

Preface

This treatise on Sai Baba is intended to contain as much information as possible of great interest to the devotees and the public. The volume has been growing and is still growing, so that at a very early stage it was discovered that the book would be too big for a single volume. It has been decided to split the book into three parts, the first part being the preliminary part containing matter which is useful for understanding the latter parts. An account is given of his early life, how he was understood and misunderstood, how he looked insignificant at first and became all important later, and what various and even conflicting views were and are taken of Sai's life. Amongst these, in the first part, a good portion has been allotted to view Sai Baba as *Guru* or *Samartha Sadguru*, especially in dealing with his *Ankita* children. To some, this devotion of a large number of pages to the subject of *Gurus* might appear to be unnecessary and may even be displeasing. On the other hand, it is noted that those who approach Sai Baba in dead earnest to achieve the highest that life holds for them were and are anxious to view in that light and deal with him in that capacity in which he would be of the greatest use to them for achieving the goal of life. And it is as *Guru* to all, that persons of all faiths and places can meet at his feet. His worship was first begun by Mahlsapathy and others as he was a supreme saint, a *Paramaguru*, an advantage to resort to and who is a necessity for one's attainment of *moksha* and other high aims of life. Mahlsapathy, his friends and the hermits meeting Baba in his earliest days at Shirdi realised what a highly advanced soul he was, how full he was of divine nature and therefore possessed of power to impart that nature or realisation to those seeking it in the proper way and to impart to various people various other benefits which circumstances might warrant. In the Mundaka Upanishad¹ we find the root of what has been expanded later in the Bhagavata. That Upanishad says that a self realiser or person of God-realisation can achieve anything and be in any world that he thinks of.

Yam Yam lokam manasa samvibhati,
Viscuddha satwah Kamayate Yamscha Kaman,
Tamtam lokam jayate,

Taamscha kaman,

Tasmat atmajnanam hyarchayet Bhutikamah.

The Upanishad adds, therefore those who are anxious about their own welfare must resort to such an Atmajnana. That was evidently the feeling of Mahlsapathy though perhaps he might never have heard of the Mundaka Upanishad. Baba's saying *Main Allah hum* or I am Laxmi Narain² is *Atmajnana*. The same doctrine is expanded in Srimad Bhagavata³ and other works. The *Jnani* is compared to *Agni*.

Bhungte Sarvatra Bhoktrunam

Dahan Prak Uttara Asubham.

that is, 'The *Jnani* goes on eating what is offered by devotees just as the fire consumes every oblation offered by devotees and completely burns out all the evil *karma* that may have been committed by them formerly or may be committed thereafter'. This is seldom actively and fully held before the mind of persons going to feed saints. For instance, Bayyaji Bai, when starting the feeding of Sai Baba from his very first entry into Shirdi, and pursuing him into the jungle for feeding him, dimly sensed the glory and appropriateness of feeding such a saint though it is clear that her having been Baba's sister, *janma* after *janma*, was the *Rinanubandha* that, accounted for her anxiety and zeal to feed him. Sai Baba's nature was slowly understood, and Volume I shows how very slow the process was. But at one stage, we might say that Baba had left obscurity behind and came out in full blaze like the noon-day sun upon the public. From about 1910 the blaze had begun, and in 1918 the blaze had advanced, and by 1918 the blaze was so powerful as to strike even comparatively blind people. However, there are such blind people even now whose eyes have to be opened to see the glory of the light of that sun, Baba. Baba's work has begun and is anything but finished. What the future holds seems to be far more important than anything already achieved by him. The object of this book is to help people to realise more and more the great work that is being done by Baba and his essential greatness. Therefore, there was a special necessity to hurry up the publication of this 'book. It was ready in some form even last year. But financial and other difficulties

prevented any publication and even now those difficulties permit only the publication of part after part, and that is one special reason why volume I alone is being issued now. In trying to cut up one closely inter-related mass of information about Sai Baba instituting his life, *lilas*, and teachings, one feels a great difficulty. However much thought is given to the subject of separation of parts, we find it difficult to say which chapter should get into what part. So in a rough way, Part I has to be closed with roughly one-third of the size" of the matter ready for printing, including in it the early history and accounts of Baba and the materials necessary for getting an idea of Baba as a *Samartha Sadguru*, who will help one to attain the highest in life, while at the same time enabling one to get the other incidental benefits of contact with such a saint. Chapters about *Ankita* children are the natural corollary of the chapter about 'Baba's Love or *Prema*' and 'Baba's *Samsara* in this world, and Baba's *Brahma Nishta*. Baba said to Nona G. Chandorkar 'You want to escape from *samsara*. I cannot escape from it myself. As long as there is the body, *samsara* is there. One cannot be released from *samsara* by running away to a jungle or by other similar process'. There is in this statement an important question of attitude to life. Several great saints who made great strides in *Atma Jnana* and God-realisation simply contended themselves with remaining absorbed in *Para Brahman* or in their *Iswara*, Personal God, and did not wish to continue any of their lives' activities. Some condemn this attitude. Others applaud it. But we should do neither. In the world, there are various sorts of fruits and views and in Divine Providence any soul may select its own fruit that is the particular attitude to life that suits it best, especially in view of its *poorva karma* and training. In Sai's life, the above quoted views as to *samsara* stress the fact that he was never for deserting society in order to be completely drowned in Impersonal or Personal God. On the other hand, he insisted upon being in the thick of life attending to his duties, drawing to him the very large number of persons, who contacted him in previous lives or in the present, all the while with his concentration God, unimpaired by such contact and in stressing the importance of performance of *rinanubandha* obligations with similar detachment upon his devotees also; he set

an example of what he taught. This matter will be dealt with at greater length in the Third Part which contain his teachings. The second volume or part mainly consist of Baba's dealings with various prominent persons showing how they were drawn to him and influenced by him, what progress they made and how they were helped to make it by reason of their contact .with him. This naturally includes teachings, for teachings form an important part of the way in which Baba developed people who came to him, and yet it is not by what we call 'teachings' that Baba moulded several prominent devotees. Therefore whatever is left over after dealing with Baba's prominent devotees in Part II must come into Part III, which as the residuary and final part must include general matter not covered by the previous parts.

The object of this work has been repeatedly declared to be practical. In cutting off a third of the book and sending it immediately before the public, the author is eminently practical. He wants that as many as possible who are hungering and thirsting to contact Sai Baba should have their satisfaction at once, that as many as are anxious to become Baba's *ankita* children should be immediately enabled to become such, and that those who wish to understand this mysterious universe and the puzzling problems of spiritual development with the aid of what Baba said and did, should be given an immediate chance of picking up as much as possible and proceed with it. Above all, the author feels sure that there is a considerable section of serious minded persons who wish to adopt Sai baba for their *Gurudeva* and want to be trained by him and taught by him every way in which Baba would consider it fit to teach and .in them. Baba's methods have not been exhaustively studied, but they include what is known as the *Dakshinamurthi* method.

Chitram Vatatarormule

Vridhdah Scishyah Guruh Yuva

Guruostu Mounam Vyakhyanam

Scishyastu chinna samscaayah.

this means, What a wonder! At the foot of the banyan tree, aged, grey bearded disciples are seated at the feet of a *Guru*, who is young. The *Guru* keeps silent

and talks not a word. The doubts however, of the disciples are all dispelled. One naturally asks, 'How is that possible?' In our present day civilisation, we have only understood conveyance of thought by speech. But with persons of the coming race or the fully developed human being that is represented by Baba, one of the most elementary power is to convey the thought impulse to action without utterance of a single word. 'Radiating thought' is an expression used about several great souls. A person seated before such a *Mahatma* feels that his whole being is permeated, controlled, communed with and moulded by the *Mahatama* without the use of a single word and without direction that any book should be studied or any practice should be followed. Fuller details of this will be found in the chapter on Upasani Baba in Part II. Apart from radiating mere ordinary thought, radiating wisdom or bliss and filling the disciple's soul with illumination never before experienced appear to be very grand, perhaps the grandest feat. Narayan Ashram formerly called Mr. Toser⁴ sat by Baba. Narayan Ashram says "He graciously conveyed to me without any words the feeling that differences between various souls were unreal, that the One real thing is that which underlies all."⁵ That means that he completely forgot himself, that, Toser's soul lost the idea that he was a single Toser with joys and sorrows, and limitations, of one body but instead, he perceived absolute bliss within him. As there was nothing else, within that bliss was Toser and he was identified with Sai Baba. And all sense of separateness was gone. This is the momentary conversion of an ordinary *Jiva* into *Satchitananda* or something on the verge of it. Baba's powers were similarly extended to G.S. Khaparde and Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiv Tarkhad. This activity of Baba would be very highly esteemed by many a reader who might consider it the privilege of his life, the total achievement of one's life to get into *Satchitananda* at least for a moment at the feet of Baba. Baba's training, teachings and achievements were of widely different sorts and were suited to the conditions of each who approached him and are suited to the conditions of those who approach him now. Baba is still a *Guru*, a Divine Personality, not a mere abstraction and can be seized by those who are in dead earnest. Unfortunately for mankind, very few are so earnest. Most stop with

raising preliminary questions as to the impossibility of such an experience or its undesirability and the various objections from the standpoint of the learning that they have already acquired. The ifs, the buts, the hows, the whys and the other numerous ways in which they face the problem prevent most readers from having the chance of approaching Baba in the right receptive spirit with full earnestness and getting the highest out of him. If the highest is not possible at the present moment, Baba suitably develops them either in this life or in the life beyond, for Baba has repeatedly undertaken to guide his devotees, life after life, promising to be born with them for that purpose. If this is not a sufficient attraction, it is difficult to find anything more attractive. There are people to whom these are not attractions, but the chance of getting Rs.500 a month, or a fine estate, or success in a particular contest, would be esteemed of far greater interest and importance than any of the things mentioned above. People's ways are peculiar and Baba does not expect every one to come to him fully perfect. Any one with all his defects may try to approach Baba and Baba will mould him, change his view point and his capacity to understand, appreciate and desire. The correct attitude is very important. That in turn depends upon one's view of one's life, one's neighbours and God. If one thinks of oneself to be a mere body, all earthly attractions overwhelm. But Baba by the grace of his *Guru Mourshad* was, as he said "taken away from the body which was but his house." That is, the *Guru* showed him that he was the spirit and not the mere body, that his interests were not to be confounded with the thousand and one things of the organism or one's artificial or sentimental personality closely associated with the organism. Baba has in turn developed several of those approaching him, at least partially to shake off the *Dehatmabuddhi* and obsession that the body is one's self. If a person once realises that he is not this organism and this body, but is something very much wider, which may be the result of Baba's training him to pitch himself into all other's hearts and identify himself with those souls, then the present necessity and the desires and aversions formerly prevailing with oneself, all drop off. The scales fall from one's eyes. All values are different. The world looms as something totally different from what it did. One sets about it and acts in a

different way. The results therefore of Sai contact will be of such wide variety and importance that it is not possible to set them out here. The earlier a person seizes upon a book about Baba and makes a careful and voracious study of everything about Baba, and a sincere attempt to absorb all that he can out of it, the better. We are sure that even after a perusal of Part I alone, several would achieve the position of becoming Baba's *Ankita* children, and there are already a good number of them. Several would definitely fix themselves up as Sai's *sishyas* anxious with his help to get up step after step in the ladder of spiritual progress. The details of these steps it is neither possible nor desirable to state here and now. One step seen at a time is enough. Baba gives the needed push and sees to the proper progress of everyone according to the circumstances and it does not matter whether one's progress is achieved completely now or later. If complete progress is not achieved in one life,

Bahunan Janmanam Ante,

Jnanavan Maam Prapadyate

that is, The *jnani* reaches God after many births. There is sure to be appreciable advance in one's position and one's nature as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita⁶. Thus one feels that he has after all come to the right place, namely, the feet of Sai Baba.

Before closing this preface, acknowledgements have to be made for all the help which have taken shape in the form of this book. The need for a complete biography in English has been felt by the public and by this author for over a dozen years, but something or other prevented the work from being undertaken and carried through. While in that condition, October 1953 brought on a serious breakage of the thigh bone and sixty days' confinement in the hospital, and subsequently a very serious attack of dysentery served to complete what appeared to be a total wreck of the physical and mental constitution. No energy was left to the author to move about, to think out, to look into the authorities or to write out a biography. There was no health or freshness and energy. In such a state of affairs, which continued yearly up to the middle of 1954, it was a wonder to the author himself that he discovered the object of his life being spared d the

object also of sufficient of energy, mental and physical, being left to him. It was clear that the remaining energy and remaining life were intended to be devoted to Baba just as the previous decades of this author's life were. So the matter of this big book within his memory was fairly and easily recallable. With some little effort, he began work and strange to say, though he had no power to sit and write, Baba provided his *Ankita* child with a stenographer who, out of modesty, wishes to conceal his light under a nom-de-plume R.R. Without the help of a stenographer, it would be impossible to turn out any work either for the book or for the *Sai Sudha* or for the numerous pamphlets that were being constantly requisitioned by others from this author. But by Baba's provision, this stenographer worked at all the .above matter and spent a large number of days in the year, that is, all the spare time that he could command, by the side of the author doing this work merely out of love for Baba. His work, if it had been charged for according to the prevailing scales, would have involved the author in the expenditure of over a thousand rupees which, of course, were not available. But Baba, like Sri Krishna, always provides *Mat parayanas* those who are devoted to him entirely, by looking after the affairs of those who assist. Says Bhagavata⁷

Samuddharanti Ye Vipram
Seedantam mat Parayanam
Tan uddharishyeham Achirat
Apatbhyo Nawn Rivarnavat.

that is, Sri Krishna says, 'Those who rescue my entirely devoted *bhakta* from his troubles, them I shall rescue and help from all troubles and calamities, just as a boat rescues one in the ocean. Baba somehow gives the feeling to the author's helpers that they are being looked after by him.

The author's health being, since October 1953, extremely unreliable, the work would have been impossible but for the due provision of medical help. Here again Baba's help to his *Ankita* child is remarkable. Baba designated a doctor in a very good position and with excellent knowledge and made him repeatedly attend, without receiving any recompense at all, upon the author and that doctor

is still attending upon him. Here also the above mentioned stanza applies. When the work was helped on in this way, the size of the volume grew and grew, and the task of reviewing even the original typed pages was too much for the physically weak author. Sri Dewan Bahadur R.V. Krishna Ayyar, for whom the author has always entertained high regard and love, went through over 500 sheets of typed matter making the necessary corrections. This was in the midst of his official work. So sincere thanks are due to him as also to Miss Indira, professor of English, Government College, Coimbatore, who was kind enough to go through 200 pages of the manuscript. Thanks are also due to the retired Law College Professor of Indore, Sri V.N. Visvanatham, and several others for having taken down notes necessary for dictation of the book. As already stated it looks impossible to publish a big book of 900 or more pages with a depleted cash balance in the All India Sai Samaj. It is Baba's grace alone that made the work see the light of day and also aided in getting the means for publication. The royal present of Rs.5,000 by His Highness The Maharaja of Mysore enabled the Samaj to purchase a Press and types. In the last twelve months, 360 odd pages constituting the first volume have been printed and got ready for publication. Stage after stage, idea after idea, and reference after reference, the remarkable help that ^fj/as suddenly forthcoming was the clearest evidence to the Author that Baba is giving unstinted support for this publication, fact it is not mere modesty but love of truth that makes the author say that the real producer of this book is Baba himself.

There may be numerous others who have helped this author in the course of getting up this book, but it is impossible to name them all here, and the author's apology may be accepted for the omission.

B.V. NARASIMHA SWAMI 1955

One

Who is Sai Baba?

The phenomenal spread, like wild fire of faith in Sri Sai Baba throughout this great country, within the last decade or two and its wonderful hold on the mass mind naturally roused the curiosity of many to put the above question and have necessitated the writing of a full and clear account. Those who know nothing of the personality in whom the faith of many centers, ought to know something of him. Those with prejudices or with wrong or defective views about him must be enabled to cast aside such prejudices and views and to acquire better and more accurate ideas about him. Those who have just a faint or superficial notion of Sai Baba must likewise be enabled to get a deeper, wider and more authentic idea about him, so that they may thereby extend or increase their contact with him.

Correct knowledge of any kind is good. But correct knowledge of facts connected with the lives of saints is not only good for the individual who knows them, but is beneficial to society as in the long run it promotes social unity and ethical, spiritual and religious study and endeavor. Lives of saints give not merely information for the brain of the reader, but food and strength for his heart, and they facilitate the general advancement of the temporal and spiritual interests of mankind. By the study of such lives, basic ignorance and illusions are dispelled. *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* qualities such as egotism, pride, hatred, and cruelty are checked or suppressed and noble virtues like humility, earnestness, love to all, service of saints, *Guru Bhakti* and *Jnana* are developed. These in due course lead to the goal of God-realisation. Apart from these, even the temporal benefits derived by individuals from appreciation and knowledge of Sri Sai Baba and the acquisition of a real living touch with him are great enough to justify an attempt to place a book like this before the public.

Further, there is even now an important section of readers, however small their number may be, that require something more than mere bread and butter or health, wealth and worldly comforts, whose spiritual longings should be met in some measure by a work which presents something of the facts about a unique

and perhaps one of the strangest of known spiritual personalities adorning the earth during recent times.

The task undertaken is however extremely difficult. There exists a mass of information about what Sai Baba said and did during his life time and about the experience of him which people who met him in life had. There is an even greater mass of evidence about the experiences of devotees who have after 1918, that is, after his *Mahasamadhi*, treated him as their true God or *Ishtadevata*. The difficulty however is to remove the grain from the chaff, to sift and arrange all the mass of evidence that exists and to present what, after enquiry and investigation, has to be accepted as true beyond reasonable doubt. If the evidence which exists regarding Sai Baba is properly sifted and carefully examined and selected, a trustworthy biography can be written and may form a useful inducement for progress in spiritual matters.

The difficulty of sifting the evidence before us is by no means slight. First, Sai Baba himself left his body more than thirty-six years ago. It is not therefore given to a biographer to go and ask him about the true facts and discover the truth. Very few who met him, or benefitted from him till 1918, made use of their contact with him to collect and record facts about him. Many of them did not understand him at all. For the mere sight of Sai did not enable a man to understand him. The right approach or mentality that is necessary for understanding a saint was wanting in many who met him, and Sai Baba himself once said: "They were coming for water to the supplier of water, but insisted on holding their pots with their mouths down, so unreceptive they were".

To many who saw him, Baba's deeds and sayings were rather confusing or perplexing. For instance, when he said, I am not at Shirdi, but everywhere.⁸ He who thinks Baba is in Shirdi alone has totally failed to see Baba.⁹ You have been with me 18 years. Does Sai mean to you only this 3^{1/2} cubits height of body?¹⁰

I am God, Allah"

such statements appeared to them like eccentric pronouncements of a mad man. In fact his queer unconventional ways, his habit of accommodating

himself to all sorts of people including Hindus, Mohammadans and others, and his fearless and unorthodox originality failed to impress many of his visitors. Sectarian prejudices and narrow views led many to think and pronounce all sorts of opinions about him. Even G.G. Narke¹² and Syama¹³ took him at first to be a mad man. Others such as Londa¹⁴ and Megha¹⁵ took him to be a communalist. A few people took him to be a hypnotist¹⁶, a black magician¹⁷ while others even denounced him as an immoral and dangerous man who was ruining Hindus and Hinduism¹⁸. When new comers like Dr. D.M. Mulky tried to go to Shirdi, railway personnel en route stopped several by their abuse and vilification of Baba.

This kind of attitude to Sai Baba is to some extent prevalent even now. Many are the persons who hate Sai, presuming from the name and residence at the mosque that he must have been an iconoclastic *Mussalman*, while others are indifferent to him, as they have not been fortunate enough to get proper information about him.

There can therefore be no doubt that there is a great need for a book of facts regarding Sai Baba like the present one. The difficulty of the task should not act as a deterrent. One very closely associated devotee of his, now living, still believes that Baba was only a *Mohammadan*. What can 'only a Mohammadan' mean? It means that even after 25 years of personal experience of him and 36 of his post mortem glories, the devotee treats him as a communalist just as he did when Baba was in the flesh. On the other hand, to Sri. M.B. Rege, a retired High Court Judge, Sai is only God, the *Paramatma*, and this view he held even in 1914.

Baba wished to convince the devotee, if he was a Hindu, that he was *Mahavishnu*, *Lakshminarayan*, etectra and he bade water flow from his feet, as Ganga issued from *Mahavishnu's* feet. The devotee saw it and praised him as *Rama Vara*, but as for the water coming from his feet, that devotee simply sprinkled a few drops on his head and would not drink it, coming as it did from a Mohammadan's feet. So great was the prejudice of ages that even one, who thought of him as Vishnu, thought he was a Muslim Vishnu. Prejudices die hard and the devotee wondered how people can believe that Baba was a Brahmin and

that his parents were Brahmins when he had lived all his life in a mosque and when he was believed to be a Muslim. It was only a few persons like S.B. Dhumal who saw clearly that Baba was neither Hindu nor Muslim, but above all castes, sects and religions.¹⁹

It is still fewer people that could rise to the level of accepting Baba's supreme claim²⁰ that he was *Paramatma* in all beings. Such persons naturally worship him as *Ishtadevata*.

Thus there are vast differences, sometimes poles apart between the various ideas which people have about Sai Baba. These render difficult the task of presenting the real Sai as distinguished from the popular distortions of him. His devotees and strangers alike said that Sai could not be understood and that nobody could know the secrets of Sai Baba. Syama called him *Deva*, that is God, but did not always behave as he would towards God.²¹

To a Haji who was proud of his Haj, Baba said "You do not know what is here", that is, in the Sai body or personality. A well known song is²²

"More Babaku Mdrma na Janare koyi More" "None knows my Baba's secret".

Till now, there has not been a good biography containing a fair, full and faithful description of his life. In Marathi, the work that can be thought of when facts about Sai Baba are wanted is Hemad Pant's alias Anna Saheb Dabolkar's Sai Satcharitra. This is a brilliantly written poetical work extending to 53 chapters and over 1000 pages narrating incidents connected with Sai Baba's life, and written in highly florid and resonant Marathi, serving excellently the purpose of *Puranic* study and daily *parayana*. Great as the merits of the book are from the standpoint of a *Bkakta*, it cannot be called a regular biography. It is rather a chronicle of reminiscences or anecdotes relating to him having no arrangement, not even chronological. There is a good adaptation of this Marathi work in an English garb by Sri Gunaji. Other small sketches or introduction to Baba's life have been published in English and other languages, but these also are too tiny to deserve the name of a biography, sketches of a few early incidents in Baba's life were issued as poetic pieces by Das Ganu Maharaj of Nanded during the life time of Baba in about 1906. He wrote 6 or 7 chapters on the whole about Sai Baba, and

he published them as part of big books namely, Bhakta Leelamrutha, Santha Kathamrutha and Bakthi Saramrutha. These 7 chapters are printed in Marathi. H.S. Dixit wrote a short biographical preface to Mrs. & Mr. Tendulkar's Sai Bhajan Mala in 1917.

