life will depart this body. My guru's feet had touched this brick; that is why I have made it my pillow. He who keeps his head on the lotus like feet of his guru; his shadow is also holy. That is why I keep my head on this brick which touched my guru's lotus feet. By this I am becoming one who every day keeps his head on his Gurus feet. Nana! You all come and salute me in the mornings. I in turn present all your salutes to my guru. In the manner that the Godavari River takes all the water that joins it and consigns it to the sea, in the same way I consign your salutes to my guru. When I had put this brick at the feet of my guru, my guru who loved me as a mother did her child, laughed with pleasure at my devotion. He said, 'Well done. In the past Pundaleeka had presented Krishna a brick and asked him to stand on that. Now you are doing me same thing and asking me to put my feet on that. By the dint of the excellence of your devotion, I have to stand steadily on this brick forever.

What body is in samadhi, the same body will also be in this brick.'

This is the truth. My Sadguru had commingled with Lord Sri Venkateswara and had become Venkateswara himself. He is now in the form of Lord Venkateswara. Sri Venkateswara's footprints are on this brick. That is why I call my guru Venkusa (Venkateswara Swami). The power of this brick is beyond compare. Have you now seen what it is?" Nanasaheb Chandorkar and the other devotees heard Baba and prostrated at his feet in devotion. Chandorkar was an ardent devotee of Sri Sai Baba. He died in the holy Sravana month in 1923 at Poona and reached the holy feet of Sri Sai Baba. I prostrate before Chandorkar.

### **Ratanji and the distinction of groups and castes**

Ratanji saheb belonged to Nanded. Once he started for Shirdi along with his family for the darshan of Sri Sai Baba. Ratanji was a gentle, cultured soul and had great devotion towards Sai Baba. He was a Parsi. His happiness knew no bounds on the day that he was to start for Shirdi. On that day he called his friends for a tea party to his house at about four or five in the evening. Ratanji had many friends. The pride of wealth or arrogance was not present in the least in Ratanji. His friends are also not from a single caste or religion. Some were Brahmins, some Vaisyas, some were of the weaver class while some were of the warrior caste. Some were Parsis while some were Mohammedans. But in that group there is not a trace of hatred or bigotry based on caste or creed. That band of friends was a garden where jasmines and roses were flowering at the same time. Where the perfume of mutual respect and love was in abundance there is no place for the stench of fanaticism based on caste or creed. Not only this, by the mixture of the fragrances of the various castes and creeds meeting in an atmosphere of mutual love and affection; that meeting of good people (Satsangam) expressed a fragrance of its own which extended its influence outwards.

The earth is the place where all the various varieties of flowers bloom. That earth gives birth to and nourishes all varieties of flowers. In the same way the almighty gives birth to and nourishes all the various castes, creeds and nationalities. But the tragedy of today is that not only the various creeds are fighting with each other in hatred, but the split and splintered society of Hindus are also fighting with greater hatred between the various castes. They are not hesitating to destroy one another's wealth, woman or lives.

"The Kshatriya is lower than us. Even then he is trying in vain to equal us. Where will they get that intelligence or majesty from- they who are not Brahmin by birth?" question the Brahmins. The Kshatriyas reply, "To tell the truth, these Brahmins are the real low classes. One rishi was born to a Harijan woman. One rishi's mother was a mixed caste. Vyasa was the son of a prostitute. The fishermen Valya became Valmiki. Did not all these people have intelligence or scholarship? Later these Brahmins have written a false history, changing all the facts and fabricated our holy books. They hid their faults very carefully. They say that the Brahmins were born from the face of Brahma. Have you heard of any thing more foolish?"



Does any one take birth from the face? You yourself can judge the veracity of their statement! If they insist that they were indeed born from the face are they not equal to the disease inducing bacteria?

Because, only bacteria are ever born from the face, from the snot of the nose and the ulcers of the mouth. Why should we salute such people? Will the insect ever become a lion? Will it ever become God? They have written the majority of today's holy books. In those books they have shamelessly praised themselves. They claim themselves to be gurus and are holding court over the heads of the Kshatriyas. They have written the puranas and have put unnecessary sanctions and barriers on the Kshatriyas."