A very short sketch of Sai Baba's life was issued in Gujarati by Amidoss Mehta. This was also before Baba's *Mahasamadhi* in 1918. A slightly more ambitious work was the Life of Baba in Tamil written by the present author. Actually only Part I of it appeared, but even that was not a full account. Subsequent to his *mahasamadhi*, there have appeared a few statements or sketches about Sai Baba, but they are scattered and do not deserve the name of a regular biography. Sai Samasthan itself published Rao Bahadur M.W. Pradhan's book 'A glimpse of Indian spirituality' but it ran upto only about 25 to 30 pages and set out just a handful of facts about Baba²³.

This list practically exhausts all attempts made hitherto to publish a biography of Sai Baba. A faithful and full account of Sai Baba's life based on a careful and critical study of the available material regarding his life and the incidents and anecdotes narrated about him by those who contacted him before and after 1918 is therefore urgently called for and will it is hoped be appreciated by his innumerable devotees.

The author has undertaken this work in a spirit of humility and as a true service of Sai Baba and in the sincere belief that Sai himself has directed him to undertake it. 'Obstacles and difficulties should not frighten us', says Bhartruhari. The most admirable of Sai Baba's charters is 'Why do you fear, when I am here?' This in itself is an answer to those who doubt and fear about the possibility of a successful biography of Sai Baba.

The arrangement of the work requires a few words of explanation. After giving as full and accurate an account of Baba's life, doings and teachings as can be gathered from the available evidence, the author has given a description of the various aspects of Baba and of the various functions which he performed. Further a sketch has been given of the more important disciples who contacted Sai Baba and benefited by such contact and of the circumstances which

attracted them to him. It will be seen that these disciples were mostly Hindus, though some of them were Muslims. In writing separate chapters about Sai Baba's doings and teachings and his disciples, it was inevitable that some teachings and incidents connected with the disciples might happen to be repeated more than once, but the author thought that it was better to allow the repetition so that each chapter may be complete and self-sufficient in itself rather than to leave the reader to go through the previous pages for the purpose of finding out references. As it is, the reader can take up any chapter and read it with interest and will not find himself handicapped for want of knowledge of the previous chapter. Further repetition is essential to ensure a deep impression.

God-realisation is a personal experience and cannot be obtained or explained through the written word. Those who are familiar with Hindu thought and in fact with religious thought generally, can realise the importance of a *Guru* and absolute faith in a *Guru* for the quickening of spiritual growth. "All things are possible to him that believeth". But faith is founded on experience and confidence is increased by tangible proofs. To create such faith and evoke such confidence. God or a God-man *Guru* has to confer wished for benefits on the disciple or devotee and the conferring of such benefits is the instrument with which God works. The less care a devotee has about his bodily or material comforts, the more perfectly he can carry out His will and programme. This book proves beyond doubt how Sai Baba took upon his shoulders the responsibility of looking after the maintenance, health and prosperity of his disciples and devotees.

The advent of Sai Baba was for the uplift of man-kind and a study of this work describing it will, shower upon the readers incalculable benefits both spiritual and temporal in this world and beyond.

Two

Babas Earliest Period

The birth and parentage of Sai Baba are wrapped in mystery. We have not come across a single person who has any direct" knowledge of them. Sai attained his fame at Shirdi in the Bombay state by the end of the 19th Century when he was already grey. It is known that he was not a native of Shirdi. He was

very young when he first came there. In the beginning he left Shirdi off and on, and returned to it. The date of his first arrival at Shirdi cannot be fixed. A very old lady, the mother of Nana Chopdar, said in 1900 that when she was young she first saw Sai Baba at Shirdi, when he was a prepossessing and attractive lad without a moustache, probably in his early teens, and of, whom nothing was known. That so little is known about his early life proves that even then he was leading a secluded life, a real fakir not hankering after the good things of the world but concentrating his attention on higher aims. He was often in solitude, not infrequently under the well known margosa tree called the *Code neeni*, meaning that the leaves of one of its two big branches are not so bitter as margosa leaves usually are and as the leaves of the other big branch are. He had no fixed residence - real *fakirs* have none. He would roam about in the fields and squat at any tree-foot, and had no interest in any worldly matter. One of his later visits to Shirdi, probably the final visit, was on the momentous occasion of Chand Bhai Patel's advent to Shirdi. Chand Bhai Patel was a rich and influential village Patel or Headman, of Dhupkeda village in the Nizam's State not far from Shirdi. His wife's newpew was to be married to a bride at Shirdi, and so in 1872, he came in the evening or night with a huge procession and Sai Baba accompanied him on that occasion from Dhupkeda to Shirdi. After that time except for two months when he was under Jawar Ali Msulana, Sai Baba never left Shirdi but only made a few occasional visits off and on to the neighbouring villages of Rahata or Nimgam, from which he immediately returned to Shirdi. So his final residence was Shirdi from about 1872 till the end of his life in 1918. He discouraged questions on parentage, and gave mostly mystifying answers. On one occasion, he said, his father was *Purusha* and his mother was *Maya* or *Prakriti*, and that in consequence, he came in as the *Dehi* into this world of phenomena²⁴. At another time he said that his uncle had brought him to Shirdi from Aurangabad²⁵. On one momentous occasion, very late in his life, he revealed to Mahlsapathy²⁶ the interesting fact that his parents were Brahmins of Patri in the Nizam's State. Patri is part of Parvani taluk, near Manwath. Sai Baba added, in explanation of the fact that he was living in a Mosque, that while still a tender child his Brahmin parents

handed him over to the care of a *fakir* who brought him up. This is fairly indisputable testimony, as Mahlsapathy was a person of sterling character noted for his integrity, truthfulness and *vairagya*. All persons including Sai Baba, H.S. Dixit, and others held him in very high esteem, and none would doubt his veracity. Sai Baba occasionally showed his interest in Patri and Parvani when people from those parts came to him, by questioning them about the residents of those places. This does not take us very far. But this is practically all that we have about the birth and parentage of Sri Sai Baba.

But who ever his parents were it is quite important to remember that from his earliest infancy he had all the associations or dissociation or detachment a true *vairagi* or *jnani* should have. Having no parents or kinsmen, and being brought up by a *fakir*, he easily picked up his foster-father's *vairagya* and spiritual turn of mind²⁷. Even *that fakir* passed away within four or five years after taking charge of him. The *fakir* directed his wife to take the young child, Baba, and leave him in charge of a noted saintly *zamindar*, Gopal Rao Deshmukh at Selu. The appellation *Deshmukh* was not meaningless in the case of Gopal Rao but denoted an actual appointment as *Deshmukh* or Provincial Governor for Jintur Parganna, and the title or *sanad* of *Deshmukh* had been conferred on him by the descendants of the Peshwas. The exact date of the title cannot be discovered. There are ballads and some old manuscripts in the possession of Deshmukh's descendants which show that somewhere about the first quarter of the last century, the Peshwas recognised his military capacity which enabled him, Gopal Rao, to bring Jintur Parganna under his control with his own horsemen and other followers. Young Baba, left under the care of this Gopal Rao Deshmukh spent the best and the most impressionable part of his life at Selu which was the centre of that Parganna, and which had a fort and castle wherein the Deshmukh resided. The young boy was very greatly attached to his master, and the master in turn was deeply interested in the boy. Consequently the boy was with the master at all times, whether the latter was in the field or at *puja*, whether he was in the garden or in the court. Baba seems to have had no education given to him at any time, that is, no book study, and no masters either in the regional

language which must have been Marathi or Telugu or in any other language. But real education of the highest sort, he had in plenty. This Deshmukh, unlike many other Deshmukhs or *zamindars* of his times, was not a dissolute and sensuous person of brutal nature revelling in cruelty and violation of all moral rules or scruples. On the other hand, he was an extremely pious devotee greatly attached to Tirupati Venkatesa whose image he worshipped daily in his own castle. He was rich, and liberal, and patronised learning and piety. Hence an abundance of real education could be picked up by the young child Baba when attending on his master. This Deshmukh's worship of Venkatesa was not of the ordinary sort. He had direct communion with his *Ishta Devata*, and the guidance of that *Ishta Devata* in all His affairs made his life a-remarkable spiritual and temporal success. He maintained his political sovereignty against all odds, and the ballads of his time show that his regiment was greatly esteemed by the Peshwas whom he helped and feared by the Muslim Nizam whom he opposed. This Deshmukh, however, spent much of his time in holy pastimes. He went round visiting holy places, and at one of those places a remarkable incident took place showing his nature. He occupied, with his retainers, a haunted house. The original owner of the house had died and become a *Brahma-Rakshas*, who would appear suddenly at midnight and kill the occupants. But Gopal Rao, the devout worshipper of Venkatesa, was not afraid. He carried on the *puja* of Venkatesa and Saligram right up to the middle of the night. The evil spirit, dishevelled and hairy all over, appeared and demanded in a terrific voice, 'Who are you? How dare you come to my house?' Then Gopal Rao coolly replied that the statement that the house was his was a mistake when there was nothing in common between him and the materials making up the house. The- spirit, infuriated, tried to approach him, though with some fear. Gopal Rao waited, and when the spirit came within a few yards, he hurled the *abhikshekam* water on the head of that spirit. At once this effected a marvellous change. The spirit fell down prostrate, and recited its past history and prayed that Gopal Rao should take possession of the vast hoards of wealth which the spirit had made when alive and which it had kept in the house and watched over and to utilise all that; to release it from its

Brahma Rakshas state. Gopal Rao agreed, and carried away the treasures to Kasi where he performed the requisite rites for the liberation of the *Brahmarakshas*.

Another noteworthy incident in his travels²⁸ was at Ahmedabad. There at the tomb of Suvag Shah which he approached, a remarkable incident occurred. The tomb actually perspired with joy and spoke to him. It stated that Gopal Rao was formerly Ramananda of Kasi and that now he had become a *grihasta* and a ruler but all the same, his former devotee Kabir would be coming to him soon. It was after this, that young Baba was brought to him by the *fakir's* widow, and Gopal Rao recognised him as Kabir.

Amongst the influences that mould the character of young boys, perhaps the strongest is that of the father or the -mother living with them, and shaping their mind from hour to hour. Baba had no mother or father to mould him but he had first a foster father, the *fakir* and next a master who ultimately became his *Diksha Guru*. So, the nature and character of Gopal Rao Deshmukh must first be understood to know how Baba's nature and character developed. This Gopal Rao, though a *zamindar* or rural chieftain of ancient days maintained a character and reputation unattained by any other *zamindar* of his time. One incident in his life illustrates this point. One evening as he sat on the ramparts of his fort, it was quite dusk, and in that half darkness, a fair damsel of some twenty years came very close to the ramparts on the ground level, and thinking that there was nobody, sat down and exposed her body. Seeing a nude usually provokes lust. Others in his position would have immediately ordered some one to go and carry away the damsel and bring her for their gratification. With Gopal Rao the sinful impulse lasted only for a moment. His conscience rebelled, and he at once thought of Venkatesa and appealed to him for forgiveness. He viewed every woman other than his wife as really in the position of a mother to him. *Matruvat Paradarmscha* says the *niti sloka*. That is, no lustful thoughts should be directed to any person other than one's wife. So, treating this lustful thought as an enormous sin, he rapidly went down to his worship room, and there, before his *Ishta Devata's* image Sri Venkatesa, he repented with bitter tears this momentary

lust, and then resolved to punish his eyes for having cast lustful glances at a mother, which is nothing short of incest. He at once seized two sharp needles and poked his eyes with them. Blood issued, and he moaned. His relations soon came up and noting the fact, blamed him for the folly of losing his eyes for such a trivial matter. As his eye sight was absolutely essential for guarding them and the Jintur Parganna from the Muslims, and as they were necessary also for purposes of worship, his *Guru* asked him to pray to Lord Venkatesa for recovery of sight. Accordingly he prayed and recovered sight. The fame of his purity, nobility of character and ability to draw Venkatesa's power for curing ailments, spread abroad. Blind people and others came to him, and his very touch was curative. To a woman born blind, he applied chillies to her eyes with Venkatesa's name on his lips. This cured her and restored her sight. This incident, therefore, shows the nature and characteristics of Baba's *Guru*, Gopal Rao Deshmukh. In his highest moments of absorption, Gopal Rao uttered words which were the words of Venkatesa. He became one with Venkatesa at that time. So Baba always referred to his *Guru* as Venkusa, a contraction of Venkatesa. Perfect chastity, thorough self-control, invariable rectitude, perfect truthfulness, generosity, and serviceability to all which were the leading characteristics of his *Guru* became - transplanted and took deep root in the disciple, Sri Sai Baba.

We shall next proceed to narrate how the full personality including curative power, descended from the *Guru* to Baba.

Baba's being favoured by the Master evoked considerable jealousy amongst the *Guru's* retainers and some of them resolved to kill young Baba by hurling brickbats at him. During a *chaturmasya*, between August to November, Gopal Rao was in the garden and young Baba was attending upon him. The villains hurled bricks at Baba. One of the bricks came very near Baba's head, but the *Guru* saw it, and by his order it stood still in mid air unable to proceed further or hit Baba. Another man threw a second brick to hurt Baba. But Gopal Rao got up and got the brick on his head. This led to profuse bleeding. Baba was moved to tears, and he begged his Master to send him away as the Master was getting harmed from his unfortunate company. But the Master declined to send him

away. As for the injury, the Master bandaged it with a shred torn from his own cloth, and then suddenly said, "I see that the time has come for me to part with you. To-morrow at 4 p.m. I shall leave this body, not as a result of this injury, but by my own *yoga* power of *Swechcha Marana*²⁹. Therefore, I shall now vest my full spiritual personality in you. For that purpose, fetch milk from yonder black cow". Young Baba went to Hulla the *lambadi* in charge of the cow, who pointed out that the cow was barren, had not calved, and could not, therefore, yield milk. All the same he came with the cow to the chieftain Gopal Rao who just touched it from horns to tail and told the *lambadi*, 'Now pull at the teats.' The *lambadis* pull drew out plenty of milk and this milk was given to Baba with Gopal Rao's blessings that the full power and grace of the *Guru* should pass on to young Baba. This was the *Diksha*, the investiture of the *Guru's* personality, which young, Baba underwent. So far as mystic powers were concerned, immediately an opportunity arose for proving the transfer of power *Saktinipata*. The villain whose brickbat had hit Gopal Rao, the Chieftain, fell down dead, the moment Gopal Rao was hit. His companions were horrified, and they came with repentance to Gopal Rao's feet and prayed for pardon not only for themselves but also for their dead companion whom they requested Gopal Rao to revive. The Chieftain pointed out that the power of revival³⁰ now rested in the young man, and that they should appeal to him. They accordingly appealed, and Baba took some of the dust of his *Guru's* feet and placed it on the corpse. The dead man arose at once.

The *Guru's* declaration that he would pass away the next day from this life into the beyond, was fulfilled. After making the fullest preparations for settling all his temporal affairs, Gopal Rao with his full consciousness sat up in the midst of a religious group carrying on *puja*, *bhajan* and *nama smaran*, in the presence of his *Ishta Devata* Sri Venkatesa and at the solemn hour he had himself fixed for departure, his soul left in perfect peace and happiness like Parikshit in Srimad Bhagavata. Before leaving the body, the Master waved his hand westward to the young boy, and bade him leave Selu and proceed westward to his new abode. Shirdi lies on the banks of the Godavari due west of Selu, and Baba by slow

degrees moved on from place to place and arrived at Shirdi and after sometime made it his permanent residence.

Three

Babas Earlier Years at Shirdi

Baba's earliest years at Shirdi were passed in complete obscurity³¹. He was a poor *fakir*, whose name itself was not known, Sai Baba being merely a term of respect applied to wandering hermits of the Muslim faith. Very few incidents, therefore, of this period of his life are known. But such as are known are all significant as proving that Baba was a real *fakir* of sterling merit. Baba himself has observed³² that *fakirs* also are now seldom dispassionate, that is possessed of *vairagya*, and it is hard to find a *good fakir*. Baba had no home. *Fakirs* have none. Hermits are, therefore, to reside either at a tree-foot or *chavadi* or temple or other public places. When he came into Shirdi, Baba visited Khandoba temple at the outskirts of the village, and noting how solitary and calm a place it was, exclaimed, 'What a nice place this, for ascetics like me to live in.' Mahlsapathy, the man then in charge objected to this observation and said that no Muhammadan would be allowed to put his foot into the Khandoba temple. He was evidently thinking that Baba was a Muslim and that he would break the images and defile the temple. But Baba was just the opposite.

He had the same regard for temples and mosques, always wanted people to carry on their religious faith in their accustomed ways, and would never hurt the religious susceptibilities of any person. Baba, noting Mahlsapathy's attitude, left the place, and went to the *gode neem* tree which he used as his halting place off and on. He went about the village and the surrounding lands and had no particular arrangements for food. Luckily the village head, Ganapat Rao Patil Kothe and his wife Bayaji Bai, were greatly attracted by Baba's personality, and from the very beginning of his stay there, they undertook to feed him - even when he was running about. Gradually he gave up roaming and then went about the streets, halted at four or five places and from there collected whatever food was brought to him. For his stay and sleep, the dilapidated mosque of the village was

the only place, and it soon became his residence. He was never for wholly deserting society and living in mountain caves and deserts.

In his earliest days, even up to 1890, Baba had a youthful love of art and music, and at night he often went to the Takia, the resting place for visiting Muslims. There he would, with his very sweet and appealing voice, sing songs mostly of Kabir or songs in Persian or Arabic, which the local people could not understand. He tied tinklets to his ankles³³ and danced about in joy while he was singing his songs with rapt devotion. Baba's attachment was to *Allah*, or *Hari*, that is to a Personal God. But the impersonal *Nirakara* whom the mystics including Kabir sang of in their songs, had also seized his heart. As he mentioned several times³⁴ long years later, *Sakara* must necessarily have a strong appeal to youth as it has to the mass of mankind and he never lost sight of the *Sakara* or Personal God in his worship and songs. General speaking his worship was mostly mental³⁵ and he went through no external forms. He seldom performed the five *Namazes*, never bending on the knees and rising, as most Muslims do. He was an adept in concentration and he had reached the perfection of *Manolaya* on the *Atman*, the merger of the self in the Self. That is why he could say as he did. *Maim Allah Hum*. I am God. His worship never took him away from his social contacts with his neighbours, in relation to whom the key-note of all his thought and activity was service, absolutely selfless service.

At times when he was not absorbed in contemplation, he went about meeting people and noting their ailments. He picked up herbs or got cheap drugs from shops and with their use cured the villagers of their bodily illness. His knowledge of medicine and surgery appears to have been extraordinary for he cured not merely snake bite but also leprosy with snake venom and rotting eyes with *Bibba*, that is, washerman's marking nut³⁶ as an antiseptic alkali. He pulled out the rotting eye balls of some patient, washed them, applied *Bibba* as a caustic and replaced the eye balls and the disease was cured. He never accepted any payment for his medical or other services. He also rendered other kinds of services. He ploughed up the village common land, the very land on which his *Samadhi Mandir* now stands, and raised a flower garden thereon. He

watered the plants, carrying pots full of water on his own shoulders. He distributed the flowers and leaves freely to various Hindu temples and to Muslim holy places and never made any invidious distinction between Hindu and Muslim places of worship. From his supreme realised state, differences of caste, creed, position and learning, were nonexistent or meaningless. All persons were children of a common father or mother, and he felt a motherly or fatherly interest in all of them and helped them. So, he expected and accepted no recompense.

This is all the history of the early years of Baba. There might have been an incident or two remembered by some of the villagers about his early years, but they do not deserve mention in a serious biography. We shall proceed to mention how this obscure *fakir* grew into Sainath Maharaj, a well recognised *Samartha Sadguru*, possessed of the most extraordinary superhuman powers with a very large following of people of all classes from the highest to the lowest and from all places, from Bombay to Hyderabad, from Konkan to Ahmedabad, and finally from all over India, and how the worship itself was developing its forms and accessories as also its application to the highest purposes of individuals and the Indian Nation and how it promises to help humanity.

When he was an unknown *fakir* he was practically ignored and treated by most of the villagers as of no account. Suddenly one day an incident occurred which brought a thorough change in the situation. He always had his Mosque, wherein he lived, lit up with three or four -earthen lamps, according to the view common to both Hindus and Muslims that places of worship should be lit up at night. So, he went round begging for oil from the *Vanis* or, oil mongers. There were only two such shops and they supplied him with oil, gratis. The oil pressman also supplied him with oil. One day it struck these people that either they should make Baba realise their importance or should have some fun at his expense and they told him mockingly that they had no oil. Baba had to return to his mosque with his oil tin pot empty. It was already dusk. The *vanis* and *ganamdar* came behind him to see what he was going to do in the darkness and thereby to have some fun. Baba took some water from the water jar³⁷ and shaking up the little bit of oil sticking to the tin, drank it up. Then he too pure,

aqua from the water pot and filled his four earthen lamps with it. He placed in each of them a cotton wick and struck up a match and lighted it. The spectators thought at first that cotton soaked in water could not possibly be lit up. But to their great surprise, the lamps were lit up and went on burning the whole night³⁸ After a little time, consternation seized the guilty *vanis* and *ganamdar*, and being terribly afraid that Baba, having shown himself to be a man of mystic power, might curse them just as Viswamitra cursed Rambha and Konkanava killed a crane with a glance, fell at his feet and prayed that he should not curse them. Baba was the exact opposite of what they thought. He was not a magician resenting contempt and anxious to seize an advantage. On the³⁹ other hand, Baba was more like the *Bhikshu* Monk in *Bhikshugita*⁴⁰ and had a true motherly heart, and noted that these men now repenting were in the proper mood to receive instruction to alter their conduct, and he gave them wholesome advice which was what they needed most. First he asked them, 'You really had oil with you when you said you had none, eh?' They admitted that they had uttered falsehood. Then Baba told them never to utter falsehood. Falsehood displeases the God of truth. There was, therefore, no necessity for Baba to curse them. Next he pointed out to them how unsocial and wicked their conduct was. The lights were needed for the use of all who visited the mosque and the public would be inconvenienced if there were no lights. He asked them if they had not come to the Mosque to enjoy the pain which they expected him to endure while remaining in darkness. They admitted the fact. He then pointed out that persons who took delight in others' miseries instead of sympathising with them would be punished by God. God is mother to all and loves all equally. If you hurt a child and tell the mother that you have hurt the child, will the mother be pleased? Thus they had displeased God by coming to rejoice in his miserable plight or supposed miserable plight in the absence of lamp oil. He asked them never again to take pleasure in other's distress, or in the words of W.W. Wordsworth "never to blend our pleasure or our pride with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels". They promised. Thus, after giving them excellent pieces of advice, so badly needed by

them and by many people now, he dismissed them from his presence. The effect of this incident was marvellous.