"The other castes which have listened to the arguments of Brahmins and Kshatriyas say, "These arguments are all lies, a mere show to fool us. To tell the truth they are both thieves. One has committed theft and the other has hidden the things stolen by them. They have combined with each other and gave the punishment to us for the crimes committed by them. Now the old cooperation is gone and they are each making public, the crime committed by the other. But they are cleverly hiding the true facts. They have come to an agreement and fabricated the puranas to say that God has incarnated twice as a Brahmin in the form of Vamana and Parasurama and twice as a Kshatriya as Rama and Krishna. You may say that Vamana and Parasurama, the brahmins were not given the greatness attributed to Rama or Krishna. The crux of the matter lies here itself. Rama and Krishna may be very great but their gurus are brahmins. Sri Rama may be the almighty but he had to prostrate to Vasista. It is as if the Sun wanted to read a book and borrowed an oil lamp for light. In the same way Sri Rama who was none other than the almighty went to Vasista for

knowledge. But they did not let God go to Vaisyas or Sudras. How can we describe the extent of the lies told by these two castes? Gautama was born in the Kshatriya caste. But he disliked his caste so much that he went away and established Buddhism. Basava was born a brahmin but he hated the sins being committed by his fellow brahmins so much that he left his caste. It will be funny to hear what the brahmins say about how the Kshatriyas were born. They say that the Kshatriyas were born from the shoulders of Brahma. They made the Kshatriyas take birth like a nit from the shoulders. They say that the Vaisyas were born from the junction of the waist and thighs. We innocently believe this to be true. They made the Vaisyas equal to the worms of the excreta but we are not learning the truth.

They have made the Sudras reportedly born of the feet of Brahma, equal to the mud and bacteria of the fungus-effected feet. The Brahmins and Kshatriyas may have had some differences but until the 19th century, they were together. They are both in this together. The puranas make this very clear. Once a camel told a donkey, "Friend! Your song is excellent! Your song is very melodious." If they hear your song the celestial beauties will leave heaven and come running to you." The donkey was well pleased. It praised to the camel, "Friend what is you say about my song is pleasing to my ears. But, what about your beauty? Even the cupid will look ugly besides you." The Brahmins and Kshatriyas are like this."

Listeners! The four castes are fighting with each other like this, saying that each is superior to the other and they are causing harm to the Hindu society. Nobody benefits by this infighting. The Jasmine, Lily, Marigold, Chrysanthemum, the Rose all grow in the same garden. They do not have enmity towards each other. They do not try to destroy the other. By their being unified and staying in one place the fame of the garden will increase and

spread far and wide. In the same way when all the various castes of the society come together in unity and work for the common weal, the society at large will progress in all respects. The Hindus have various castes. The Moslems have the Shias and Sunni's. The Jains have the Swetamber and Digambers. The Christians have Catholics and Protestants. In the same way in the animals and birds there are many varieties. These varieties of life will always be there. But one should not keep harping about the supposed superiority or inferiority of the castes. From the time the ears are pierced at Upanayana (the coming of age ceremony of the male Brahmin) until the time the brahmin widow's head is shaved upon the death of her husband, nothing can be done without the barber.

Is it reasonable to look down upon the barber saying that he is a low caste? A lady may be of the brahmin caste but if her child passes urine or excreta does she not clean it? In truth, she is doing the same work as the low caste man. Looking at it this way, no matter what their caste; all mothers are low caste. To not recognize this truth and feel disgust at another individual, who has taken birth like us from the human womb, just because he is a remover of excreta is illogical. It is unjust. Think it over. Do not twist the story of the various castes being born from the various parts of the body of Brahma. The purusha sukta has taken the society as a whole as an individual and gave a poetical representation of the work of various castes. The castes themselves were created by the work they did rather than any perceived superiority or inferiority. Do not give way to this aberration.

This society is a temple to God. Vyasa had spread the dharma in this society. Adisankara had placed some mattresses, arranged the windows of good conduct and morality, and put Valmiki as the curtain on the windows. The sastras have painted the temple. In this way many mahatmas have made arrangements for us to live happily in peace and harmony in this society. But after Sri Sankaracharya, dharma suffered. To rescue the society and to resuscitate true spirituality Sant Tukaram and many other mahatmas have incarnated. They have brought the lamps of karma, Bhakti and knowledge, poured the oil of sincerity, devotion and faith into the lamps, and lighted them. But all this has been lost now. The differences based on caste, lack of faith are the dust and the six enemies of lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and envy are the rubbish, which has filled the temple tarnishing it.

That is why, my patient listeners, I pray to you with my hand joined in supplication; let us all get together and get brooms to sweep the pollution out from this temple of God. Let us make it gleam again with love. If the brothers of a family fight they both become bankrupt; their lawyers grow rich. Let us open our eyes before we too suffer the same fate. Let us remove this mutual hatred from this society, which is our temple, and live together in happiness as brothers. By such behaviour, we will all be happy and we will all benefit. Do not delay. Do not keep postponing the good day. Let us start now and explore the truth.

Please consider me as one of you. It is a result of my accumulated merit that I have been able to talk to you of these things today. You need a broom to rid this society, which is a temple to God, of all the rubbish and the dust of differences and hatred based on caste, creed. Use me as that broom. That is my prayer to you.

Let us now come back to our story. All the friends of Ratanji were sitting with him at his house for the tea party. At that time a mahatma came there. He was Maula saheb, who used to roam along the banks of the Godavari River at Nanded. His face was shining with the super natural glory of godliness. Ratanji and his friends courteously welcomed Maula saheb and made him sit in the seat of honour. They provided him with courteous hospitality. The party was over. Ratanji garlanded Maula saheb to honour him with faith and devotion and presented him a coconut.

Maula saheb said, "Ratanji, do not wait any longer. Start immediately for Shirdi. As you see Baba, convey my salaams to him. You will not find a fakir equal to that excellent yogi, Sai Baba anywhere. You will realize his divine power over time your self. Not only that. The time is now ripe for your desires to be fulfilled." Maula saheb blessed Ratanji and left. Ratanji was very happy with the Maula saheb's darshan as he felt it a good augury. He started immediately for Shirdi.

Ratanji reached Shirdi and saluted Baba reverently. Baba looked at him in a kindly manner and said, "Oh you have come? Very good. I was thinking about you. Your troubles are over. You do not have to worry any more. That is all alright, but have you brought me any

dakshina?" Ratanji replied with devotion, "Baba, you just have to command me and I will give any amount within my means as dakshina." Baba said, "Do not worry; I do not want a big amount. Just give me five rupees. That will be enough. By the way, as you have already given me three rupees and twelve annas out of the five; you owe me just a rupee and four annas. That will be fine". Ratanji was perplexed. He thought, "I have never come to Shirdi or met Baba before this meeting. When did I ever give the three rupees and twelve annas to him as dakshina?"

He made no demur but gave what Baba asked. But the thought was still haunting his mind. He was raking his brains trying to understand Baba's meaning but to no avail. On the second day Baba said, "Ratan, what are you thinking? I came to your house on the day you were starting for Shirdi. You gave me a light repast and looked after me well." Ratanji did not still understand what Baba meant. He took leave of Baba and returned to Nanded. But he continued to think of Baba's words. One day, he was going over his accounts and saw the account for the day of the tea party, when he had honored Maula saheb. The expenditure that day came to just the amount Baba said was received by him. Ratanji was ecstatic with happiness. Later by the grace of that mountain of compassion, he got children too. What can one lack when one has found a kalpa vruksha called Sai Baba?

Listeners! Baba has taught us a moral in this incident. He has taught us that no matter where his devotees are, he will protect them and give them all that is auspicious. He also taught us that the expenditure incurred in satsang and in the looking after the saints reaches him. When we do the worship of saints and mahatmas it is as if we have worshipped Sri Sai Baba. That worship reaches him too.