The contemptible *pagal fakir*, as they called him, was turned overnight into the hero or the weird magician or the holy *Sadhu* of the place. Before this, Mahlsapathy and his two friends Tukaram Darji and Appa Bhil had been perhaps the only persons to worship him. Now other people also began to flock to his feet and worship him as a Divine Saint or God, much against his will, with waving of lamps, throwing of flowers and coloured rice over him and offers of fruit and sandal. However strenuously Baba tried to prevent his being worshipped as God or a Godman in the Mosque, he could not stem the tide of popular frenzy. They presently declared he was their God or Godman sent to bless them. It was thus, the *pagal fakir* became the God or Godman of Shirdi.

Such a change could not continue for long without obstruction. Worship of anything except the Impersonal God in a Mosque is forbidden by the Koran, and the Muslims, though few and poor at Shirdi, raised their protest against such worship. He himself might have felt at first the incongruity of his being worshipped at all and next the worship being carried on in a Mosque by the mass of Hindus to the accompaniment of all that Hindu worship implies, that is, the din, the bustle, the noise, the music, and the sacred rituals all of which would be totally unwarranted in a Mosque. Even his being debauched with sandal paste would strike any Muslim as extremely unorthodox and reprehensible, Abdul Rangari of Thana when visiting Baba noted that sandal paste was being applied by the Hindus to his forehead, and he told Baba, 'What is this? The Hindus are applying sandal paste to your forehead. This is not the custom among the Muslims.' Baba had to appease him by pointing out that he had to bend to circumstances. Baba's words were *Jaisa Desh Aiyasa Vesh*. This means, 'While in Rome do as the Romans do'. Baba also told Rangari that he himself was a devotee of Allah. But if the Hindus wished to please themselves by worshipping him, why not allow them to do so? To other similar objectors Baba pointed out that if Hindus worshipped a Muslim in a Mosque⁴¹ then there was no loss to Islam but only loss to Hinduism. That seemed a very plausible argument and

contented many. But some were still dissatisfied with the *puja* that was being done to him, and some of the more vigorous opponents of his *puja* went to consult the Sangamnare Kazi for finding a remedy. That Kazi found that the only chance of obstructing this heterodox *haram puja* was by threat of force. The Hindus were no doubt the majority in the village, but the actual worshippers were only a handful, and a few muscular Muslims, standing at the entrance to the Mosque, and threatening force could stop this *haram*. Accordingly a very stout, muscular, powerful and well-built Muslim by name Tambuli and four or five others went up to the entrance to the Mosque and stood there with clubs one morning. The chief worshipper Mahlsapathy was a very slim, meek, and apparently cowardly sort of person, and they hoped to stop his *puja* by their threats. Tambuli went and explained to Mahlsapathy the exact position, namely, that he ran the risk of being clubbed by the Muslims if he entered the Mosque and applied sandal paste to Baba. Mahlsapathy in his great shock and grief prayed to Khandoba and hit upon an alternative. He went upto the compoundwall of the Mosque and without entering into the Mosque, used all the *puja* articles that he had brought on a plate, for worshipping a part of the compound wall itself into which by *Avahana* he invoked Baba. After such invocation or *Avahana*, he went on applying water, flowers and scents to the wall. Baba noted this and asked him what he was doing, Mahlsapathy explained that the Muslims there threatened to beat any one who would enter into the Mosque and worship Baba with sandal paste. Then Baba judged the situation very correctly and said, 'Come in. Go on doing your *puja*. Apply your sandal paste here, there and anywhere. Let me see who will beat you'. So saying he dashed his *satka*, a short club, which he had in his hand on the ground with such a thunderous sound that the few Muslims at the entrance trembled. They found that they would have to reckon with Baba himself if they wished to pursue their plan, and Baba, individually and physically, would be more than a match for them. Besides, Baba was a weird personality who could turn water in oil, and they had therefore still greater fear in trying to oppose Baba. So they considered discretion the better part of valour and retreated quietly. Mahlsapathy entered and carried on the worship.

Mahlsapathy feared that they might attack him on his way back home, and he told Baba of his fears. Baba then gave him the assurance that not merely these, but any others who would come to attack him not merely at that time but at any other time in any other place, and not merely in *this janma*, but in *future janmas* also, could do him no harm and Baba would see to it. Thus assured Mahlsapathy who finished *his puja* and was not molested. Thus all joined in Baba's worship.

Thus the first impediment was removed. The second impediment is more interesting. Baba had both Hindu and Muslim features in his body and in his actions and practice, and, his mission in life was to unify Hindus and Muslims into one compact mass with common religious, spiritual and worldly interests. As he had a Hindu *Guru*, namely, Gopal Rao Deshmukh alias Venkatesa or Venkusa, he was considered fitted to guide his Hindu followers. In order to guide his Muslim followers, initiation into Islamic scripture by a Maulana was essential according to public opinion. So, his destiny had to be fulfilled by his getting a second *Guru*, a Muslim. Jawar Ali Maulana was a distinguished Maulana of the last century, residing for some time at Rahata. He had extraordinary ability and learning, but had disagreed with his Rahata followers. He came to Shirdi and noted that Baba had a large Hindu following who worshipped him at the Mosque. He called upon Baba to come out of the Mosque and asked him whether he knew the Koran and the Shariat. Baba had learnt neither. So Jawar Ali Maulana ordered him to accompany him to Rahata and there Baba was living with this *Guru* for about two months. The *Guru* initiated him into the mysteries of Islamic spiritual literature. Baba did humble *seva* to this *Guru*, carrying water pots, fetching faggots, lighting up fire, doing hard physical work which others would complain of. But in the case of Baba, he accepted his position as the *sisya* of Jawar Ali with perfect sincerity and underwent with sweet complacency⁴² all the ordeal and the course of training given to him. The villagers of Shirdi headed by Mahlsapathy who were very anxious to have Baba back again permanently settled at Shirdi requested the Maulana to allow them to take Sai Baba with them. This was agreed to by the Maulana on the condition that with Baba he also should be taken to Shirdi, and that both he and Baba should be fed and

supported by the villagers of Shirdi. So both came and lived at the Shirdi Mosque. Some time later, Jawar Ali was drawn purposely into a dispute with Devadas, a noted Hindu saint living in a *chavadi* at Shirdi, and Devadas's questions cornered **Jawar** Ali. The latter had to make so many admissions that the surrounding spectators were moved to laughter. Jawar Ali resenting this humiliation left Shirdi and did not return there for long years to come. Baba's worship at the Shirdi Mosque went on and gathered strength. What appeared as the second impediment tended only to increase the devotees' attachment through *Viraha* and admiration and helped Baba's mission. It must be noted here that the worship mentioned here is individual worship, each one going to Baba and placing flowers on his feet and treating him as God, *Avatar* or *Guru*. Baba followed the rule for *Jnanis* "Avoid honours as poison. Ever welcome indignity, as nectar". *Manu smriti*⁴³

Four Worship

Worship is discussed and its need or validity is questioned by several, and hence a few words about worship in general and Sai worship in particular are called for at this stage.

Worship is not usually the result of logical discussion and analysis, but is at the initial stage usually the result of an intuitive impulse arising out of a fear, a need, or other impulse. Some terrible power confronts us. Then we bow down in fear. Some terrible calamity overwhelms us. Then we yearn and look out for some help from some powerful personage that can overcome the calamity. Some terrible and oppressive need arises, such as ravenous hunger or serious illness or discomfort. Then again we look to a higher power for relief. It is an intuitive impulse in all these cases that leads man to worship, which is an emotional act. Later, comes the reflective stage and religious conduct is based on reason. Then, the question arises 'Why does man worship a higher power?' The obvious answer is, it is the feeling that a higher Power can give and will be induced to give man what he needs and save him from trouble. This is true whether the Power is an invisible God or a visible man or image. There must be in the first

place power and willingness to use the power in the object worshipped, and as a counterpart, there must be a need, a fear, or other stimulus operating upon the worshipper to make him believe in the power and willingness of that power to render help. The stimuli are of various sorts, for example, *Arti* or trouble, need for some objects and a desire to understand this mysterious and puzzling universe and one's relations to it. Of these, the *Arti* is the commonest stimulus. It is the sufferer, *Arta*, who turns to God or to a saint or to a spirit—not the contented and happy man spending his time quite easily and with joy. If, in the last case, a man is given to philosophising or investigating on a basis of curiosity to understand himself and things about him such a person is named *Jijnasu* - he may turn to God and pray for divine aid to understand. But such people are few. The question is further raised whether any object at all should be worshipped and mostly this question is raised by persons who have neither any trouble nor need nor other stimulus mentioned above nor any spirit of solemn enquiry nor any higher impulse or sensitivity. It is only in cases of persons with hard and unattached hearts that a question as to the justification for worship and next the justification for choosing the particular object of worship is raised. This class of questioners may for the present be omitted, and our discussion here may be confined to those who have some spirit of worship in them and who raise the question about what objects ought to be worshipped. Amongst the Hindus there is a wide range of worship. The all pervading nature of God enables the ardent Hindu mystic to perceive him in any and every object and to worship him in that object. Local heroes and saints with superhuman powers and *Daivi sampath* or *Vibhuti-that*. is, divine qualities in abundance naturally get worshipped in many places. According to the doctrine of *Bhakti*, it is the spirit and faith with which an object is worshipped that matter, not the object itself and hence the objects without *Vibhuti* also can be and are worshipped. According to higher systems of thought, every object in the Universe is a manifestation of God, and therefore might be or ought to be worshipped.

The Upanishads refer to both sets of cases, and the Gita, which is the gift of the Upanishads, justifies both sets. In Chapter VII of the Gita, Lord Krishna

says that one does not know and realise God unless one knows and realises Him in everything, in the Universe, that is,

The *Para prakriti* which is manifest as the Universe and which includes the five elements *Pancha bhutas*, namely Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether and *Manas, Buddhi and Ahamkar* as well as.

The *Aparaprakriti* or *Mulaprakriti*, the substratum of all. The *Para* and *Apara* put together constitute God. One ought to worship God in all aspects⁴⁴, following which all objects in the Universe are viewed as God. There is in the Upanishads no shying at worship of any objects. Following nature, the Upanishads recommend the worship of the mother, the father, the teacher and the guest. *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava*. Then come *Acharya Devo Bhava and Atithi Devo Bhava*. About *Acharya Devo Bhava* we shall have to consider in great detail many a question, and, therefore, a special chapter must be devoted to it. At present we shall only note that the father, the mother and the teacher naturally evoke great respect, and a child has to depend upon them and is at their mercy. Therefore, it naturally looks with feelings of adoration to all these just as Baba looked at his foster father, the *Fakir* as God and *Guru*. The Upanishads recognise the fact that human nature turns to see and feel God. God is the name for the Father of All; who looks after all his children through the mother and father, its procreators; and to the *Acharya Deva* who develops its mental body in understanding and wisdom. Even ordinary *Gurus* and parents without special powers are worshipped. But if any particular *Guru* happens to be possessed of noble virtues or of *siddhis*, superhuman or extraordinary powers, then he is worshipped more naturally and readily not only by the mass but by the intelligentia and the critics.

In the case of Sai Baba, his perfect purity, asceticism, general benevolence, harmlessness, non attachment, and other virtues evoked the respect of the saints, Devadas, Janakidas, Gangagir, Anandanath and Bidkar, that met him, and also of serious and noble minded men like Mahlsapathy and his friends Appa Bhil and Tukaram Darji. His nature is well described as unattached and happily roaming about fearlessly and as a help to those in

suffering and misery⁴⁵. So Mahlsapathy and his friends regarded Baba as a saint, an *Acharya* or *Guru Deva*, long before he exhibited any *siddhi* power. However, so far as the general mass was concerned, it was the fact that he turned water into oil that provoked worship. And the worship took the usual form of offering flowers, fruits and scents. Baba protested and tried to dissuade these worshippers. He asked them to go to their customary objects of worship such as the images they had in their temples and homes. But they would not listen. They felt that he was a saint, a *samartha* saint. The learned could quote Tukaram's *Sant toch dev. Dev loch sant* that is, Saints are God. God is saints. The Villages told him "You are a *Bolte Chalte Dev*", that is, a talking and walking God. The persistence of the mass idea that his *siddhis* were evidence of divine power, and therefore marked him out as a *Guru Deva* for worship, could not be combated or resisted. Sri Upasani Baba put it in these words,

Aneka Asruta Atarkya Leelavitasaih
 Samavishkrita Isana BhasvatPrabhavam
 Ahambhava Hinam,Prasanna Atmabhavam
 Namami Iswaram Sadgurum Sainatharri*.

this means, I bow to Sainath, the *Sadguru*, who reveals his divine nature through numerous unheard of and inscrutable lilas, who is free from egotism and has attained Self-Realisation". So, alike in the case of the highly learned *pandit*, Sri Upasani Baba, as in the case of the uneducated rustics, the ladies of Shirdi, the *chamatkars* or *lilas* are the first prompters to worship Sai as a manifestation of divinity. That is how worship begins⁴⁷ and grows. Gradually as we shall fully explain later it leads the worshipper higher and higher so that he understands his own self and the Supreme self more and more until the *Jiva* is absorbed in the *Paramatma*. There is a considerable distance of time, stages, and a vast amount of effort between the beginning of worship and the highest achievement, and Baba worship had and has all stages in it, and all sorts of worshippers. Baba who first objected to his worshsip, did by his own *Antarjnana* or prophetic vision foreseeing what was to follow, namely, not only individual benefits to millions but also national benefit and ultimately benefit to

the cause of religion itself for the sake of humanity. That is why he gradually promoted and then developed his worship, in spite of numerous obstacles. The obstacles arose from all sides—the Hindus and the Muslims. Naturally Muslims objected to the worship by Hindus of a human figure like Sai Baba within the Mosque with the application of sandal paste to his forehead and to the accompaniment of much din and bustle through music and in other ways. From mere protest the obstacles mounted higher as we already noted to a threat of force for stopping worship. But Baba's wonderful power and foresight overcame all these obstacles. Individual worship of Baba attracted larger and larger numbers from the immediate neighbourhood and from distant places and this developed into congregational worship, and that again from simple congregational worship to the highly complicated forms which are seen in famous places of worship like Pandharpur. All the *shodasca upacharas* and the *Raja upacharas* were brought in by the increasing volume of *bhaktas* and tended to the wider and deeper expansion of Sai worship. Gradually everything that goes on in sacred places of worship like Pandarpur and Tirupati were developed for Baba worship at Shirdi including ritual, hymnology, music, processions, cars, palanquin horse and *pujaris*. We shall now proceed to set out in full this later development of Baba worship which began about or after 1908. But we shall first notice the important part that obstacles play in the march of this as of other great movements.

Obstacles to worship arose from various viewpoints and served several purposes—one of which was to gain time to build up sufficient strength to capture all for the mission of Baba. The first obstacle might be from the modesty of Baba himself as a *fakir* who welcomed poverty and obscurity in a nook or corner of Kopergaon which means a corner *taluk* of the Ahmednagar District. Baba's whole heart was engrossed in contemplation of his *Guru* whom he always called *Fakir*⁴⁹, and in the bliss attending that contemplation, thoughts of food and rest did seldom trouble him.

Prana Vrittyaiva Santushyet'

Munir Naivendriya Priyaih

Jnanam Yatha Na Nascyeta
Navakiryeta Vangmanah II⁴⁹

that is, The sage should be contented to get just what would keep body and soul together and see that his powers of knowing, speech and wisdom may not perish.

Kvachitchannah Kvachit Spashtah
UpasyahScreya Ichchatam
Bhungle Sarvatra Datnmam
Dahan Praguttara Ascubham //so

that is, The *Muni*, sometimes concealing his nature and attainments and sometimes revealing them is approached and worshipped by those desirous of achieving their highest well being and eats everywhere the food given by donors and thereby burns up their past evil *Karma* and subsequent evil *Karma* also.

Grasam Sumrushtam Virasam
Mahanlam Stokam,
Eva Va Yadruchchayaiva
Apatitam Graset Ajagaro Akriyah II

this means, Whether food be tasty or tasteless, plenty, or scanty, the sage, following the python's example should just take what comes of itself without any exertion on his pan.

Samruddha Kama Hino Va
Narayana Paro Munih
Na Utsarpeta Na Scushyeta
Saridbhih Iva Sagarah IP-

this means, Whether he has plenty of comforts or none, as his heart is set on *Narayana* alone, he neither overflows nor shrinks, just as the ocean does not overflow when the rivers throw their floods into it, nor shrink when the rivers do not.

These verses aptly describe Sai Baba's condition and mentality. People could therefore see in him a *Parama Bhagavata*. Thus the serious minded and noble set was easily drawn to worship him despite obstacles.

At first his nomadic habits of running hither and thither as fancy drew him showed that comfort of the body and care for the good opinion of the society in which he moved did not bulk largely in his view. The Bhagavata says,

*Atmaramo Anaya Vriya Vicharet Jadavat Mutnih*⁵³

that is, Immersed in God or himself, the sage rambles like an idiot.

Bayyaji Bai had to trace him amongst the jungles or treefoots that he frequented, to give him his meal. As for fame, he knew full well that many people thought him to be mad or foolish and insulted him calling him *Pagal* or treated him as a totally negligible factor. But he had no vanity or *amor propre* to be wounded by such lack of regard. He was like the *Bhikshu* in the Bhikshu Gita⁵⁴, who was subjected to indignities or insults and bore up with all silently as part of his *Karma*.

Evam Sa Bhowtikam Duhkam

Daivikam Daihikam Cha Yat

Bhoktavyam Atmano Dishtam

Praptam Praptam Abudtiyala Il

that is, Whether due to his body or animals or gods, the *Tapatraya*, all that befell him, he deemed to be his *Karma* and bore them unruffled.

On the other hand when people began to show him great regard and wanted to worship him, he wished to avoid it in the interests of his own peaceful and quiet life. His happiness was complete in itself and did not require offerings of *naivedyas*, of praise, of camphor lights, and the assembling of crowds round him. Thus the first obstacle was from Baba himself. But Baba was divinely gifted and had important objects to achieve in his life which formed his mission. When in 1886, exercising his wonderful power or *Siddhi of Swechcha Marana* dying at will he left the body and returned to it after three days, he evidently confirmed the idea that there was a mission for him to fulfil to benefit thousands, if not tens of thousands of people, connected with him, directly or remotely, through *rinanubandha* and the very society or population of India amongst whom he was born and was living. He felt probably that he could do something for the uplift of humanity also. These put together may constitute his mission and evidently it is for the fulfillment of that mission, which he might be slowly realising

and working out as we shall explain later on, that he returned to his body in 1886, But even before 1886 he would surely have perceived that his mission in some form existed for him. So, he might have gradually endured, encouraged and fully developed the worship offered to him in the above view, that is, to carry out his mission. But we must not anticipate. A separate Chapter must be devoted to the subject of Baba's Mission.

Five

Success Begets Success

The benefits attending such worship were quickly seen and hence numbers from outside the village, that is, from the immediate neighbourhood were drawn to the worship. This spread gradually from place to place and people from even remote parts were attracted to the worship. As for the details of worship, it is not necessary to mention how Baba objected to sandal paste being applied to his forehead though no objection was raised to its application to his feet by any one except Mahlsapathy and how ultimately he acquiesced in every one applying sandal paste to his forehead also⁵⁵. Individual worship itself was first not systematic nor organised. But K.G. Bishma, a good *Kirtankar* and a great adherent of Vittal worship at Pandharpur, drew up the ritual for Sai Baba worship on practically the same lines as the Pandharpur worship, and he brought a set of *artis* that is ritualistic; verses for use by individuals at Shirdi, and these were sent up by Baba to Nana Saheb Chandorkar at Jamnere and were approved of by him. They were largely in use and tended to develop the worship of Baba on the customary lines of worship in well known temples, The next step was from individual worship to congregational worship. It was in 1908 that the change was started. Congregational worship implied that there would be some one to officiate as the *pujari* and that he would be available at various periods of worship namely Matins, vespers, night *artis* and noon *artis*. For this purpose, Hari Vinayak Sathe, a Settlement Officer, who in 1905 was blessed by Baba with the promise of a son in case he married, and who got married in consequence, sent up one Meghashyam called Megha to Shirdi so that he might officiate as the *pujari* and carry on congregational worship. But that man was an extremely dull

and rustic Brahmin having hardly any learning either in Hindu sacred literature or in any other literature. He heard that Sai Baba was a Muslim, and he requested Mr. Sathe not to send him up to worship a Mohammadan. He was a Siva worshipper, a staunch Hindu, and might worship Datta but not a Muslim. Sathe told him that Baba was God, and, therefore, he might worship him. So under pressure from Sathe, the man arrived at Shirdi and was taken by Shama to Baba. Baba, reading his mentality completely, shouted against him at his first approach and said, Why does that fool of a Saheb send this idiot to me? So saying he drove Megha away, because he would consider it demeaning to worship Baba. Megha being a Siva worshipper was attracted to *Triambak* a sacred place for Siva, 18 miles away from Nasik, and tried to spend his time there. But there he fell ill, and remembered his refusal to worship Baba. He thought that might be the reason why he had his illness. Having learnt about Baba's greatness, he returned to Baba, this time more humble. By Baba's grace he regained his health and started early in 1909 the congregational worship. He was fully convinced that Baba was Siva, the same as the Siva at *Triambak*. He was determined to worship him with Ganga, that is, Godavari water and *bilva* leaves. So, he usually went out five miles to fetch Godavari water for the daily worship, and three or four miles to fetch *bel* leaves which are said to be specially appropriate for Siva worship, *Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam* that is one *bel* leaf even is sufficient offering to Siva. When even the very orthodox Megha thus became an ardent devotee of Baba, others followed suit and sooner or later gave up their prejudices against Baba and joined in the congregational worship. All this required time; and obstacles like Megha's sentiments, had to be overcome and made stepping stones for further progress.

To make the congregational worship more advanced and attractive, there was an enthusiastic set gathering at Shirdi. One Ramakrishna Ayi, a young widow of the family name of Sahasrabuddhe, came and established herself as a devotee of Baba, and being highly accomplished, was intent upon using all her gifts and cleverness for developing Sai Baba's worship. She drew a large number of people to herself and made them more enthusiastic in the cause of Sai

worship. She made them carry out her plan of fitting out Baba and his *chavadi* in exactly the same way as these would be fitted out if Baba was a real *Maharaja* and a real God's image. The 16 *shodascaupacharas* common to all Hindu worship and the *Raja Upachars* add pomp to worship in temples and *mutts* *Raja Upacharas* means treating the object of worship as a *Maharaja*. They add to the impressiveness of the ceremony and the religious effect on the mind of those who attend that worship. They also increase the extent of worshippers. Thus, Ramakrishna Ayi introduced silver whisks, silver maces, silver umbrellas, silver candelabras, moons, and artificial gardens to deck the *chavadi* where Baba was worshipped on alternate nights. A car, a palanquin with silver appurtenances, a horse, and other regal paraphernalia were furnished on her insistence and the insistence of other devotees to make Baba worship run exactly like *Vittal* worship or the worship of great *Acharyas* in their *mutts*. This, by itself, would be impressive. But Baba fell into the humour of the devotees. They wanted to make him and called him always a *Maharaja*, and he was determined that he should be a *Maharaja* to satisfy the devotees. What are specially wanted in a *Maharaja's durbar* were valuable presents in cash and kind and to various people visiting the *durbar*, the hope of obtaining those presents. *Pandits*, acrobats, *nautch* girls, wrestlers, *kirtankars* and musicians, who flock to regal *darbars* visited Shirdi Sai *Maharaja's durbar* also. Sai Baba, therefore, arranged for funds to pay them all. Moreover, there were those depending upon his favour to get wealth which, on the principle of *rinanubandha*, he wished to shower upon them, such as Tatya Patel, Lakshmi Bai, Bade Baba and Ramachandra Patel. So Baba's *durbar* had need to get an income and Baba began from 1908 to ask for *dakshinas*. Formerly, he would refuse offer of rupees to him saying that he had no need for them⁵⁶. But from the time that this new tide began, he began to ask his visitors for payments of large sums. Some he would ask for Rs.5, some for Rs.25, and some others for Rs.250. Almost every one that he asked would pay. Baba knew the minds and state of the Purse of all the persons and could get exactly what he wanted, and he would not ask for any funds except where he was going to recompense or where the visitor had already been blessed by *Dana* or *Vittal* and

was bound to pay⁵⁷ whom or those God pointed out. Many sent "vowed Sums" of their own accord. For example one paid Rs.6,000. Therefore, Baba easily succeeded in getting as *dakshinas* in the course of each day varying sums that totalled up in the evening sometimes to Rs.300 and sometimes to thousands. The total income came up to a Provincial Governor's income on which the authorities tried to levy Income-tax. But Baba himself retained, nothing at all, as every evening he would dispose of the day's accumulations. But the Income-tax authorities were able to levy tax upon the regular recipients of Baba's daily doles such as Bade Baba and Tatya Patil. Thus Baba had a steady and large income from which he was making very liberal presents to *Ramadasis*, other *dasis*, acrobats, *pandits*, and various people who came to him from distant places, for example Madras and Punjab like Addullah Jan who hoped Baba would provide funds for *Haj*. In addition to the large crowd of persons who offered *naivedyas* of eatables to Baba, it was possible for 200 beggars to be fed everyday by Baba's bounty and doles. Thus the appearance of a very prosperous *darbar* was presented at Shirdi from 1909 up to 1918. All this pomp Baba despised. Profusion of wealth also could never captivate him but he could use it without, being tainted⁵⁸. It served a purpose, namely, the widening of Baba worship, which had a great purpose behind it. That is why Baba allowed all this to develop his worship.

As Baba's having wealth and a royal *darbar* was misunderstood by some, we are obliged to stress again the following facts that prove that Baba was a *Janaka Maharaja* and continued to be a Divine *Samartha Sadguru* carrying on the noble work referred to already.

Baba had no attachment and so could handle wealth and make it run into and out of his hands without danger of being tainted. He was a perfectly realised soul in the perfect *laya* stage as disclosed by his words *Main Allahum* that is *Aham Brahmasmi*. For such a person, Srimad Bhagavata says, danger of attachment does not arise. Baba told the *sadhu Devadas*⁵⁹ that *fakirs* and hermits must avoid the *upadhis*, namely, *Moha* and pomp. But in Baba's case, at the latter end of his life, pomp was thrust upon him and had a useful purpose to

serve. Till then Baba avoided pomp. He would not even sit on a chair or lie on a cot, but sat and slept upon a sack cloth or gunny mattress placed on the floor. He would not put on his head the crown or regal dress when the devotees wanting him to look like a *Maharaja*, brought these for him. Nor would he accept or allow other royal insignia upon his person. When a silver-plated palanquin was brought to him with its small silver horses as appurtenances, he refused to receive it, and said that he did not want to sit in it. The devotees then said that he need not sit in it, but that his picture would be placed in it, and that it will be used for the procession. Even then he would not allow the palanquin into the *Dwarakamayee*, and so they had to leave . the palanquin in the open yard in front of his Mosque. At night some of the silver horses were stolen. The devotees noting it were very sad, and came to complain of it to Baba. But Baba asked them, "I say, why was not the whole palanquin stolen?" That is, to Baba it was a matter of utter indifference whether palanquins or silver articles or any other things were provided or not provided, were stolen or remained safe. He lived as a true *sanyasi* up to the end of his life on *Bhiksha* food. Of course, it is well known that when people go out for begging bread, all sorts of things, insipid, or even partly rotten, are given as *Bhiksha* especially to beggars. In the case of Baba, who enjoyed more respect than beggars, rotten things would not be showered on him, but many people, who were content to eat rather ill cooked and tasteless or insipid food, would bestow part of their stuff upon Baba also.

Yad annah purush bhavati,
tadannah tasya devatah

that is, what we eat, we give to God. That is why the hermit is directed in Uddhava Gita⁶"

Stokam Stokam Graset Grasam
Deho Varteta Yavata
Grihan ahimsan Atishtet
Vrittim Madhukarim Munih

this means, the sage should observe the *Madhukari* system in begging for food. He must take little doles from several houses, without taxing them too much. He must take only what is absolutely needed to keep body and soul together.

Baba did not hate or fear poverty. But on the other hand he was content with it and esteemed it. He said '*Fakir Aval padsha*' that is, 'The *Fakir* is the real Emperor', because he can lead a life free from care and anxiety. So Baba had no possessions, and all these regal paraphernalia mentioned above were kept with Ayi, and on her death, were held by an association, and finally vested in the Sai Sansthan, formed by the order of the Ahmednagar District Court in the year 1922.

When Baba left the body, he had only Rs.16 in his hand and no other property. Hence the *Raja upacharas*, which would have puffed up or affected other persons, did not affect him. In refusing to own properties or have a palace, he set an excellent example. If all *sadhus* had followed his example, there would not be so much of scandal against *sadhus* and so much of wreck in *sadhus'* lives that we notice. Baba followed the direction of the *sastras* for hermits and *fakirs* that a hermit should not put by anything for the morrow. Srimad Bhagavata⁶¹ says,

Sayantanam Scwastanam Va
Na Sangrinhita Bhikshitam
Pani Patro Udharamatro
Makshika Iva Na Sangrahi II

This means, The sage should not store what he obtains by begging for the evening or keep it for the next day. His vessels for receiving alms must be either the hand or the stomach. He should not hoard things like the bee. The 12th verse adds, If he does, like the bee he will be killed. Spiritual persons who store, develop attachment or *Moha*, which means death of the soul. Baba had also no necessity for delicacies. He had thoroughly conquered his palate. Srimad Bhagavata⁶² says,

Jitam Sarvam Jite Rase

that is, When the palate is conquered, everything is controlled. Baba was a perfect *Jitendriya*. His *dhriti* or self control included conquest of the urges of hunger and sex as directed in Srimad Bhagavata⁶³,

Jihvopastha jayo Dhrutih

that is, *Dhruti* means perfect control over the palate and the sex urge.

Six

Further Results of Worship

So far we have been dealing mainly with the externals of worship and it is to be feared that some highly refined and sensitive souls might have been displeased thereby. These worthy persons wish to have the kernel, the very essence of the fruit of worship without having to deal with any shell or bark, skin or other outer coverings. It is true that mere formal performance of worship unaccompanied by the pure and fervent spirit counts for nothing and that the spirit is the essence. But so far we have had to deal with externals, as externals are indispensable to clothe, embody and convey the spirit from person to person, from place to place, from stage to stage and even from age to age just as husk and shell serve a similar purpose in Nature. It is the nectar we want, but the liquid nectar comes only in a cup, as its necessary vehicle, just as the grain we need comes and must come with chaff and cannot be grown without the husk. Sweetness is what we want. But except by getting sugar or other sweet article, sweetness is not got. This is so patent. Sugar stands for sweetness. So worship stands or should stand for the best form of worship, that worship which in every item is saturated by fervent admiration, reverence or love. It is on supposition that this is well understood, that worship has been and is referred to till now as a highly desirable object, as conferring on individuals, the country and humanity what is badly and urgently needed by them. But still to satisfy the demands of these specially sensitive readers referred to above, a few words on the nature and essence of the worship may be added here, to stress their importance.

Indian readers would appreciate worship better if we take them to the corresponding Sanskrit words and note what they connote. Those words are *puja* and *upasana*. These are well understood terms in constant use. We say a person

is doing *puja* when he offers flowers, water, food, scents and praise to a person or an image of a divine being. Yet all the while, that worshipper is not acting like a robot machine, but is simultaneously using speech and thought. He utters words, mostly *mantras* and *slokas* and his mind turns to their meanings for most of the time. Occasionally he may be merging himself in the object of worship mentally - attaining *Poorna laya*, or feeling perfect bliss and forgetting all ideas of his self being the actor. Most readers would have admired the simple hunter Kannappa's worship of a stone *linga* in *Peria Purana*. He just saw the *linga* on a hill covered by leaves and flowers, and water used by some adorer who had made formal worship of the stone. At once by some *purva Vasana*, some trace of memory from past births probably, *Bhakti* entered into his soul and he had a powerful urge to go to the *lingam* and worship it. He had no object to gain that is objects as expressed in the *sankalpa* or initial portion of every *puja* but simply felt the irresistible impulse to go to the image and to feel its beneficent presence. What was the worship he offered? The devotee, judges the worshiped, God only by standards and ideas applying to oneself. So besides leaves and flowers and *abhisheka* water brought in his mouth as he had no vessel, he offered roasted flesh to God as that was the food he liked and lived on.

Yadannah purusho bhavati,

Tadannah tasya devatah.

this means, Whatever is a man's food is also the food of his God. But however repulsive this flesh was to the orthodox *Saiva acharya* who was worshipping the image there, it was not repulsive to the deity that Kannappa worshipped in the *linga*. For the deity appreciated Kannappa's unmotivated but powerful love, and to prove the superiority of worship with such love to cold formal worship albeit with *Vedamantras* that deity Siva began to bleed in his eyes. Kannappa, who saw it, at once plucked out one of his eyes and placed it on the image in lieu of the injured and or bleeding eye. Then Siva made his second eye in the image bleed. Undaunted, Kannappa started to pluck out his second eye for replacing the second eye of the image, but in order to be sure of the place where the second eye of the image was, which, after plucking out his own second eye he would not

be able to see, Kannappa placed his foot with its *chappal* near the second eye. Then Siva appeared and stopped this sacrifice of the second eye. And the formal worshipper noticed how greatly God Siva esteemed the love freely flowing from Kannappa's heart and how much superior it was to his formal external worship with all *Vedic* rites, *mantras* and ceremonies. Sri Sankaracharya in his *Sivanandalahari* refers to this superiority in the oft quoted verse,

Marga avartita paduka Pascupateh angasya kurchayate,
Gandushamfpi mshechanam purdy'voh divya abhishechayate,
Kinchit bhakshita mamsa scesha kabalam navyo paharayate,
Bhaktih kirn nakaroti aho vancharo bhakta avatamsayate.

which means God Siva felt the touch of the worn out *chappal* delightfully thrilling,

The water given for bath *abhisheka* carried by the hunter in his mouth mixed with his saliva was enjoyed as a divine ablution,

The flesh which was previously tested by tasting had been found good and offered by the hunter, was felt to be as good as newly cooked food,

Well, what cannot devotion achieve? A forest hunter was esteemed as the highest worshipper.

Thus it is the spirit that matters. It is needless to quote other stanzas from *Mukundamala Amnayabhyasanam*, to illustrate the same truth.

But when all is said and done, one must recollect that Kannappars are not found everywhere, and every one cannot imitate Kannappa. The ordinary man has to remember that his gentle plant of devotion has to be grown and tended and hedged with considerable care and for that purpose the regular forms of worship and the usual directions for the growth of devotion by attending *pujas*. *Bhajan*s and other ceremonies must be followed for a long time before attaining full fruition of *Bhakti*. Especially the nine modes of worship mentioned in the Bhagavata and stressed by Sri Sai Baba often have to be attended to and followed. In setting out those nine forms, one can see how the external and internal are inextricably interwoven and combined and how one gradually progresses with lower and external forms till his inner kernel of devotion attains maturity and perfection.

The nine modes are,

Sravana Listening to accounts of the deeds of God, his *Avataras* and Saints.

Kirtana of Vishnu, reciting these or repeating God's names and praise,

Smarana constantly recalling these, especially uttering God's names⁶⁴.

Padasevanam falling at the feet of God and Saints.

Archana formal worship, for example with flowers, water, food, scents and all the 16 *upacharas*

Vadana prostration before God and the saints.

Dasya, for example service, doing every work for God or Saint.

Sakhya remaining in the company of God or Saint.

Nivedana that is, surrender of the self that is forgetting oneself entirely in the contemplation of God after formally offering the self as a gift to God.

The devout reader would like to have a further sketch of the nature and the works of devotion at this stage before we deal with the expansion of the mere system of worship of Sai Baba throughout the country and its diversification. So, once again we may refer to Sri Adi Sankaracharya who, though a perfect adept in the metaphysics of *advaitism* and an authority in respect of the Impersonal Absolute or Brahman, in his numerous works has also shown his grip of the subject of the *bhakti marga*. This is how he describes what *Bhakti* is :

Ankolam Nijabhija Santatih, ayaskantopalam,
Suchika, Sadhvi Naijavibhum,
Lata Kshitiruham Sindhuh Sarid Vallabham,
Prapnoti Iha Yathatatha Pasupateh Padaravinda Dvayam
Cheto Vanchati Sada Sa Bhaktir Iti Uchyate.

This means, as the seeds of the *Ankolam* tree or plant are regrasped by the parent tree,

as the parent magnetic block attracts needles one behind another,

as the chaste wife clasps her husband,

as the tendril creeper clings to the adjoining tree and mounts upward and upward,

as the waters of the rivers are for ever drawn downward and downward till they reach the ocean and get inextricably and indistinguishably lost in it, similarly the heart of the devotee longs after the Divine feet of Pasupati, God Siva to be ever there.

This is called *Bhakti*. The ideas of Sri Sankara are very well thought out, and we see in example after example here, how *bhakti* is to be understood as a natural force which is found working in all creation namely, vegetable, animal, mineral, and human. Each illustration takes *bhakti* one stage further up. First comes the tendency of the *Ankolam* plant and its seed. After the seed is first shed from the parent tree, it gets reattached to the tree. Thus the tendency even in vegetables is to get back to the original source and get reabsorbed in it. That is the real nature of devotion in the human being also, for we are parts, *amsas*, or sparks from God, and are drawn by a natural force to look to and reach the original source of all creation and of ourselves, namely, God. this force being devotion. The second example is from *Ayaskanuj*, that is the magnetic stone. The magnet, when approached by a needle. magnetises It. and then draws it to itself and converts it into a magnet that is it gives parts of itself, its force to the new corner, and that in turn acts in a similar way towards other needles, and thus a string of even seven needles might be found attached one behind another to a big magnet. This shows the nature of devotion. *The jiva's* contact with the parent body is ever to strengthen devotion to God, and every growing *bhakta* tends to attract others and impart his devotion to them and through them to others ad infinitum. These are inert pieces of creation, and even these exhibit the nature of devotion. The third is human. The chaste wife longs for her husband, and even his slightest absence for even a short period makes her full of unrest, *viraha* and pant for his presence, and when that presence is regained she is full of bliss and joy and sticks to him. This again is quite descriptive of *bhakti*. The Bhagavata treats all devotees as females, Gopis, and the only male in the Universe is Krishna. So in the *Rasakrida*, Krishna by his flute or magic sound draws all the Gopis to himself, and they form a ring round him. Between every two Gopis is Krishna and between every two Krishnas is a Gopi. That is, each Gopi sees only

Krishna on either side of her and not the other Gopis. Perfect white heat of love converts everything into Krishna. This feminine devotion to the Purusha is the loftiest love and bliss known to humanity and that, therefore, is the best way of indicating what devotion is. Next comes the creeper. The creeper is a very feeble tendril and it must be sending up tendrils which intuitively clasp a strong, powerful tree next to it. The wind will shake out and break the creeper to pieces. But when it twirls round and round a big tree, the wind can do no harm. The natural tendency of the creeper is to go further and further upward and upward till the top of the tree is reached. This helps it to get more light from the Sun, more of air, and more of freedom and safety from animals which will bite and eat up the creeper. Similar is the tendency of a weak human being who resorts to God as the source of his strength, just as the creeper resorts to the neighbouring tree as the source of its strength, and clings to God and ever tends to mount up higher and higher in his spiritual levels to achieve nobler and nobler objects and to transform himself into more and more of the like-ness of God till he reaches full *Sarupyam, Sameeepyam and Sayujyam*. So long as *bhakti* is in the lower stages, there is the danger of his *bhakti* being disturbed or his safety being affected by other creatures or beings. But when he mounts up higher and higher and reaches the top stages of *Sarupyam, Sameeepyam and Sayujyam* there is no more danger to his existence or perfection. Lastly comes the example of the rivers. All the above mentioned examples are all objects which retain their identity as separate from the objects to which they are drawn. In the last, namely, the rivers, the perfection of the current of devotion is attained by losing one's own entity or existence in that of the Divine or the end of the course. The river is inevitably drawn down. Does water go back or upward? It is drawn downward and downward, and finally it meets the ocean. The waters of the rivers were originally part of the ocean, and after being held up in the form of water vapour, cloud and rain, they take the shape of a river. So, it is the oceanic waters that flow through the rivers and get back to their original source. The devotion of the river which was issued out of that immense, endless, infinite expanse called the ocean, makes it get back to that ocean and be lost in it. Once the rivers Ganges,

Indus, get into the ocean, they Cannot be pieced out again as Ganges or Indus water. *Purnalaya* is the end of the devotion and that is obtained by the *jivas* surrendering themselves, that is, making *Atma nivedana*, which is the ninth mode mentioned in the *Navavidha bhakti*. That is both devotion and also absorption. After that there is nothing further to reach. Thus the various stages, attitudes, and relations of a *bhakta* can be very well dwelt upon and learnt by studying the above illustrations and applying them to oneself.

Another stanza, which may be quoted next, sets out the names of a number of loving *bhaktas* so that they may ever remain in one's heart and show how *bhakti* achieves its ends. The end of *bhakti* is not achieved by the offer of money to God or by mere learning or by age or beauty of a person, God does not want any of these. God wants only your heart, that is, your self, and he will not be satisfied with anything else. The stanza runs as follows,

Vyadhasya Acharanam Dhruvasyacha Vayah Vidya
 Gajendrasya
 ka Ka-jatir Vidhurasya Yadavapateh Ugrasya
 Kim Pourusham
 Kubjayah Kamaniya Rupam Adihikam
 Kimtat Sudhamno Dhanam
 Bhaktya Tushyati Kevalam
 Natu Gunaih, Bhaktipriyah Sripatih.

This means, as for the hunter *Kannappa* what. *Achara* or religious course of conduct had he?

For *Dhruva*, what was his age?

For the elephant *Gajendra*, what education or degrees and titles had he?

Had *Vidura* favourite of Krishna any qualification in respect of caste? He was the son of a slave or dancing girl.

For the king of *Yadavas* called *Ugrasena*, who was favoured by Krishna what manliness had he? He was a great coward: ,

For *Kubja* also was favoured by Krishna, had she any great beauty? She was deformed in person.

For *Sudhama*, known as *Kuchela* who also was favoured by Krishna, had he any wealth?

Therefore, God is pleased with and wants only *bhakti* or devotion. God is captured by *prem* or love. The above stanza refers to well known *bhaktas* who received great help or favour from Krishna or God on account of their *bhakti*. One's profession or conduct, that is, whether one is a hunter or a *Vaideek Brahmin*, whether one is young or old, whether one is highly learned or a creature without education, whether one is a high caste person or the son of a slave whether one is a brave man or a coward, whether one has beauty or wealth, none of these are the reasons for God's help and favour. God is pleased by *bhakti* alone and *bhakti* can capture Him. This contains the essence of the doctrine of *bhakti* or devotion, and, therefore, earnest readers who are anxious to study the history of Sai Baba, who realised in himself the perfection of Godhead by attaining *Purnalaya*, concentrating his mind always on God with intense love from his earliest period of life, and thereby attained *Aikya*, so that he could say *Mainm Allahum*, that is *Aham Brahmasm* and could exhibit all the powers of God; would find the use of the above stanzas. Sai identified himself with Krishna and with every other form of God. As the object of everyone should be to please God in Sai form or in any other form, one may note how in point of historical fact, from this biography, numbers of people were drawn to Sai Baba and achieved the love of Sai Baba, and thereby achieved every object of human existence. The succeeding chapters of this book would deal with the details of a large number of devotees being drawn to and benefiting from Baba, and would fully illustrate the truth of the above verses. At present we have sufficiently satisfied highly sensitive readers who wish to have the essence of Sai Baba's *Marga* placed before them, before we deal with the expansion of the Sai movement and the details of persons who approached him, and the problems that arise for consideration in the life of Baba.