Ratanji's friends had all sat together without any feelings of ill will or hatred even though they were of different castes and creeds. Baba was pleased with that. The hospitality extended to Maula saheb was received by Baba too. So my dear listeners, open your eyes quickly! The differences and hatreds based on creeds and castes are not at all helpful to our progress.

### **The leelas of Sai Baba**



The great yogis and mahatmas of the past such as Sri Jnaneswar, Narsi Mehta, Eknath, Tukaram, Savata Mali, Kabir, Gora kumbhar, Bodhale, Samarth Ramadas and other were great devotees of God. Sri Sai Baba is also a saint of the same order. There is no difference between them. I pay my obeisance to that one who is in the form of all the sadhus- Sri Sai Baba.

Once I sat in front of him and stubbornly insisted that he show me some miracle. Then Sri Sai Baba made the holy Ganga flow from his toes and immersed me in bliss.

In this manner, Sri Sai Baba did many divine leelas and left his body while in sitting position, in the month of Asvayuja, on the tenth day of the lunar fortnight in the Abhijeet mahurta. In the Muslim calendar it was the 9th day of the Mohurram month. That was in the English year 1918 and the year 1840 in the Hindu calendar. It was the day of the festival of Seemollanghan, when everybody ceremonially crosses the borders of his village to celebrate the victory of the mother Durga over the demonic forces (Vijaya Dasami). The divine Baba chose that day to cross the border of this world. His body has been kept in such a manner that both the Muslim as well as the Hindu devotees can visit and have his darshan.

I got a divine dream immediately after Sri Sai Baba entered mahasamadhi. I will let you know the details of the dream. In that dream, Sri Sai Baba who was none other than Sri Rama had crossed the borders of this world and went to Vaikuntha, the abode of Sri Hari. There the Almighty Sri Mahavishnu had come to the gates of Vaikuntha on the pretext of Seemollanghan but actually to welcome Sri Sai Baba along with mahatmas such as Sanaka,

Sananda, Suka, Prahlada, Dhruva, Vibhishana, Narada, Tumbura, Maruti, Sabari, Sugreeva, Siriyala, Nandagopa, Yasoda, Bheem, Arjuna, Dharma Raja, Sri Shankara, Madhvacharya, Ramanuja, Matsyendranath, Ghoraknath, Gahaninath, Sopanadev, Changdev, Namdev, Gora kumbhar, Damaji pant, Tulsidas, Rohidas, Eknath, Savata mali, Bodhale bua, Sri Samarth Ramadas, Tukaram Maharaj, Sajan Kasai, Chokha Mahar, Narsi Mehta, Nagar and Kamaldas.

On seeing Sri Sai Baba Kamaldas ran to him and clasped him to his breast. He could not speak for some time but silently enjoyed the bliss of reunion. After a while he said, "My father! Baba! Where did you go for such a long time leaving me alone here? I was burning with anguish for a glimpse of you." Then the other mahatmas consoled him, "Why cry now? Your father Kabir has returned. He was in Shirdi all this while to show the right path to the people of this world. Now he will stay on with us." The rishis all hailed Baba. The celestial beings sang in his honour. Then Sri Sai Baba took his seat alongside Srimannarayana. I was prostrating to their lotus feet clasping them to my heart when I woke up. This was my dream. The physical body of Sri Sai Baba was taken in a great procession by Kakasaheb Dixit and was put in mahasamadhi in the Buti wada. Gopal Mukund Buti was a very rich man of rare good fortune. He had great devotion for the feet of Sri Sai Baba. Now Baba is in Samadhi in the building constructed by him. Many devotees have experienced that Baba is still there. Nobody ever feels that he has died. If any one feels so, it is just ignorance. It is said that he was not born of the human womb. Where is death for one who has not taken birth? He is beyond both birth and death. He is one without end. He is indivisible. He is the ocean of knowledge.