Seven

Worship, Its Further Expansion

We have stated so far how the worship of Sri Sai Baba expanded and assumed vast proportions during his lifetime. This however did not stop with 1918 but continued to expand further and further, not merely as to the forms and modes of worship but also in respect of the populations and areas covered and further extended in its inwardness and heightened its results. In describing the *post-Mahasamadhi* developments, and the introduction of Southern modes of worship the spread of Sai faith to all parts of India and beyond will be dealt with more fully. One feature of present day worship will be noticed by any one touring the Indian States, and that is the fact that there are over a hundred institutions named after Sai, carrying on Sai *Puja*, Sai *Bhajan*, Sai *Prachar*, often called Sai *Samajs* or *Sammelans*, *Bhajan* groups. Most of them have Sai *Mandirs*. A good number of decent buildings with suitable compounds sometimes with *gopuras* or towers are seen dotting the face of the country. In Madras City alone we have the Mylapore All India Sai Samaj Sai Mandir, the Guindy Sai Mandir and the Egmore Sai Mandir, At Kurnool, Coimbatore Ventrappagada, Tenali, and other places there are notable *Mandirs* attracting thousands to worship there. These are but the nucleus of what is to be, a tiny patch of cloud prognosticating the vast rainy clouds that will soon screen the sky and flood the whole country. Sri Sai Baba has ordained all this expansion.

Baba's gradual permission of his worship has been noted, and it has been specially stressed that Baba allowed his own worship with the prescience that it would be the means for providing temporal and spiritual benefits to millions of individuals and also the means of solving India's national problems of communal and religious unity as *Sarva loka malapaha*.⁶⁵ In India we have not merely Hindu and Mohammadan divisions but various subdivisions of religion, among the major communities also. In their ideas and modes of worship they differ widely from one another. Till recently, religion meant differences between group and group and, therefore, mutual conflicts, preventing the unification of India or even of Hinduism, urgently calling for its purification and unification⁶⁶. Sri Vishnu and Siva conflicts have been going on for centuries. Also Hindu-Muslim conflicts. To

Akbar must be given the credit for trying to solve the problem of religious disunity in India by using his powerful position and influence to unify and consolidate the two chief religions, namely, Hinduism and Islam, by making the representatives of both gather at one place to worship the common father of all, *Din Ilahi*, Akbar's attempt though slightly successful during his days, perished with him. His successors did not take up the idea and some of them took up the opposite idea of oppressing the non-Muslims with a view to inducing them to embrace Islam -Aurangzeb being the most notable of such successors. What Akbar tried in the region of statesmanship and politics was attempted in the field of literature and religion by Kabir, Guru Nanak, and others, and they tried to establish the bedrock of ideas on which Indian unification in religion could be accomplished. Each had some degree of success, but even their efforts fell short of that completion and perfection which we shall find in Baba's performance Sai Baba declared on one occasion that in a former *janma* he was Kabir, and it may be noted that Baba, as Kabir, was suiting the narrow views of former centuries, while Baba of the 19th and 20th centuries had broader views and more efficient means of reaching unity. Kabir brought under his own leadership Hindus and Muslims who gave up former labels and were called Kabir *panthis*. But a little later, a short time after his demise, the spirit of division came in, and there were Hindu Kabir *panthis* and Muslim Kabir *panthis* separating each from the other. Guru Nanak also accomplished the same remarkable feat in bringing Islam and Hinduism closer to each other. But the Sikhs, who now represent the fruits of his labours, cannot provide any basis for the religious unification of India. Sai Baba fully grasped the difficulties of the problem. The only thing that could bring Hindus and Muslims together was a weird, saintly personality acting as a *Guru* or god-Man, absolutely neutral, allowing all sects, religions and creeds to have their own ways, and yet bringing them all to a common platform, namely, devotion to that saintly personality and enabling them to see that the differences are petty and ridiculous, unworthy of serious men of *jnana* or realisation. Sai Baba was such a person. In him, divine qualities, obviously super-human powers combined with even-minded beneficence were so patently manifested that all alike, Hindus,

Muslims and Christians, who came to know about him felt that they were before a higher influence and that they could all approach and reach God through him, that he was the high watermark of saintliness, or Godliness or God head and they willingly made him their *Gurudeva and* protector. Some of them treated him as their god. The result was that Sai, by allowing his worship to be done at the Mosque by different people with varying sets of ideas, was drawing all to Mysticism, the common essence of all Religion and thus building up, by a slow but inevitable process, a united community engaged in common worship which ultimately could include at least the whole of India. Sai devotion means tolerance towards all, faith in God and in Sai as *Guru*, and the acceptance of the basic principles found in all religions. These factors were stressed by Sai Baba from time to time and many a time. Sai allowed the Hindus to adopt their puranic method of worship and treat him either as an *Avatar* or *Ishtadeva* or a *Gurudeva*, as they liked, while he allowed the Muslims approaching him to read their Koran and the *shariat* at the Mosque and to join his flock as his devotees, treating him merely as an *Avalia* or a saint with remarkable powers. All alike noticed that Sai was the soul of love and purity, and a storehouse of superhuman power and superhuman enlightenment. It is such a person that has succeeded in drawing the otherwise jarring and warring sects into a peaceful flock of Sai devotees. When his *puja* is gone through during the day time with all the din, bustle, and formalities of *mantras* and rituals of Hindu worship in the Mosque or *Dwarkamayee*, the Muslims do not interfere. When the Muslims on *Idga* Day have their rituals or prayers at Baba's Mosque, the Hindus do not interfere. During the day, Hindu *puranas*, *Tukaram gathas*, *Ramayan*, *Vedas*, were being read or recited and at night the Koran or *shariat* was read or repeated either by Abdul or by a person known as the *Rohilla* or by some other person, offerings brought to Baba were distributed by him to all after *fatia* was pronounced in true Muslim fashion. Though Baba did not himself perform the five *Namazes* every day, he encouraged the orthodox Muslims to do so at his place. Baba was displeased and showed his anger when any religious intolerance was exhibited. On one occasion a devotee came up and deplored the fact that the newly

appointed *Foujdar*, that is, Police Sub-Inspector at Ratha was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but a Christian, Baba's immediate reply was, 'What of that? He is my brother'. Again, H.S. Dixit, though generally observing all propriety, once fell into the unfortunate mood of decrying Christianity and Christ when talking at his quarters with some others. After that, he went up to Baba to pay his respects. But Baba severely said "Don't come near me". At once Dixit felt that, by decrying Christ and Christianity he had offended Baba, and immediately he repented. It was only thereafter that Baba allowed him to approach him. Baba expressly declared⁶⁷ that when devotees were quarrelling amongst themselves, he was feeling great pain, whereas if they all put up with each other and pulled on amicably, he felt happy. In effect, his message was "Love ye one another even as I love you all". Baba's love and wonderful power of reading and controlling hearts was mainly responsible for the almost perfect concord between Hindus and Muslims that always reigned at Shirdi. In other places when a Muslim festival came on the same day as the Hindu festival, battles were fought, and heads were broken. But at Shirdi there was not a single occasion of a Hindu-Muslim class fight. When Baba's picture was carried in procession through all the streets including the neighbourhood of the Muslims, no one felt the least repulsion or objection. On the other hand, in front of, and behind the palanquin carrying his picture, Hindus and Muslims vied with each other for the honour of carrying various insignia of devotion, namely, whisks, umbrella and Maces etcetera. Baba distributed *prasad* brought by members of any community to all, and they were accepted by members of all communities. The chief point to note about Baba's unification is that there was no fixed book or doctrine to which he wanted all people to subscribe; and no fixed observance was forced on any one⁶⁹. The main mass of the devotees were Hindus, and they carried on their worship of Baba at the Masjid with rituals based on the Pandharpur *Arti*. Their *bhajans* were full of allusions to Hindu mythology, but the Muslims who were present on such occasions were free to ignore all the above and simply regard Baba as their kindly disposed *Avalia-lheir* Guardian. Christians and Parsis also had the same freedom and they adopted whatever course they thought was

proper. There was no compulsion of any sort in the matter of religion before Baba. The common point was attachment through powerful love to the personality of a weird *Guru* who exercised all his vast and wonderful powers of seeing or knowing, everything everywhere and of even doing the impossible for the benefit of his devotees. Love, keenest and burning love was the means and the end. Love is really what every one wants, with relief from distress and attainment of desired objects. At Baba's feet they were obtained by any person-Hindu or Muslim, Parsi or Christian, and the question of a difference of religion did not arise at all as love to the *Guru* was the common plank of all, the other planks being different. To many a Hindu, Baba was identified with various gods or *Avatars*. Each man saw in Baba sometimes the very form of the deity that he wanted to worship. A South African doctor would respect none but Rama and did not care to approach a Muslim as Sai Baba was supposed to be. But when that South African Brahmin doctor came to the Masjid on the express stipulation that he would not bow to a Muslim Baba, he stayed for a few minutes outside and, afterwards, darted into the Mosque and fell at Baba's feet. When asked for an explanation, he gave the answer. 'I saw that Baba's form was really the wonderful form of *Nila Megha Syama Rama*. As I found my Rama in Baba, I worshipped him' and Baba later filled him with *Parama Ananda* and love. This is a typical instance. A Sub-Inspector of Police M.S. Nimonkar had regard for nothing except Hanuman, and when he was looking on, Baba appeared to his eyes exactly like Hanuman with all the hair and prognathous face. N.G. Chandorkar's relative Binnewalla did not care for anything except Datta, and was anxious to go away from Shirdi, where Baba was worshipped, to some place where Datta could be seen. Suddenly to his eyes, Baba appeared with three heads, that is, as Datta. Baba exercised these marvellous powers to induce faith in persons that approached him. Thus, he was Siva to Megha, Rama to the South African doctor and Madrasi Ramadasini, Krishna or Vittal to Krishna bhaktas, Maruti to Maruti bhaktas,

Ye Yatha Maam Prapadyante

Taams Tathaiva Bhajaami Aham⁷⁰

Shirdi Sai Noon Arati Song says,

Jayaa Manim Jaisaa Bhaava

Tayaa Taisaa Anubhava

Davisi Dayaghana, aisii tujhi hi maava

Which means, According to the feeling or attitude of mind of each person, you give him experience of you. Such is your sport, merciful One. Thus, he really was God, that is, he had not merely God essence, Supreme Power and Love but also every form of God that the devotee wanted to see. As he was completely self-realised he could with perfect truth say Main Allahum, that is, I am Allah or God. When a Deputy Collector was gazing at Lakshminarayana's figure at Bombay and concentrated his mind on that image it disappeared and Baba's form took its place; the Deputy Collector was afraid that his concentration was a failure. But when he came to Shirdi, Baba knew what happened and asked him, "What is the difference between this form and Lakshminarayan's form? I am Lakshminarayan'. He showed in himself the form of Ganapati to others such as B.V. Dev's sister. He was all gods, because according to the *Sastras*, all gods are parts of God *Angani anya devatah*⁷⁰. Baba had the complete realisation of the fullness of God-not merely of God forms, but God essence. He was *Sal Chit Ananda*. He had absolute freedom from attachment to all earthly objects and freedom from all those emotions which take persons away from God. Therefore Baba was best fitted to bring into a common fold all persons who had desires or objects that religion could grant through service at his feet and acceptance of him as the *Gurudeva* or guide. This work which occupied so many decades of Baba's life on earth has greatly developed since he cast off his earthly body. As Justice Mr. MB. Rege remarks in his foreword to Baba's Charters and Sayings. 'Now that the fleshy body is gone, he is to me only God.'¹ The fleshy body repelled many people who came to him because of their sectarian or other prejudices. Now when a person reads about Baba and notes the effect of prayer to him with full faith, the physical body of Baba, the Muslim appearance, is not there to repel him. Thus, his casting off the fleshy body in 1918 leaving thousands or tens of thousands bound to him by love and a system of worship by love, with the fame

of his *lilas* helped to continue his work and was a very useful step in carrying out and in perfecting his mission to unify all faiths by acceptance of him as the common *Guru-deva*, especially because the worship of, or prayer to, tombs of saints is practised by both Hindus and Muslims⁷¹. Kabir objected to images and image worship. Baba on the other hand allowed people and even directed people to go to particular temples to worship the images there and he presented *lingas*, *padukas*, coins, and pictures to devotees as fit-objects of worship especially his own pictures. These images too are needed to make the minds steady and concentrated in meditation⁷². These steps among others help to bring more into Baba's fold.

It is common knowledge that any one who pins his faith to Baba, regardless of castes or creeds and appeals to him, gets remarkable relief, and therefore, feels convinced that this Sai whatever he might have been by birth, parentage, or training, in his corporeal life, is now nothing but God, that is, the dispenser of desired things to those who want them and make the proper approach. So Baba is the God or the God-man to all Sai devotees. While unifying India on that basis, he is the granter to millions of individual devotees, of all their cherished or most ardently longed for objects.

Eight

Unification and Purification of Hinduism

In India the divergences of worship between class and class or group and group are so great that some foreigners thought there was nothing like Hinduism that there is nothing in common at all between the *Todas* and the *Brahmins* in worship and that they reflected different levels of thought and had contents of truth or degrees of philosophy in them. Toda worship might simply amount to bowing to natural forces or a few objects whereas the worship by the highest cultured classes in temples and else where reveal a great diversity of philosophical systems, and of religious thought, Apart from this, the distinction between the worship going on in Siva temples, Vishnu temples, Jain temples and other temples, was noticeable enough. The differences were sometimes sought

to be bridged by enclosing Siva and Vishnu temples in the same compound or inside the same building. In some cases there was amicable worship of the different deities inside the same place but in others the differences of view were intensified by the closer contact. In some cases, the *bhaktas* of Siva claim that Siva should have priority in procession and that Vishnu's procession must follow. The other group contests this claim. These and other similar matters appear however to be a quarrel over trifles. But there was bitterness enough to take the differences to courts and even to the highest court like the Privy Council. It was not easy for anyone to say that there was a single religion called Hinduism, the characteristics of which one could set out. In any case, there was a war of literature going on during the last two or three centuries developing bitter antagonism between Siva and Vishnu faiths and between Jain and both of these and other similar religious institutions. The quarrels were always on non-essentials. But anyhow they prevented unity and sowed dissension. The consequence on society was to weaken society and demoralise religion. In order, therefore, to unify the people and to purify the religion and raise it to the highest grade, the one great thing needed was to discover what was the essential substratum of all these faiths called Hinduism and to bring in actual practice the adherents of all sects and views into one mass that could work harmoniously. Sri Sai has done marvellously good work in this connection. Having been brought up in his earliest years by a *fakir*, the idea of unity of God struck deep root in him. He changed at a very early age his residence and his caretaker, and coming under the *Selu zamindar's* care which naturally involved contact with various forms of gods. Baba thus naturally developed the feeling that the one God or *Allah* that he knew in his earliest years under the *fakir* was the same as Venkatesa whom his *Guru* at *Selu* worshipped, and that other gods or god-forms that were incidentally brought to *Selu* or were visited by his master were all forms of the same God, that is, the *Ekam Sat, Vipra bahuda vadanti*, which means, "The Real is one. The wise call it variously." *Angani Anya Devatah*, that is, all gods are part of God. So Baba had, as the backbone of his religion, the unity of God-head in all names and forms. This, is the feat that must be achieved by all in

India, and Hindus especially should attain unity and purity of religion. Therefore those who contacted Baba by worshipping him at Shirdi or elsewhere were deeply impressed with and felt this truth that all god forms such as Vittal Maruti etetra are God. "All that is *Allah*" was what Baba told the Rohilla. Baba constantly used one name for another, namely, Vittal for Khandoba or Maruti for Vittal, and it may be noted that advanced *bhaktas* following *Hari Hara Guha Bhajana Paddhati* do the same. He told Upasani Maharaj that he Upasani would get God's grace after four years of severe training at Shirdi. and the word he used for God's grace was "Khandoba's grace." When he referred to Upasani's residence at Shirdi, he would say "Vittoba's temple," but Upasani Maharaj corrected him and said it was Khandoba's, for Vittal's temple was inside the village and Khandoba's temple outside. Baba would again correct Upasani Maharaj and say, 'What is the difference between Khandoba and Vittoba?*' By persons who are ingrained in Hindu notions of difference between Siva and Vishnu, Khandoba would at once be declared Siva's *avatar* and Vittal as Mahavishnu's *avatar*, and so the two cannot be the same in their functions, their dresses, or their pleasures. The two, Mahavishnu and Siva, are severely contrasted daily by *murthy* minded Hindus, thus

Alankara Priyo Vishnuh

Abhisheka Priyas Sivah⁷³

that is to say, Vishnu is always dressed up in fine *pitambar*, that is, golden dress, and given a fixed number of ornaments, weapons, insignia, whereas Siva is either undraped as in the *Linga* or clad with tiger skin, and he wears his hair on the head in the form of a rough tuft. But Vishnu's hair is nicely combed and presentable. In the description of accompaniments also, living or other, the two are described differently and presented differently in temples. Mahavishnu is surrounded by Lakshmi, *bhaktas* and *bhagavatas*, all wearing *Namams*, whereas Siva is ash besmeared and surrounded by ghouls, demons, and fierce looking creatures, for he is supposed to dwell in the horrid cremation ground, which is considered a polluted place to visit. Hindu groups exultingly developed the peculiar merits, each of its own *Murthi* ideas, as contrasted with those of others;

and the *Vishnu Mala kandanam* by Saivas and the *Saiva Mata Kandanam* by the *Vaishnavas* gave plenty of scope for hairsplitting, philosophising, and bitterness for centuries, and in practice, often the followers of each kept themselves apart from the others. Even in the Valmiki Ramayana., Bala Kanda, there is a chapter showing that Siva came to conflict with Vishnu, and even after they stopped their fight, their followers continued their fight. This unedifying spectacle of degrading religion by enthusiasm over unessential and exulting over differences has worked sufficient harm already to the great neglect of the essence of religion that should alone be stressed by all sensible and truly religious persons. Baba, therefore, drew the attention of all his *bhaktas* to the fact that whether you called your God, Siva or Vishnu, he is the Supreme Power that is responsible for the creation, maintenance, and the withdrawal of the world, and he gives you all that you need and finally the highest bliss at his own feet. This, being the central essence of all Theism, is or should be the central plank for unifying all branches and sects of Hindus and also unifying Hinduism with Islam and other theistic religions. In fact, world unity of religions can be achieved mainly on this basis. Sporadic teachings on the same lines existed. For example,

Sivasya Hridayam Vishnuh

Vishnoscha Hridayam Sivah

Ishadapi Antaram Kritva

Rouravam Yati Manavah⁷⁴

This means, Siva is the essence or heart of Vishnu and Vishnu is the heart or essence of Siva. Any one who makes the slightest difference between the two goes to Hell. There are many similar authorities. But why go to authorities? Does any one think that God, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, who is responsible for the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe can be many? If there are many, the universe will be a chaos, not a cosmos. The above are functions or aspects of one and the same God. Baba was always impressing this silently on all. We have the opposite ideal deeply ingrained in us. We are bodies, we think. So we think Siva, Vishnu and Brahma are embodied beings, *murthis* with eyes, legs, nose and crown. It is absolutely essential for the seeker after

salvation to shed these and consequent differences. So Baba stressed unity just as even Srimad Bhagavata stresses unity. The *Vedas* on which all schools rely seem to support the idea of multiplicity of Gods and in fact multiplicity of objects in the universe. In Srimad Bhagavata⁷⁵ Sri Krishna says.

Mam Vidhatte Ahhidhane Mam

Vikalpya Apohyate Tvaham

Eiavan Sarva Vedarthah Sahda Asthaya Mam Bhidam

Mayamatram Anudya Ante Pratishidya Prasadati

that is *Vedas* enjoin Me, Me they express. What is stated tentatively to be refuted is I. This is the import of the entire *Vedas* with Me as their substratum, that is, the *Vedas* affirm the existence of duality and that duality is but a illusion. Refuting that duality at the end, the *Vedas* are satisfied. Baba did not stop with stating the principles on which all could be brought to a common basis. He went further and worked out the actual unity of the groups by bringing men from different groups and making them all form one solid block of Sai devotees under his own care. Those who came to him saw in him their only God, recognised him as their *Guru Deva* and that was the highest religious sentiment that they had and there was no possibility of their tearing themselves off into divisions, though their original loyalties were in other respects maintained. Baba hated intolerance and made people tolerate each other's views and peculiarities. He did not allow the Hindus under him to fight against the Muslim devotees. He removed disparities and made them work in unison as fellow devotees, as brothers in Sai faith. Thus, he worked out not merely the unification of Hinduism but also the unification of Hinduism with the other great religion in India, namely, Islam. Especially under Sufi influence, one sees that it is impossible to distinguish the essence of Hinduism from that of Islam. When the essentials of Sufism are put forward, it is difficult to say whether those essentials do not constitute real worship according to the Bhagavata doctrine as well as esoteric Christian doctrine. Sai Baba is both a perfect *Sufi* and a *Parama Bhagavata* following the Bhagavata or *Parma Guru* of the Guru Gita embodied in *Skanda Parana*. The one thing that religions must agree upon is that God, the Supreme Power, is *Sat Chit Ananda*; the highest

bliss that man can know is represented to be God, and God is, therefore, the ultimate goal of all religious striving, and every effort should be made by every sincere and honest seeker of truth to realise this real *Sal Chit Ananda* as the basis of the Universe and the basis of his own personality. All personalities will, therefore, finally merge in the one grand personality, *Paramatma*, that is God, which is Love. This is the essence of Baba's teaching and practice and is well fitted to be the basis of unification of all faiths in India and in the world.

BUT HOW CAN POLYTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM BE RECONCILED?

This is a question on which theoretical differences of opinion exist in abundance, and theoretically one can go on maintaining that monotheism and polytheism reflect different levels of thought and action and that the two are poles apart. In one sense that is true. Yet it is also the truth recognised in the lives of great souls and in the history of nations that the two co-exist and are reconcilable in Mysticism. This is well illustrated in Hinduism. Is God really one or many? Are the various forms of worship of various gods and goddesses reconcilable with the worship of one God? In the case of the one God, is worship necessarily external and formal or might it be equally advantageous, if not more advantageous, without external formalities? Is the realisation of pure *Satchitananda* a form of worship? If it can be termed worship, then probably the term worship must have an extended significance which ordinarily it does not have. When a person is simply enjoying *Satchitananda* he is generally referred to as in a blissful state, and he might even express his own condition by the words *Mainm Allah Hum*, I am God, *Aham Brahmasmi*, *Soham*, That is, if the individual soul has so completely surrendered itself to and got identified with the *Paramatman*, then there may be no such thing as relation of one soul to another. Worship is usually understood as the attitude of one soul, a *Jiva*, towards God, viewed not as identical with it, but as in some way different from it, though the Godhead might include the *Jiva*. One might worship a God which includes oneself because it includes others also, and is thus different from oneself. If worship must necessarily connote differences between the worshipper and the worshipped, it is not correct then to say that the merger of the individual soul in the *Paramatman*

is an act of worship. It may be the ultimate end of worship. There in *Atma Nivedana* worship ends. But ordinarily no one would think loss of identity is worship. In fine flights of poetry, as in the pages of Wordsworth, we come across passages where the soul is lost in admiration of the beauty, the infinite character and the glories of Nature treating them as expression of love and joy arising on God's Visitation. That is described sometimes as an act of worship as loss of self is only temporary. Even the person who worships a God-form is lost in it for a time and then comes back to himself and treats that form as different from himself. A mystic has various stages, one stage of which is losing himself in Nature or in a God-form other than Nature. Thus Nature and he are two different objects, and that is how the term worship may be applied to such cases. But apart from verbal differences, taking only the essence into consideration, if God is bliss and man is only a spark from God, the spark, after much *sadhana*, gets reabsorbed in the original flame from which it came. Then, the process of approaching, absorption and getting back may be called worship. But the end, that is being permanently part of the original flame or bliss or love, is called worship, as means and end are bundled together as in Bhagawad Gita⁷⁶. Worship is usually described as a *sadhana* or means, and the end of it is reaching God. Persons of all grades of development were flocking to Baba's feet, and a very large number of them were incapable of any *laya* or merger in God. But a few like Wordsworth's 'youth at sunrise' quoted in a 'later chapter occasionally touched that *laya*. Once Balwant Khaparde and Bhisma went out in the morning when dew was falling and the Sun was just rising. The Sun's rays hit them and threw their shadows behind them. Their shadows began with their feet and continued right on to the distant horizon, and at the horizon there was a rainbow caused by the piercing of the dew by the Sun's rays. Thus the long shadow of each of them was crowned with a halo of the iridescent seven coloured rainbow. This struck each of them as marvellous. From each one, who is finite, goes out an infinite shadow which at the other end is crowned with divine glory! This was by the rays of the Sun who sends his rays upon all. The Sun is typical of God. The halo of glory cast round the head of the shadows was also

typical of Godhead, and so each one had a feeling that he himself was identical with that elongated shadow which had a crown on its head. Therefore each one dimly sensed his divinity. The finite body and its infinite and glorious shadow were really one. The Sun showed the oneness. That was the mystic meaning to be attached to their morning experience of the Sun, the dew, and their shadows. They communicated their experience to G.S. Khaparde who said that Baba had kindly given them a mystic experience of *Atmananda*. With this uppermost in their minds, they went to see Baba. Baba gave them a smile of approval and said nothing. One would take it that Baba set his seal of approval on their interpretation of this natural phenomenon of having long shadows of themselves crowned with divine glory, and considering the same as typical or significant of their being in essence divinity, something infinite, blissful, and beautiful, and that their *Jivas* must be recognised by each one of them as being the *Paramatma*, that is, Divine, as was demonstrated by their blissful *laya* absorption for a moment. Baba similarly expressed his approval of the use of music also for purposes of enabling the *Jiva* to get *laya* in bliss. Baba himself in his early days used to dance with tinklets tied to his feet singing rapturously songs of Kabir, some of which undoubtedly referred to the beauty and blissfulness of infinite Godhead. Baba must have enjoyed what Tyagaraja says is enjoyed by the *bhakta* in moments of musical *laya*,

'*Gitarthiamu*' *Mokshamu Galada* asks Tyagaraja, that is, Is it possible for a man whose mind does not melt with music into *laya*, to obtain *laya* in any other way into God?. Baba told Rangari that on the night previous to his coming, there was *bhajan* and music, and all night he was in rapture. 'They abused me', Baba said.

Tyagaraya who like most Hindus revelled in meditating on the details of God forms attained *laya* or mystic absorption especially with the aid of music. Sufi and Christian adorers of God without form also succeed often times in merging their selves in rapt communion with God. Both these groups of mystics show that concentration in the end gives the longed for bliss of God and is the way to reconcile all religious differences. Baba as the pastmaster of mystic bliss

and lord of *siddhis* or psychic powers flowing from mystic concentration helped on the reconciliation of these apparently conflicting faiths of Polytheism and Monotheism.

Nine

Guru Worship

Sri Sai Baba's beneficent work especially on the vast scale that is seen more and more now was and is exercised through various means, Sai worship being one of the most important of these means. That worship was mostly *Guru* worship, his *marga* being *Guru marga*. Hence *Guru* worship must form an important feature of the Sai movement. A full study of the *marga* here is out of the question. But to understand Sai Baba's life, *guru-sishya* relations and nature have to be studied, and Sai Baba's life and *lilas* throw a flood of light on the full significance and value of *Guru marga*. That term picked up from *Guru Gita* is clothed with power and glory from Baba's life.

The story of the life of such a great saint like Sai Baba must include references to *Gurus* and *Guru* worship, for it is by their grace that saints achieve perfection which they naturally endeavour to impart to others. By reason of Sri Sai Baba's ability to conceal his real nature and the working of his mind and body obviously in pursuance of the directions of *sastras* and *Gurus* that eminence must be concealed, for example, the saint must be unfathomable and undiscerned like the ocean and the python⁷⁷, moving about like a dullard, idiot, or devil, his acting as a *Sadguru* and a *Samartha Sadguru* was unknown to the thousands that met him in life or heard of him thereafter. It is only by revelation of devotees' experiences that people now mostly realise that he was a *Samartha Sadguru* and had various grades of devotees and *sishyas*.

His biography is the practical illustration of what *Guru* and *Sishya* mean and of the principles that govern their conduct and mutual relation, Hence a preliminary discourse on these subjects is needed, though it cannot exhaust either the general subject or its application to Sai Baba, his *Gurus* and *sishyas*. The *marga* that Baba followed has puzzled many. Many asked and ask whether he was a *Yogi* or a *Jnani* or a *Bhakta* or followed any *marga* peculiarly his own.

Several thought and think that Baba cannot be classed under any of the divisions applying to saints and *sadhus*. As a result of study, aided by His own grace, one sees at last that he was an adept of all the *margas*, though his chief *marga*, was *Bhakti marga*, the special form of it that it described as *Guru Marga* in the *Guru Gita*, and that *Jnana* and *siddhis* including *yoga siddhis* came in the wake of his *Guru bhakti*. These will be made clearer as we advance in the study of Sri Sai's Life and of his relation to devotees. At present in this chapter we shall state just a few preliminary matters relating to *Guru* and *Guru* worship.

Definition : *Guru* may be defined as one who imparts information or gives training to another. Any school teacher or moral teacher or the one who teaches the way to salvation or *mukti* or even teaches *mantras* for various religious or secular purposes, high or low, can be called a *Guru*.

Derivation : The word *Guru* is a Sanskrit word and a number of derivations are found especially in *Guru Gita*, which is a part of the *Skanda Purana*. 'Gu' generally means '*Guna*' and therefore means 'darkness'. 'Ru' denotes the action of destruction just as fire destroys or removal. So *Guru* means the dispeller of darkness or ignorance.

Gu karascha Andhakarastu

Ru karah tannirodhakrit

Andhakara Vinasitwat

Guru riti Abhidhiyate.⁷⁸

Another derivation says that *Guru* is one who takes you from the *Gunas* to That beyond the *Gunas* that is, Brahman⁷⁹.

Arabic and Persian : It is always better especially when dealing with Sai Baba whose teachings are unique and cosmopolitan to give the word *Guru* its equivalents in Arabic and Persian, as used by Sufis, *Murshad* is the Sufi equivalent which Baba himself used. For example Baba said "My *Murshad* has taken me away from this body which is but my house'. This means his *Guru* had destroyed his identification of self with the body *Dehatma buddhi* and made him realise that He the *Atma* is not the body just as the fire which burns the fuel is

different from the fuel, and the seer is not the seen⁸¹. The Sufi equivalent for *Sishya* is *Talib* and *shakir*.

Everywhere in the world we find, the usual practise is to have *Gurus*.

Purpose for a *Guru* : A *Guru* being a teacher, the question as to what he teaches or what help he gives or is expected to give, is the essential question.

Classes of *Gurus* : There are various classes according to what is taught or given, for example *Siksha* or *Diksha*, secular or religious subject, sex of *guru*, methods adopted, whether *guru* is visible or invisible.

Guru Gita⁸² classifies *Gurus* under seven heads calling them:

Suchaka is the ordinary school master who gives secular teachings - the three 'R's and arts.

Vachaka is one who imparts ethical teachings, *dharma sastra*,

Bhodaka is one who teaches *mantras* for various purposes - secular or other, and stops with that.

Nishiddha is one who teaches *mantras* and other methods for achieving lower purposes just as *marana*, *vasikarana*, *sthambana* and *akarshana*. These are almost invariably used to achieve low earthly objects and are hindrances to one's achievement of the spiritual goal. It is a danger for one to get under a *Nishiddha Guru*.

Vihita is one who teaches *Virakti* or detachment, that is frees one from attachment to earthly things and prepares one for achieving one's spiritual welfare. *Vairagya* or dispassion is the *sine qua non* for progress just as its opposite, namely, extreme attachment to *kamini* and *kanchana*, is a powerful barrier to all progress.

Karana instructs the *sisya* as to the import of the *Mahavakyas* the axioms or axles of the Upanishads. After securing thorough *vairagya* one is ready to get at least an intellectual grasp and then a realisation of the grand basis of all *mukti*. *Mukti* is the realisation of the real nature of oneself and of *Atma*, that is *Paramatma*; and the *mahavakyas* embody that truth. Thus the teacher of this basis of salvation is the cause, *Karana* for salvation and therefore the *Karana Guru*.

Parama Guru, The last and the greatest of all, who enables the *sisya* to thoroughly absorb the truth of the *Mahavakyas* and to realize for himself the *Mahavakyas* and thus escape *samsara* or rebirth, is the *Parama Guru*. He is also called the *Moksha Guru*. Others are mere *Gurus*.

The Kula Moolavatara Kalpa Sutra Teeka Gata Kulagama mentions six classes of *Gurus* in regular gradation. They are;

Preraka one who just starts the pupil

Suchaka one who indicates and carries further

Vachaka one who regularly teaches and coaches

Darsaka one who points out the way and goal to the pupil.

Sikshaka one who regularly teaches and guides the pupil fully. These five are preparations to go to the 6th.

Bodhaka one who is also called the *Karana Guru*, who thoroughly illumines the pupil and prepares him for *Brahma Jnana* and *Moksha*.

There are *Gurus* who are seen and others unseen; and there are *Gurus* who merely impart teachings and do not care for results, that is, they are those who do not undertake any responsibility for the *sisyas*. There are others who give definite undertakings and carry out the same at all costs and if necessary life after life proceeding to seek the *sisya* in subsequent lives for the purpose. The best instance of such a *Guru* is Sri Sai Baba who undertook liability for H.S. Dixit, N.G. Chandorkar, Bandra Master T and M.B. Rege and others.

Another classification is based on the powers and methods of the *Guru*. The *Guru* who teaches something secular or religious is merely called *Guru*. He who teaches about God or Sat is called *Sadguru*. He who uses all his *siddhis* and superior powers to carry the *sisya* right up to the goal is called *Samartha Sadguru*. Ramdas, Guru of Shivaji, and Sai Baba belong to the class of *Samartha Sadgurus*. *Paramaguru* is a *Samartha Sadguru* who looks after the entire welfare secular and spiritual of his disciple.

Diksha Guru who formally initiates the pupil and invests him with *mantra*, power,

Siksha Guru, that is the usual *Guru* who teaches or trains a pupil.

Male Gurus usually prescribed in all *Sastras* for pupils to attain *Moksha*.

Female Gurus specially referred to in *Tantra* works to give *mantra* and training to pupils who aim at *siddhis*, The *Sastras* generally dissuade persons anxious to attain *Moksha* from resort to female *Gurus*. In the case of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Bhairavi Lady *guru* trained him in *tantras*. After that came the *Nanga Avadhuta Guru* who initiated him into concentration on *Nirguna Brahman*. Similarly in the case of Sri P.R. Avaste, a lady *guru* initiated him into *Mantra* that is Siva Panchakshari permutations and combinations *japa*, which would result in seeing various god forms and produce various powers. Later he came to Baba. *Kula Gurus* - hereditary. *Other Gurus*.

Prefer the *Kula Guru* to begin with. But if no benefit, then go to a competent *Guru*⁸². Baba was not the *Kula guru* of Nana Chandorkar, but his *rinanubanda Guru* and in a sense the *Guru* of his Destiny.

Was Baba a *siksha Guru* to any? For example, to N.G. Chandorkar and Balakram Manker? Yes It seems so.

Gurus for all round training and teaching for example, Venkusa.

Gurus for some push or help, for example, Sai Baba to Narayan Asram.

Gurus for some *mantra*, *tantra*, special *vidya*, *yogabhyasa*, and *asana*.

Gurus for *Vydeeki* profession and *Vedic* study.

Gurus for secular purposes only. for *tantra*

for spiritual purposes only. and *mantra*

for both. and

for *Moksha*.

Gurus for Inward working *Dakshinamurthi* method and Baba's.

Gurus for Oral teaching mainly. *Gurus* for Both.

Diksha is a special process for removing evil taints and investments of pupil with powers and *siddhis*⁸³. Kinds of *Dikshas* are :

Chakshushi by mere glance, *Sparsa* by touching the head, *Vacha* by words blessing, *Manasi* mentally blessing. *Sastri* by teaching *sastras*,

Yoga that is *Gurus* entering into the pupil inwardly.

Howtri Kriyavati performing homas with fire,

Howtri Jnanavati doing the *homa* mentally, to bless the pupil.

Derivation, *Diiyate Vimalam Jnanam Kshiyate Karma vasana tena diks hetu prokta. Di-giving jnana, Ksha* eradicating taints.

Need for a *Guru*. The question whether *Guru* is needed is often times debated by people with great warmth, some holding that there is need and others holding that there is no need. These debates are usually infructuous and they excite and result in loss of peace. A good example is Hemadpant alias Anna Saheb Dabolkar's case on his first visit to Shirdi⁸⁴. He hotly contested for one hour or so and, contended that a *Guru* was an unnecessary fetter and quoted the Gita, in his support. Bala Saheb Bhate took the opposite view and maintained that destiny was supreme and that a *Guru* was had by all. The discussion made Anna Dabolkar less fit to approach the great *Guru* Sai Baba by reason of restlessness. But Baba by graciously revealing his *Antarjnana* of all that passed during the discussion made Anna Dabolkar feel humble and contrite, and he felt that Baba was a wondrous Supreme Power before whom he and his weak powers should bend and give up his "reason" and supposed independence. And thus he became the *sishya* of Baba by the latter's grace and found that destiny had fixed him up, though his reasoning might indicate independence was his proper course. The *Sastras*, for example, Srimad Bhagavata, Bhagavata Gita, Guru Gita, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya, Maha *Narayanopanishad* say clearly that without a *Guru Brahmanjnana* and *Moksha* cannot be attained.

The need is questioned as a rule by persons not yet fit to be *sishyas*, that is those without humility, reverence, patience, receptivity and other virtues, or the proper attitude towards great saints. They must be advised to have *Satsang*. That is they must move with *bhaktas* and fit themselves for further progress. When they are fairly fit, they will get their *Gurus*. It is not the truth that *sishyas* always go out to find the *Guru*. The reverse is often true. There are many noble souls waiting to be approached by persons who want to become *sishyas* and have the proper attitude and training.

Scanta Mahanto Nivasanti Santah

Vasantavat Loka Hitam Charantah

Teernah Swayam Bhima Bhavarnavam janan
Ahetuna Anyan Api Tarayantah⁸⁵

This means, There are great souls who have attained perfect peace and who are working to benefit and bless the world like the spring season. Though they have themselves crossed the terrible ocean of *samsara*, they are ferrying others across without any reward or recompense or motive. *Amayantu Brahma Charinah*⁸⁶, this means, Let students come. Sai Baba himself sent for N.G. Chandorkar expressly and drew hundreds or thousands to himself inwardly and unnoticed by them. Baba says⁸⁷, 'No one comes to me except by my drawing. I draw people unto me under various pretexts such as the worldly objects they want, When a boy ties a bird's foot with one end of a string and pulls the other end, can the bird refuse to come?'. This drawing is mostly due to *rinanubandha*. that is prenatal ties and obligations. This is termed by Bala Saheb Bhate, the irresistible pull of destiny. The need for a *Guru* is patent especially in worldly affairs. People do not expect the children to learn the three,'R's, drawing, etcetera without a teacher. If this is so in the patent material world, how much more essential is the need in the subtle spiritual field? Generally one's spiritual progress and the stages one has to go through, and the way of mastering problems that arise there are often dealt with in books on religion. These books will not suffice to enable one to tackle this subject effectively. Religious literature is a vast forest, through which one cannot pick one's way. Guru Gita says, *Scastrajalam*. It is "*Bahu Kanataka Avrutam*",

Bhava aranya pravishtasya

Ding moha bhranta chetasah

Yena sandarscitah panthah

*Tasmai Sri gurave namah*⁸⁸.

This means, Salutation to the Sri Guru who shows the path to one who has got deep into the forest of *Samsara* and lost all knowledge of even the cardinal directions and got confused". It also adds that the *Guru* alone can help one to go through this forest of the spiritual field. On one occasion this point was raised by Baba apparently accidentally⁸⁹. Baba was referring to the fact that he

himself was a *Guru* who could guide those who came to Shirdi or to his feet to make spiritual progress. On the general question about the necessity for a *Guru*, Baba mentions⁹⁰ the discussion between himself and three other fellow students who were reading *pothi*, *parayana puran*, and discussing how to get realisation.

Baba himself described how he met his *Guru*. Once myself and three others were studying our *pothi*, *puran* and other works and discussed how we were to get realisation.

One said we should depend on ourselves and not on a *Guru*. For Gita says, *uddharet-Atmana*, Raise your self by the self.

The first *sadhaka* here is like the Devil quoting scripture. In quoting Gita⁹¹, he wrests a verse out of its context and misapplies it. The Gita⁹², emphasises the need for a *Guru* to get realisation, and these are ignored and the wrested verse is treated as cancelling the other express reference to the need for a *Guru*. The *Sadhaka* ignores the all important fact that the Gita *upadesa* is given to Arjuna only after he got disgusted with his life situation and he made *Prapatti* and *Saranagati*⁹³.

The second and third *sadhakas* quote the need of qualifications or requisites for *Brahmajnana* as per *Vivekachudamani* correctly. But this is mere reproduction by bookworms. How to get self-control and release from doubts? How to actually feel that the thing our animal, uncorrected nature draws us to is transient and how to overcome our desire for it and feel a revulsion to it! There lies the rub. Books do not solve. Surrender to a loving *Guru* and love towards that *Guru* alone can solve these problems. Baba the fourth *sadhaka* was practical and noted that Surrender and Love to *Guru* were the only solutions.

A second said The main thing is to make the mind self-controlled, free from thoughts and doubts. It is we who are in every thing every where.

A third, The form that is in phenomena is ever changing. The formless is unchanging. So we must always be making *Vichara*, that is distinguishing between *Nitya*, unchanging and *Anitya*, changing.

The fourth disliked bookish knowledge. He said Let us do our prescribed duty, and surrender our body, speech and life to a *Guru*, who is all pervading. Faith in him is the thing needed.

As we rambled through the forest, we met a *Vanajari* one that works in the forest who asked us "where are you going in this heat into the forest?" We gave no direct reply. He kindly warned us from getting into the trackless woods and that to needlessly. He bade us share his food. We disdained his advice and marched on.

But in that vast and dense wood we lost our way. That man met us again and said that by relying on our own cleverness, we had got into a wrong way and that a guiding finger was needed to show the way. "Do not despise offers of food. Such offers are auspicious signs of success in one's endeavour" he said, and he again invited us to take food with him. Again we declined it and went away. I soon felt hungry and I went and accepted a bit of bread and ate it and drank some water.

The *Guru* then said, "What was your dispute?" and I told him all our talk. The others left him and did not care for him. But I reverently bowed to him. Then he took me to a well, tied up my legs with a rope, and suspended me, head downwards, from a tree by the side of the well. My head was about three feet off the water, which I could not reach. And the *guru* left me there and went away, God knows, where. He returned after 4 or 5 hours and asked me how I fared. "In great bliss was my time passed" I answered. The *Guru*, mighty pleased with me, drew me near him, passed his palm over my head and body and spoke to me tender words dripping with love, and he put me into his school where I entirely forgot my father and mother and all attachments and desires. I loved to gaze at him. If he were not there to see, I would not like to have eyes at all. I did not wish to go back. I forgot all other things but the *Guru*. My life was concentrated in my sight in him. That was the object of my meditation. In silence, I bowed. Meaning, Realisation flashed upon me, of itself without effort or study purely by his grace. *Guru's* grace is our only *sadhana*. *Jnana* comes as experience or in its wake.

The above is a correct description of Baba's *Marga* which has been called *Guru Marga* in *Guru Gita*⁹⁴ *Guru Marga* may be defined as that form of *Bhakti Marga* in which faith in and devotion to the *Guru* is the only *Sadhana* for achieving every end including salvation, *Mukti* or *Brahmaikya*, *Satchidananda* conquest of *samsara*, and also all *yoga*, *siddhis* and temporal welfare.