Dear listeners! Of the devotees of Sri Sai Baba, Sri Narayan Govind Chandorkar was the foremost. As Kalyan swami was to Samarth Ramadas so was Chandorkar to Sri Sai Baba. Hari pant, Kaka Dixit, Buti, Mahajan, Harda Sadhu Bhayya, Govindrao Dhabholkar, Baba Tarkhad, Moreshwar Pradhan, Balasaheb Bhate, Purushottam Avaste, Baba M B Rege, Raghunath Tendulkar, His wife Savitribai, Malegaon fakir, Purandhare, Nanasaheb Nimonkar, Thatya Patil, Madhavrao Deshpande, Ramachandra Patil and so many others were his devotees. I have told some of the names earlier. Is it possible for me to name everyone?

Oh the able Sai! I kneel before you and seek your protection and make a request to you. Please make me worthy of your generosity. I am as the dust of the feet of the mahatmas. It is only you that can save me. I know that you are the ark which enables me to cross the ocean of worldliness. Oh Sai Maharaj! Do not throw this Das Ganu away from the shade of your lotus feet. This is my earnest prayer. My guru Vaman Shastri has passed away. That is why I am an orphan now. I am still too young to look after myself so you have to look after me and nourish me. Baba! You are in the form of all sadhus. You are Vaman Shastri. You alone are my father.

The divine history of Sri Sai Baba is like the limitless ocean of divine nectar. May all the auspiciousness attend to those who read this history as well as those who listen to it. This is the prayer of Das Ganu who is serving Sri Sai Baba by the singing of his story and by hearing his leelas.

Weal be to all.

All Hail to Sri Sai Baba who is the Brahman.

*This is the end of the 53rd chapter of 'Bhakti Saraamrit' written by Das Ganu Maharaj.  
(Contributed by Source: "Sri Sai Gurucharitra" originally by Santkavi Sri Das Ganu Maharaj.  
Translated from Telugu version by Sri SVL with an Introductory Preface by Sri Sainathuni Sarathbabuji)*

### **Das Ganu discarding pride**

*It is our nature to enthusiastically share our convictions about Sai devotion with others and expect them to follow the same. Those who have seen the miracles of Lord Sai tend to wish that the grace that they have received should also be bestowed upon others. Thus, every Sai devotee is a Sai servant involving in spreading the love and message of Sai. While some*

*indulge in Sai activities with voluntary willingness, others accomplish the same indirectly by sharing their experiences with Sai. It is natural that the good results of everyone's such actions depend on their capabilities and the extent of their involvement. However, what God wants is the true love and devotion but not the magnitude of their gross efforts! In the great epic Ramayana, the efforts put forth by the squirrel on the sand is considered equal to that of mighty Hanuman. Lord Rama looked at the specks of sands that squirrel contributed to the bridge with the same love and appreciation as that of the boulders moved effortlessly by the monkey God.*

*Occasionally, an intense participation in spreading God's words and involvement in such service leads some to believe that their service to Sai is superior and not those of others. This leads to feelings of jealousy and hatred amongst Sai children eventually leading to their spiritual downfall. Only Lord Sai, the merciful Sadguru can save those from such eventuality. Once, Das Ganu Maharaj had to face a similar situation. Even though Das Ganu was the one that inspired thousands of listeners through his spellbinding Sai gospel, he used to be averse to one particular female devotee in Shirdi Village. He used to criticize her in others' presence, some times in a very acrid tone. Once, as Das Ganu was indulging himself in such a deplorable act, Sainath Maharaj summoned Das Ganu and chided him for his behaviour. Baba scolded Das Ganu that people involved with God's work must not possess arrogance and that Das Ganu should seek forgiveness at the feet of the woman devotee who was the subject of Das Ganu's contempt. It was not easy for Das Ganu, the most revered kirtankar of his times who commanded respect from his followers, to stoop down and fall at the feet of a woman. However, he had to obey the Great Master and in the process he was reformed to a humble servant of God and not an arrogant apostle who thought himself to be superior to others!*