Here Baba showed the applicability of the *Guru Gita*⁹⁵ to religious progress. The one who is acquainted with the 'ins' and 'outs' of the spiritual field, a forest, is a *Vanajari*. The fourth person, Baba, who realised that a guide was needed, and mere talk with bookish knowledge was no use at all to help one to realise God and himself. Above all, the question was not an intellectual one. It was a problem as to how a particular soul was to be raised to realisation, and that was essentially a matter of moulding the entire soul of the student or *sisya*. What is wanted, therefore, is humility, receptivity, and a powerful desire to reach the goal with the aid of a *Guru*, and therefore, a readiness to adopt a *Guru* and surrender everything to the *Guru*, as Baba has said. Everything *Tan*, *Man*, *Dhan* that is, body, mind and possession. Baba sacrificed and surrendered at the feet of his *Guru* as a result of the intense love he bore to his *Guru*. The solution of the problem as to whether there is need for a *Guru* is already reached when the *sisya* gets into the proper humility, receptivity, and longing attachment to the *Guru*, culminating in mutual love. Then realisation is reached. Realisation flashes upon the *sisya* purely by *Guru's* grace as is repeatedly stressed also in *Guru Gita*⁹⁶, in *Jnaneswari* and other works. Baba wound up most appropriately by saying⁹⁰. The *Guru's* grace is our only *sadhana*. *Jnana* comes as experience or in the wake of *Guru's* grace. He alone succeeds who feels the *Guru* is the one thing needed. If *Sastraic* authority is needed on the question of the need for a *Guru* we have it from the *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, and *Itihasas*. *Acharya Devo Bhava*, is mentioned in *Taittiriya Upanishad*. The last verse in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* says,

Yasya Deve Para bhaktih

Yatha Deve Tatha Gurow

Tasya ete kathitah hi arthah

Prakascante Mahatmanah

This means, He who has intense faith in God and equally intense faith in the *Guru*, who is treated as God, to him these teaching of the *Upanishads* about God, flash out.

This is to be taken along with *Acharyavan Purushveda*, which means, It is the man who has a *Guru* that can get knowledge or realisation.

Mundaka Upanishad⁹⁷ says,

Tad vijnanartham sa gurum eva abhigachchet,
samtpanih scrotriam brahma nishtam.

This means, To get *Brahman*, Knowledge and realisation, one should go with fuel in hand to one versed in the *Vedas*, who has realised God.

The same idea is conveyed by Srimad Bhagavata⁹⁸

Madabhijnam gurum scantam upasita Madatmakam

that is, the *Sadhaka* must resort to a *Guru* devoted to God, who has realised God and is calm.

Maha Narayanopanishad also says the same. Authority is also quoted from the lives of *Avatars* and saints and their sayings. Such as, Kabir's maxim *Guruvina Kona Batave Vat* which means, If there is no *Guru*, who will show us the way ? will suffice. It is quite enough to refer to the fact that all great teachers and even *avatars* have had their *Gurus* including Rama and Krishna. Especially on the question as to whether realisation is possible without the help of a *Guru* the *sastras* are quite emphatic. The Katha Upanishad says *Ananyaprokte Gatih Atra nasti*, which means, In this matter of realisation unless some one else speaks it out, there is no way. Guru Gita 191 says :

Yadi api aditah Nigamah

Shadanga agamah Priye,

Adhytamaadini sastrani,

Jnanam Nasti gurum Vina

that is, Studies do not suffice. Without a *guru*, there is no Realisation.

Naayam Atma pravachano Labyah.

Na Medhaya Na Bahuna scrutena.

Yam eva esha vrunute tena labhyah.

Tasya Esha Atma vivrunute tanum swam.

This means, This *Atman*, that is, its realisation is not got by study or repetition of *Vedas* nor by keenness of intellect nor by much learning. It is he whom Realisation desires that gets it. To him it reveals its form. Of course this realisation which is personified comes as a matter of fact because there are methods through the grace or bodies of the *Gurus*. Even Vyasa, who taught his son Suka all the *Vedas*, sent him to *Guru* Janaka for confirmation. This King Janaka acted as his *Guru* and enabled him to perceive that what his *Guru* had taught and what the *Vedas* explained was the same as the actual realisation which Suka had in himself. Until and unless such a seal is set on one's realisation, that realisation is not complete. A story narrated frequently in this connection relates to Namdev".

Namdev was an ardent worshipper of Vittal and had frequent *sakshatkara* of Vittal and Vittal even spoke to him. So Namdev was under the impression that he had achieved complete God-realization and self-realisation, and that there was nothing further for him to achieve in the spiritual field. When he had such wrong notions in his head, he once visited an assembly of saints, and there Gora Kumbhar, another saint, wanted to test which of the saints present were ripe or *pucca* and which were unripe or *kaccha*. The *pucca* pot that is the fully baked pot, when struck with a mallet, produces highly musical sound different from the thud which alone is got by striking the mallet on an unbaked or ill-baked pot. Gora Kumbhar went round with his small mallet in hand and struck the head of one saint after another and said, *pucca, pucca*, that is, 'ripe, ripe'. When he came near Namdev, the latter got afraid and did not wish to face the mallet stroke, So he got up and went away. Then Gora Kumbhar said 'unripe, unripe', and 'kaccha kaccha'. The whole assembly held Namdev to be an unripe one, because he had no *Guru*. Then Namdev went up to Vittal and complained. Vittal said that he was really unripe, *kaccha*. Namdev thought that Vittal's *sakshatkara* to him was sufficient. But Vittal answered, 'No', and that he must go to a *Guru* before realising God in full, whereas at the time he was only realising God in Vittal and

not in other forms. He was not able to see every form as God. Then God Vittal told him to go to the *Guru Visoba Kesar*. Namdev challenged Vittal to appear in any form and said he would recognise him in any form. Vittal then appeared first in the form of a Harijan who was baking in a pot a buffalo, recently cut, and next his own child to the great horror of Namdev. Namdev not realising Vittal in that Harijan form came to Vittal and said that he had not kept his promise of coming to test him. Vittal said that he was the Harijan and Namdev was horrified and wanted another test. Next Namdev was told to sit under a tree near a well and go on with his worship, and then Vittal would appear. Instead of Vittal appearing, Namdev found that a *Mohammadan* riding on a horse came and trampled upon all his images and went with his horse to the pond for the horse to drink water. He was fiercely glaring at Namdev and left him. Namdev went on the second day to Vittal and complained to him that he had not come. Then Vittal said that the *Mohammadan* who broke his images was Vittal. 'Can you break images?' was the wondering query of Namdev. Vittal answered 'Yes' and in order to be able to realise God in all forms, he asked Namdev to go to Visoba Kesar. And when Namdev went to Kesar, he saw Kesar, an old man, placing his feet with shoes over a stone *lingam* that was worshipped. Namdev was aghast and entreated that old man to place his foot elsewhere than on the head of a *lingam* which people worshipped. When the old man requested Namdev himself to lift his emaciated legs and lift them up and leave them where there was no *lingam*, Namdev at once lifted up the old man's shod feet and placed them two or three feet off. There, right where he placed his feet a *lingam* shot up. Again when Namdev shifted those feet, to another place a *lingam* shot up. Namdev was greatly surprised, and then that teacher told him, 'You think my shoe is unworthy and that the *lingam* alone is God. It is to enable you to get over this prejudice and wrong notion, you are sent here'. After serving this Visoba Kesar for some time, Namdev went back, and then his *pucca* God realisation was proved by Vittal's test. Namdev sat at a dinner along with his caste men who were all full of *Achara*. When the leaves had been spread and covered with dishes, a dog ran up to Namdev's plate seizing and biting a *roti*, ran away. Every one cried out, polluted,

polluted. Namdev alone lifted up a cup of ghee or butter from his leaf and ran after the dog saying 'Vittal, Vittal, if you are taking only dried bread, it will choke your throat. Take this *ghee* along with it'. People were laughing at the madness of a man who wanted to give extra feeding to a dog that polluted his plate and prevented his dinner. But the dog suddenly assumed the form of Vittal and told him, Now that you have served under a *Guru*, you are able to realise Me in a dog and other forms'. This is an excellent way of teaching the need for a *Guru* to have full realisation of God in all forms, which, according to the Gita, is the only knowledge of God.

Why do we need a *Guru*. The object of seeking a *Guru* may be secular, temporal or spiritual. So far as secular matters are concerned, people take very great care to get appropriate *Gurus* to achieve the highest results. It is in spiritual matters that the issue is more often raised. People are apt to fancy that there is no clear reason to approach a religious *Guru*, especially when other considerations such as one's own pride, one's disinclination to part with goods as *dakshina* to the *Guru*, arise. But if one sufficiently clarifies the position in one's own mind as to what a *Guru* is needed for and what a *Guru* can do, a solution is easy or made easier. Now the main question being spiritual, one might note what there is as authority and next as precedent, and then finally come to one's own reasoning and try to decide the question. So far as the aim or object is concerned, aim with the highest spiritual benefit, that is, to be reaching God or realising God. But even for making out what the goal is, a *Guru's* help is very often needed. Our nature and tendencies due to *poorva karma* are mostly concealed and not realised or controlled. They are so confused as to make many people find it difficult to decide what it is that they want and what is really good for them to aim at. In such cases, even to clarify the issue and to make a man clearly see what is best, a *Guru's* aid is often useful, if not absolutely necessary. When some people realise that in the case of a certain set of *Gurus*, called *Samarthas*, every benefit is achieved including temporal, then the solution becomes easier. So, we shall first take up the question of authority. What is a *Guru* wanted for? Is it reaching God or God-realisation? Is that the highest? For

that the Upanishads in unmistakable terms refer to the necessity of a *Guru* *Ananyaprokte Gatih Atra nasti* is what the Katho Upanishad says. That is, Unless somebody else points it out to one, there is no other way of finding it. The realisation of Self or God is so very subtle a matter that no amount of trouble in various directions such as study and running up to meet people will alone suffice. Study, *Tirtha Yatra*, *Dana*, other *Punya* works, *Ishta* and *Poorti*, will not themselves show God, but will help one to a purer state of mind from which we can get the proper *Guru* and realisation of God. When he take up the authorities in the *Puranas* and *Itihasas*, we notice that a *Guru* is able to achieve not only the above but everything else. Especially in Baba's *marga*, called the *Guru Marga*, the *Guru* provides everything, including food, safety, and protection, to the *sishya*. That is the present counterpart of the ancient *Guru sishya* system for every study. In ancient times, all knowledge was one. All training was one. Any knowledge was called Veda, including Mathematics, Astronomy, Prose and Grammar. Therefore for any and every learning, teaching was the regular course. A boy went up for *Gurukulavasa*¹⁰⁰ that is to live with his *Guru* for 12 years as part of his household and rendered even menial services and was treated as a member of the family. He reaped a rich reward in having not only his food and clothing and shelter provided for him but also in the attention paid to every other item of his welfare. Consequently the *Guru* and his wife loved the pupil as their child and the pupil loved the *Guru* and revered his *Guru's* wife as his mother. The best illustration is found in some Tamil *puranas*. One *Aruni* was a pupil who went to live with his *Guru*. The *Guru* had a wet land which had to be looked after. The boy was told to go and see the *Guru's* land one day. The boy found that the water needed for irrigating the *Guru's* field in order to feed the standing crops was all running away on account of a breach in the clay ridge. He had no stones with which to fill up the breach, and thinking that the loss was too great, he put his own head and body in to the breach and, as a result, died. That *Aruni* is an excellent illustration of the extent to which the love between *Guru* and *Sishya* could go. So the *Guru Gita* says

Sariram, Vasu, Vijnanam, Vasah, Karma, Gunanyasun

Gurvartham dharayet yastu Sa sishyah Netarahsmritah

that is, the true disciple's body, wealth, skill, action, merit and life are the *Guru's*. Exactly similar to this was the love of Sai Baba towards his *Guru*. The *Guru's* return of love in ancient days was equally strong. The *Guru* if a *Samartha* had every power, including the power to ward off death or revive the dead, and it was the *Guru's* duty to use his power to save his pupil from death. Rishabha says in Srimad Bhagavata,

Guruh na sasyat Svajano na sa syat

Pita na sasyat Janani na sa syat

Daivam na tatsyat svapatih na sa syat

Na mochayet yas Samupeta Mrutyum

This means, He is no *Guru*, nor a Kinsman, nor father, nor a mother, nor God, nor one's husband, who does not avert death when death is near. This was not a mere theory but was the actual fact of practical life due to the *Samartha's* greatness. In Baba's own case, his *Guru* Venkusa averted his death from a brickbat hurled at him by making the brickbat stand still in mid air. Baba himself averted death in the case of a good number of persons such as Nana Chandorkar, Santi Kirvandikar, S.B. Nachne, G.S., Khapharde, Balwant K. Nandaram. Baba expressly mentioned these¹⁰¹. Apart from death, there are numerous other important matters in one's life for example, success. Success very often counts so greatly that people desire success even at the cost of death. It was the *Guru's* function to help the proper *sishya* .to success even in such cases. Referring to *puranas*, the best instance is that of *Sukra Acharya*, Bhrigu the great master of the *Mantra* science, helping his *sishya* King Bali to conquer all the three worlds and make *Indra* shake in his shoes and run up to his own.

Guru Brihaspathi. Brihaspathi told Indra,

Janami Maghavan scatroh Unnateh,

asya karanam Scishyaya upabritam,

tejo Bhrigubhih Brahma Vadibhih

This means, Indra, I know the reason for this success of your enemy. Bhrigu, the *Guru* of Bali, being a *Brahma Vadin*, that is a master of *mantras*, has

exercised his fullest knowledge and power on behalf of his *sisya* Bali, Therefore, one can see that for temporal purposes also, it would be excellent if one can get a *Guru* who has vast powers, that is, is a *Samartha Sadguru*. Let not people think that this power to provide material things is a mere bookish statement and not a reality. Sai Baba, a *Samartha*, has proved in a good number of cases several of which are recorded that he could provide everything and that he undertook to provide everything. Let us take the case of H.S Dixit. Baba told him, 'Why have you any anxiety? All care is mine'. Accordingly Dixit alike in the matter of health, wealth, and religious training, trusted entirely in Baba and left everything in his hands, not only during Baba's life time but even after Baba passed away. He found that he did not trust in a broken reed. On every occasion and in every matter Baba looked after him. In the matter of health, Baba told him, 'You are going to have fever. It is however going to last only a few days. Do not fear'. The pupil found the statement true and was happy. When he had to meet an enormously large claim at a time when his practice and his income were practically nil, Baba helped to find for him a sum of Rs.30,000 at the nick of the moment to pay his creditor. There are numerous instances, of Baba looking after the entire welfare of the *sisyas* and they remind us of Bhadrachala Ramadas and how his large debt of six lakhs of sovereigns to Tanisha Batcha, Ruler of Hyderabad was met. Now the above will suffice to show that a *Guru* is a distinct advantage if not a necessity, when he can provide everything. But as *Samarthas* are not as plentiful as blackberries, and one finds only ordinary *Guru's*, the question may still be considered to be dependent upon the nature of the *Guru* that one gets. But even taking ordinary *Gurus* into consideration, a person is likely to make a very good advance alike in temporal and spiritual matters if he has perfect faith even in an ordinary *Guru*. It is not so much the personality of the *Guru* that matters, as the extent of the *Sishya's* faith. Ekalavya's case is an instance in point. Ekalavya finding that Drona would not be his *Guru* made a clay image of the teacher, and with the aid of that clay image, by his own intense faith in it, learnt all the innermost secrets and essence of the art of archery. Baba told a lady that she could find great benefit by putting faith even in a potsherd¹⁰² and

that the most important thing is the faith of the *sishya* and not so much the merit of the *Guru*. Having said so much, we might next turn to the question of the qualifications of the *Guru* and *sishya*.

Ten Gurus Qualifications

As the main interest in this book is religious development, we shall take up only the highest of *Gurus*, that is those who attend mainly to spiritual welfare. The description of a qualified *Guru* is given in Manu, in Bhagavata Purana, in Tantra works, Guru Gita¹⁰³ and Dasa Bodha¹⁰⁴ his glories are sung in Jnaneswari. The central fact of *Guruship* is that the *Guru* is approached by an earnest person for achieving highest spiritual welfare. Hence the best *Guru* can only be one who knows what the highest welfare of humanity is, who has himself achieved it and is both able and willing to train and carry others to that state. *Niscreyas* and *Screyas* that is the good, the excellent are the words commonly used to denote the highest achievement in spiritual welfare. The other aim contrasted with it is *Prgyas*. that is the pleasant. The contrast between the two has been brought out from the earliest times for example, in the Kathopanished,

Sreyascha preyescha Manushyam etow

Tou samparikshya vivinakti Dhirah.

Tayoh Screya adadhanasya sadhur bhavati

Hiyate arthat ya vu prayo - vrinite.

This means, Both the excellent and the pleasing confront man. The wise one observes, compares and chooses. It is well with him who chooses the excellent. He who chooses the pleasing loses even pleasure, that is loses his aim. The same is also the choice of Hercules between virtue and pleasure in ancient Greek tradition. Man has, in him, both the brute level based on his animal urges especially Hunger, Sex & Self assertion and the higher or divine level and capacity of raising himself above the brute level. Ordinarily men pursue their lower aims connected with the maintenance of the body and its appurtenances and neglect the hard task of controlling the brute instincts and achieving the

divine nature which alone can carry man to Godhead a realisation of the identity of the *Jiva* or individual soul with the *Paramatma* or Universal soul.

The *Guru* must be from the Vedantic standpoint a realiser of *Atman* that is *Atma Brahma Aikya*, Identity of soul and God and that comes to much the same thing as God-realiser of the *Bhakti marga*. *Vivekachudamani* and other works say that the *Guru* must be in perfect *Atmanishta* or *Brahmanishta*, and the *Bhakti* works like *Srimad Bhagavata* say⁹⁸

Madabhijnam Gurum,

scantam upasita Madatmakam

That is, Krishna says the *sishya* must go to a *Parama Bhagavata* who is thoroughly familiar with, that is steeped in love of a Personal God, who treats God as his own self. *Bhagavata* stresses the effort to reach personal God as the Vedantic works stress the reaching of the Impersonal God or the Absolute. Both are necessarily intertwined¹⁰⁵ for the Personal merges in and emerges from the Impersonal. Both the *Bhagavata* and the *Guru Gita* say that the *Guru* must be a Supreme realiser of the Impersonal Absolute and Personal God. The *Guru Gita*¹⁰⁶ asks how a teacher who himself does not know the Absolute Brahman is to teach it to others and how a stone which itself cannot float across the ocean, can be expected to carry other stones to the other side of the ocean. Instances of ignorant *Gurus* posing as teachers of Brahman are not rare, and persons deficient even in moral qualities posing as teachers of *Daivi bhakti* have played havoc with credulous *sishyas*. Realisation of the Absolute is one of the rarest accomplishments and it is by no means easy for a *sishya* going to a reputed teacher for the purpose of acquiring realisation of the Absolute to see whether that teacher has that realisation. There are no standards or recognised insignia or marks¹⁰⁷ of soul-realisation or God-realisation and several of the external characteristics usually attending *Parama Jnanis* and *Parama Bhagavatas* are easily put on, professed or assumed by others. In this great perplexity, most seekers after *Gurus* have to trust to the repute which the alleged *Parama Jnani* or *Parama Bhagavata* has in society and trust to intuition, *purva vasana*, *rinanubanda* or luck. *Guru Gita* says¹⁰⁸ 'Observe and choose your *Guru*'.

But the chances of observing and testing, which a student has, are hardly sufficient to enable him to arrive at a correct conclusion. Persons who achieve some *siddhis* by *upasana* of petty gods are taken to be perfect *gurus*. Anyhow, the *sadhaka* has to get on, and if he has made a bad choice, he is compelled to retrace his steps and give up a bad choice, and give up a bad or false *Guru* and change for a better one. The *Guru Gita* warns the *sisya*'s from falling into the clutches of false *Gurus*

*Jnana Hino Guruhtyajydh Mithyavadi vidambakah*¹⁰⁹.

This means, a hypocrite who really is without God realisation and who pretends to have such realisation should be abandoned. Verse 200 of *Guru Gita* says that these are

Darsanat bhranti karakah

that is, by external appearance, they mislead people into the belief that they are true realisers. Verse 201 of *Guru Gita* says that the following are false *Gurus*.

Pashandi, that is, those who reject the *Vedas*.

Paparatah, that is persons revelling in sin.

Nasthikah, Atheists or agnostics.

Bheda buddhayah, Those who are under the tendency to oppose one God to another, to distinguish *Guru* from God, and stress differences instead of stressing the unity of existence.

Stree lampatah, Those who are under the influence of lust.

Duracharah, that is the sinful or wicked.

Kritaghnah, that is the ungrateful.

Bakavrutayah, that is, those who like the crane put on the appearance of *Dhyana samadhi* or wisdom or realisation, professing to concentrate on *Brahman*, all the while concentrating on worldly aims and objects. The crane while waiting on the bank to catch fish wears a solemn look, as though it cared for nothing.

Karma bhrashtah, that is, those who have fallen from their duties.

Kshama nashtah, that is, those who are without patience or forgiveness.

Nindyatarka vadinah, that is, those proceeding on fallacious modes of reasoning.

Kaminah, that is, men subject to strong desires for women.

Krodinah, that is, men with ungovernable temper.

Himsah that is, murderous men.

Chandah, that is, cruel men.

Scathah, that is, rogues

Jnana luptah, that is, men without realisation or wisdom.

Mahapapah, that is, highly sinful men.

These have to be avoided. The reason for avoiding such is patent. *Sadhakas* do not always succeed in avoiding them. One Kavle Patel who was a subordinate of *Mamlatdar* B.V. Dev of Thana had such a *guru*, who told him he, Patel, should install a brand new image of the Goddess of Vani in the place of the old image of Vani that he had in his family temple, evidently with the hope of making a great profit out of the new installation, that is *Pratishta* and *Kumbhaabhisheka* ceremonies. The Patel had some doubts and so approached Sai Baba through B.V. Dev and next through Shyama to get his decision in the matter¹¹⁰. Baba, a *Samartha Paramaguru* without any desire for gain, definitely stated that the new image should not be brought and only the old should be installed. When asked about the harm of introducing the new, Baba mentioned that by contravention of a similar advice given by him about the purchase and introduction of a cow, an epidemic was the terrible consequence. The Patel who still believed in his own *Guru*, brushed aside Baba's advice, and brought in the image. And Lo! an epidemic came into the village, and the Patel's wife was one of the first to be attacked. When the Patel appealed to his *Guru* for aid, the latter demanded a gift deed by the Patel of half of his landed property. The Patel then woke up and discovered that his *Guru* was an avaricious *lobhi*, an ignorant man, and a crane like hypocrite and gave up his *Guru* and followed Baba's advice of reinstalling the old image. Where the *Guru*, however, is not a person who is sinful or wicked, Baba was conservative and directed people not to shatter their loyalties. His advice was that people should stick to their own *gurus* however little

their merit might be, and not change over to another *guru* who may have more merit¹¹¹. The *Guru Sishya* relation is more personal than the marital.

The process of the *Brahma Nishta Guru* that is, one with Supreme Realisation of *Atman* enabling a proper *sisya* to get the realisation is compared in the *Guru Gita* to getting another's lamp kindled in the flame of one's lamp. It is the same heat and light which proceed from one to the other, and thus there is continuity in the *Guru Parampara*. The final result also is said to be light within light.

The realisation of *Atma Nishta* or *Brahma Nishta* is very well set out in *Vivekachudamani* and other works, and the requisites therefore are *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Scamadi shatka*, and *Mumukshutva*¹¹². *Vairagya* or detachment is the state when attachment to worldly things disappears. Love of God and love of *Guru* are based on the decreased pull on the heart from wife, child and wealth, So the *sadhaka* has to march on to strengthen his *vairagya* and *viveka* based thereon, in his *Jnana Marga* and strengthen his love of the *Guru* also. These, *Viveka Vairagya* and Love of *Guru* form a virtuous circle so to speak, mutually assisting each other. The development of *scamadhi shatka*, *scama*, *dama*, *titiksha*, *uparati*, *shraddha*, and *samadhana* also fall into the same course. In the *Bhakti marga* also, the increased love of god helps one to overcome the attraction of sense objects and that in turn strengthens one's *Bhakti* or *Prema* to God and *Guru*. The best antidote to worldliness or sense attraction is declared in the *Hamsa Gita*¹¹³ to be worship of God with *Bhakti*, *Bhakti* gradually grows in power and intensity and finally leads to a merger. In *Bhagawad Gita*, Lord Krishna says,

Bhaktya maam abhijanati
Yavan yatcha asmi tatvatah
Tato maam tatwato jnatva
Viscate tad anantaram

which means, A person contacts me and recognises Me by his Devotion, a dynamic process, and learns more and more what sort of personality and what

I am in reality. Thereafter by proceeding higher and higher on to the highest reality he fully realises Me and then merges in Me.

The qualifications of true *Gurus* may be partly inferred from the above statement of who the false *Gurus* are. But the positive marks of a true Guru are set out in various words like the Upanishads, Manu, Guru Gita, Bhagavata Purana, We will take the Guru Gita¹¹⁴ first. He must be a

Tatvanishta Adhyatma jnani
Viveki, Sadhu, Nirmalamananas
Scuchi, Kamakrodha Jit Indriya Jit,
Scanta and Mita bhashana

From these qualifications, namely *Tatvanishta*, which comes along with *Adhyatma jnani* and *Viveki* it is patent that the *Guru* must have perfect *nishta*, that is, must have steady and continuous realisation of *Brahma Atma Aikyam*, which is the real significance of the *Mahavakyas*. Unless a man has reached that realisation, he will not enable the *sishya* who approaches him to reach it. Mere bookish understanding would only lead to doubts of various sorts as the matter is extremely subtle. As the *Guru* has to impart *jnana* or enable the *sishya* to realise it, it is not sufficient that the *Guru* should have got into the supreme state of *Brahma Nishta*. He must also understand the theoretical basis which is found in the *Mahavakyas* and in the Upanishads for the same. He must have *viveka*, that is, be able to distinguish between the real or the Brahman and the phenomenal or unreal Universe. There are persons who know a fact or realise a state and yet do not and cannot impart it to others. The omission or inability to impart may be due in part to unpreparedness and in part to incapacity. It is not all who can express what they feel.

The Guru Gita draws a distinction between two sets of *Parama Gurus*, the *Mouni* and the *Vagmi*. The former *Mouni* enjoys the bliss of perfection but does not impart it to help others to get it. But the *Vagmi* expresses his thoughts and realisation as far as possible, and uses language and other means to enable the *sishya* to acquire that realisation. So the *Vagmi* is the one primarily to be preferred by the *sishya* at the initial stage, though finally often a *mouni* may suit

his purpose. *Brahma Nishta* is not a mere question of intellect or working up the mind and other phases or facets of the self. It is a unique experience and it comes from the grace of the *Guru*, God, and can come only in that way.

Gurum vinana jananti Mudhas tat paramaam padam.

Mere prayer to Siva and Vishnu will not suffice for knowing God. To know God even a Personal God properly the *Guru* must help the *sishya*¹¹⁵. Namdev's case is the best illustration of this truth. That is why prominent mention in the list of qualifications is made of these, *Tatvanishta* and *Adhyatma jnani*. This will suffice for the present, and later references amplifying the subject may be found in other portions of this book. The fourth qualification, *Sadhu* is a very wide term. But as it is fairly understood, it need not be discussed. *Nirmalamanas* refers to the purity of the heart of the *Guru*. *Scuchi* also denotes much the same thing, for in addition to external purity, internal purity also is implied by the term *scuchi*. *Kamakrodhajit* and *Indriyajit* qualifications are also practically involved in *Nirmalamanas* and *Scuchi*. Unless a person has conquered his lust and other appetites and his temper, he can never be a proper *Guru*. Any *sishya* who approaches him is apt to absorb his lack of control. Those who have not conquered their senses, *indriyas*, their lust, their anger, are generally given to sins and vices, and, therefore, will not only lose mental peace but would also be doing much harm to the very name of Religion and ruining their *sishtyas* and others approaching them. The Upanishads and also the *Guru Gita* point out the necessity for a person to avoid *Gurus* who are tainted with these faults.

Navirato duscharitat Naasanto

Na asamahitah Naascanta manaso vapi.

Prajnaneniva enam apnuyat¹¹⁶.

This means, a person who has not given up bad and evil courses, the man who has not reached calmness and quiet, and who has not gained peace of mind can never realise Brahman that is get *Brahma Nishta*. Amongst the disqualifications mentioned lack of these has been noticed. The last two, *Santi* and *Mitabhashana*, peace, paucity of speech in a *Guru* are patent external marks

of the calm, peace, and quiet that reign in his heart. The Guru Gita points out that at the very sight of a *Parama Guru*, one's heart is filled with *Santi*.

Eleven

Qualifications of Sishyas

This subject like that of the previous Chapter is exhaustively dealt with in the works mentioned therein including,

Dasa Bodha, a great authority not only in Maharashtra but elsewhere. The Guru Gita¹¹⁷, under disqualifications of *sishyas* say that a *Papakarmarata*, that is, one indulging in evil and sins and abuses is loose in his morals and who keeps company with the wicked, should not be given the position of a *sishya*. Other words like *Kulamavatantra* state that *Upadesa* should not be given to,

Arthalubdha, Piscuna, asthira

Bhakti sraddha vihina, Susrusha vimukha

that is, Instruction should not be imparted to the covetous, the miserly, the fickle minded, one lacking *Saburi*, the person without devotion or faith, and lastly to one who does not care to render service to the *Guru*. While on this subject we may take apt illustrations of the above from popular stories as well as from Baba's biography. As for covetousness, it is very well known that a covetous person would ever be thinking of money and the importance of getting it and keeping it, in every matter. The *Niti sloka* says, *Artha Aturanam, Na Guruh Na bandhuh*. That is, Those who are always hankering after wealth, will have no regard' for *Guru* or Kinsmen. A good description of an *Arthalubdha* is in Srimad Bhagavata¹¹⁸. An incident commonly narrated by *Bhagavatars* is as follows:

In a certain community, the caste *Guru* used to tour about and when he visited any place, the local adherents of the *Guru* would each have to pay ten *panams* Rs. 1-4-0. One such *guru* wanting to visit a village, where there was only one *sishya*, had a very unfortunate experience. The *sishya* though very well off, was an *Arthalubdha*, an inveterate miser. So he wanted to evade the hereditary *Guru's* claim for ten *panams*. When he learnt of the time at which the *Guru* would arrive, he went up to the *Tahsildar*, a friend of his, and prayed to be put in stocks and kept there till the time that would be communicated later on. The *Tahsildar*

obliged him and put him in stocks. The *Guru* came and learnt that the only *sisshya* he had was in stocks and so went away. Learning of the *Guru's* departure, the *sisshya* wanted to be freed from the stocks, but at that time the *Tahsildar* was not in office but had gone home. When he asked the peon guarding him to report to the *Tahsildar*, the latter declined, and said that he would not go to the *Tahsildar's* house. So, this covetous *sisshya* had to pay Rs.5 to the peon in order to make him go to the *Tahsildar* and get the order for his release. The man anxious to cheat his hereditary *Guru's* claim for Rs. 1-4-0 had to pay four times that amount to a peon besides having the experience of being in the stocks for some time. Amongst Baba's own followers, these are some incidents to be found in Baba's Charters and Sayings, and one or two of them will suffice here. Baba who read the hearts of every one approaching him, dealt with such visitors appropriately. Once a very rich man, having over Rs.250 in his pocket, had heard that Baba was a *Brahma Jnani* and could impart *Brahma Jnana* to anybody that he chose and would not ask for payment for the *upadesa*. Having a sort of momentary desire to acquire *Brahma Jnana* at the hands of Baba without payment, he straightway engaged a *tonga* at the Kopergaon railway station for a visit to Shirdi and back, fixing up a single fare for both journeys and stipulating that he would return in a few hours. He went up and told Baba that he had come for *Brahma Jnana* which Baba was so capable of imparting and wanted it immediately, evidently treating it as a parcel to be handed across the counter in a shop. Baba fell into the humour of the man and told him that his demand for *Brahma Jnana* was grand, for so many people came to him for other objects and none, for *Brahma Jnana*. Then turning to a boy, he told him to go and get for him a handloan of Rs.5 from a *marwadi*. The boy came and reported that the *marwadi* was absent. Next Baba went on similarly sending word to absent *marwadis* and thus nearly half an hour was spent. The rich visitor was getting impatient thinking that the *tongawallah* would raise his demand. He noted that Baba only wanted a loan of Rs.5, and he could easily give it. But he was oppressed with the fear that a loan advanced to Sai Baba might not be recoverable, and so he would not advance the money. The risk of lending Rs.5 was too great in his estimation for

obtaining *Brahma Jnana*. Finally finding that Baba was still not answering his question, he asked Baba, why he delayed giving him *Brahma Jnana*. Baba's answer was, 'Have you understood nothing. I have been all the while trying to impress you with *Brahma Jnana* even as you are. You see I want five things, surrendered to me, that is, *Manas, buddhi, ahamkar, chitta*. Unless a man thoroughly surrenders himself, and is free from the love of money and love of worldly things, he cannot attain *Brahma Jnana*. When the dawn comes, there will be light, and not earlier. The man then discovered that Baba read his heart thoroughly and that he was too avaricious ever to get *Brahma Jnana*.

In Baba's summary *Nishta* and *Saburi* are the qualifications and their absence the disqualifications in a *sishya*. But it is better to go into the full list given of such disqualifications after saying a word as to the importance of that subject. *Rudra Jamala* says

Vicharya yatnat vidhivat Schishya sangraham acharet
Anyatha Scishyadoshena Narakastho Bhavet Guruh.

This means, The *Guru* should examine and test the *sishya* as ordained by the *Sastras*. Else the *Guru* will go to hell by the *sishya's* taints. Such taints may arise in two ways. First the natural contagion of evil qualities especially in a powerfully evil *sishya* may corrupt the *Guru*. Secondly, even apart from that, the *Niti sloka* says,

Sishya papam Gurum Vrajat

that means, The pupil's sins fall on the head of the *Guru* the *Guru* being responsible for the good and evil done by the *sishya* who has surrendered to him. The phrase *Vidhivat* in the above verse refers to the rule and practice of a pupil going and serving the *Guru* at his place for 12 years after which probation, instruction would be imparted.

Samachara Tantra gives a long list of 27 disqualifications, which are specially mentioned. The first eleven are mentioned in *Rudra Jamala*. They are,

Kamukha, lustful, this being the greatest danger in youth.

Kutila, crooked.

Loka Nindita, notoriously bad.

Satya Varjita, given to lying

Avinita, stiff-necked.

Asamartha, too weak in nature.

Praja hina, issueless.

Ripu priya, a man dear to enemies, as a weak minded and weak bodied person is apt to be.

Sada papa kriya yukta, given to vice and sin.

Vidya scunya, unlettered.

Jadatmaka, dullard.

Then come the sixteen disqualifications of Samachara Tantra.

Body with *doshas-defects*.

Without *Vedakriya*, that is, not having been given the regular *samskaras* prescribed in the *Vedas*.

Without *Ashrama Achara* failing to perform the duties of his *Ashrama* or stage of life. Impure in heart. Lacking in faith.

Mean.

Passionate temper.

Bhrama confused.

Asat charitra, given to bad ways.

Without good qualities.

Adulterous, lecherous.

Deformed.

Samuhaugra, that is, anti-social. Without *bhakti* or devotion to God or *Guru*.

Dvaita cheta, ever doubting and tending in opposite ways.

Ninda Fond of scandal and blame.

Now let us turn to the qualifications of *sishyas* and begin with Baba's summary. Baba stated that his own *Guru* asked him for a *dakshina* of 2 pice and that he gave them to him, who was thereby satisfied. He added in explanation that the two pice demanded by the *Guru* who had no attachment to coins, or earthly objects were *Nishta* and *Saburi*. Baba wanted two things to be given to him. About the impatient Mrs. Khaparde, who was staying with her husband, who was

impatient of the prolonged stay at Shirdi that entailed loss of business and income Baba told Kaka Dixit to give her Rs.200, meaning only *Nishta* and *Saburi*¹¹⁹. Taking up *Nishta* first, one can see that no progress at all will be made by any *sishya*, who has no faith either in the particular *Guru* or in *sastras*, *Vedas* or *Mantras*, Atheists, scoffers, flippant persons, women hunters, combative persons, passionate natures, hypocrites, cruel hearted and wicked people in general, or those revelling in sin, are, as a rule incapable of pure and strong faith and so are unfit either to be *Gurus* or *sishyas*. And in the *sishya*, pride and stiff neckedness, *Susrusha Vimukha* lack of reverence, *Bhakti Sraddha Hina* will be fatal to all progress. No *Guru* in the first place would care to accept a *sishya* who lacks in the proper attitude and spirit and the above defects betray lack of faith, *Nishta*. In the *Guru Gita*¹²⁰, the warning is given that no instruction or *upadesha* should be given to one lacking in faith, for,

Naranaamcha phalapraprou Bhaktir evahi Karanam.

That is, To make the teaching effective, the *sishyas* faith in the *Guru* is a *Sine qua non*. Unless a man has the necessary humility, he cannot approach a *Guru*. *Gurus* have to test a newcomer to make sure that he has or will soon have sufficient humility and receptivity. If one has not sufficient faith in his *Guru*, he will not accept what the *Guru* says in the first place. Taking the case of *mantropadesa*, it may be pointed out that *mantras* do not bear fruit unless the *Japa karta* has faith in the *mantra*. The *Niti sloka* says.

Mantre Tirthe, dwije deve daivajne,

Beshaje gurow yadrasi Bhavana

yasya siddhir bhavati Tadrasi

which means, In *mantras*, *Tirthas* holy places, Brahmins or priests, gods, in astrologers and in the *guru* and medicine one achieves only to the extent of one's faith, which stresses the above point. Faith in God and *Guru* are equally stressed in this verse. See also *Vivekachudamani* stressing need of *Bhakti* faith and devotion for *Moksha*.

Moksha Sadhana Samagrat, Bhakti reva gariasi

that is, *Bhakti* is highly important among the elements that make for salvation. Unless a man has faith, he will not take the proper steps and persevere in following the *mantra japa* or the advice given. All sorts of persons came to Baba. For instance, one Valambi Station Master, who had no faith in Baba and fancied that Baba was unnecessarily honoured, was taken by Das Ganu Maharaj to see Baba at Shirdi. Baba was then washing pots and placing them on the ground mouth downwards. When asked why he did so, Baba explained his symbolical action. He said, Persons who come here are like this. That is, Just as a vessel with mouth turned down cannot receive anything, some persons come to Baba in an unreceptive mood. That was exactly the case with the Valambi Master, and the All Knowing Baba knew it. Persons with poor or no faith would easily give up their *guru* or his advice if any persons talked anything adverse to the *Guru*. When Dr. Mulky was trying for the first time to go and see Baba at Shirdi as advised by his sister, he came up to Kopergaon station. There, the railway personnel vilified Baba and described him as an immoral and dangerous character. Dr. Mulky at once turned back and went away to his own place without seeing Baba. Persons with wavering faith have first to develop stronger faith before they could get any benefit from Baba and Baba graciously helped such people in a number of cases. The above mentioned Mulky was persuaded by his sister again to go to Shirdi, and on that occasion, Baba revealed his All Knowing nature and narrated the above incident and thus helped Dr Mulky to get strong and unshakeable faith in Baba. The *Prarthana Samaj* is against paying any respect or worship to saints and *sadhus*. One of that *Samaj* got a little faith in Baba, but suddenly, he was asked by a disbeliever in Baba, if Baba had the qualification of a *Gunatita* mentioned in the Bhagavata Gita. When with faith thus reduced he came to Baba, Baba asked Shyama to tell him something. Shyama then told him facts to revive his faith. Tampering with faith also is part of Baba's *Lila*. He then understood just as Vittal or God might appear as an idol breaker. Similar help Baba rendered to S.B. Nachne, who also was greatly dampened in his *bhakti* to Baba by the Manmad railway station personnel and their vilification. When he approached Baba, the latter revealed his wonderful knowledge and love for

sishtyas by asking without any one's revealing the facts to him 'Why have you come without your *Mamlatdar's* permission? Do not do so again' and thus strengthened Nachne's faith. Baba's testing of faith is in strict accordance with the *sastras* as stated above, and sometimes the test is very severe. Shri M.B. Rege a double graduate had the great advantage of seeing Baba and Mahavishnu in a vision in his own place and Mahavishnu's direction to him that he should make Baba his *Guru*. He also had another vision of his visit to Shirdi, bowing to Baba, who embraced him and accepted him as his *sishtya*. When he actually visited Shirdi and prostrated before Baba, Baba tested his faith and humility by saying, Why do you bow to a man?. Usually English educated people will not prostrate to a *Guru*. Shri Rege was stunned and stayed at a distance for some hours, being determined to keep on to Baba, as he had shed his pride of caste and title and learnt that treating a *guru* as a man is fatal to all progress. He waited quietly and was then accepted by Baba with a fond embrace.

Gurow manushyata buddhih

Schishtyaya yadi Jayate

Nahi tasya bhavet Siddhih

Kalpa koti scatair apt

That means, that if you treat a *Guru* as a mere man, your *sadhana* will be a failure perpetually. Faith in the *Guru* is specially needed for God-realisation. The *Guru* who has himself realised his soul as identical with *Para Brahman* a truth expressed by *Mainm Allah Hum* of Baba works at the soul of his disciple and after seeing that it is duly prepared, and at the right moment, utters a word or uses a gesture or makes other effort, and the effect is instantaneous. The *sishtya* is drawn into the same state of *Satchidananda* resulting from the experience of *Jiva Brahma Aikya*. This is done in one minute or half a minute, as The *Guru Gita* says,

Nimishena Nimishardhena.

That is, In a moment, or half a moment the *Guru* and his disciple are in that realised state as a result of the *Guru's* action and the disciple's faith. This involves no doubt a previous preparation under the *Guru's* care of the *sishtya's*

soul for a very long time. But the final effect takes no time. It is instantaneous. As dramatically put, in the story of *Janaka* and *Ashtavakra*, the change may be suddenly and marvellously effected. The story goes that King Janaka asked the sage *Ashtavakra* whether it was true that the *Guru* could make the *sisya* have the realisation within the short space of time that exists between a man's putting his one foot on the first stirrup and the second foot on the second stirrup. *Ashtavakra* answered in the affirmative and was prepared to prove it. That *Rishi* spent some time with Janaka in preliminary preparation and then said, 'Bring a horse saddled up'. Then he asked Janaka to put his first foot on one stirrup and to put his second, foot on the other stirrup. Within that time the magic had worked. King Janaka had full realisation of himself as Brahman and went away riding, caring for nothing in the world. Similar instances of the magic effects of faith are found in Tukaram's,

Apana sarika karitat tatkal

Kalavela lagat Nahi tayachi.

As for the obverse, many have experience of the effects of lack of faith even in temporal matters. If a man takes a medicine without any faith, he will often fail to have any effect from that medicine. *Mantre, Beshaje Gurow*, quoted above is absolutely correct, in the experience of all. Persons with strong faith pronouncing certain syllables for curing cobra bite, scorpion sting, etcetra succeed in curing these ailments. If so much faith is needed, and useful in such trivial cases, how much more would be needed when the effort is for the soul to realise its highest goal of *Brahmanhood!* The only technique by which the *Guru* prepares the disciple and the actual means by which the grand denouement is effected are extremely subtle and peculiar to each saint. In Baba's case, these are highly concealed, and yet have been partly revealed. Some attempt will be made to disclose these and other interesting facts about his *Guruship* later on. Let us proceed to consider the authorities on other qualifications of the *sisya*. Srimad Bhagavata¹¹⁵ gives a list of them in these words,

Amani, amatsaro, daksho, nirmamo, drudhasou hridah,

Asatvaro arthajijnasuh anasuyuh amoghavak,

Jaya apatya griha kshetra svajana dravina dishu,

Udasinah samam pascyan sarveshu artham iva atmanah.

this means, The *sishya* must be not conceited, not jealous, tactful, devoid of the sense of possession, that is, ready and willing and eager to sacrifice everything and own nothing, that is endowed with perfect *Nishta* possessed of patience *Saburi* very firm and intense in his love to the *Guru* , not hasty, earnest in his desire to understand and reach the goal of life, free from envy, reticent-avoiding gossip and idle chat and free from attachment to wife, child, home, lands, kinsmen, and wealth, thinking and feeling that every object will serve his purpose. This is a fairly exhaustive list, but the essence of it consists in two items. The first and foremost is freedom from worldly attachment and the second is intense love to the *Guru*. One who has these will naturally be free from envy, jealousy, hastiness, self conceit, and unrestrained speech, and will not be too much attached to wife, children, kinsmen, or wealth. The attractions of the world reduce or even nullify one's disposition and power to love the *Guru* with one's heart and soul. If one loves God, he does not love Mammon, and if one loves Mammon, he does not love God. You cannot love both God and Mammon. In order to develop this unworldly love or to test the presence of these qualifications, *Gurus* not infrequently employ devices when a person first approaches them for becoming a *sishya*. Partly with this view Baba from 1908 established a threshold of *dakshina* for those approaching him to cross. It was a good test from several stand-points, testing reverence to Baba, freedom from narrow ideas and too much attachment to "mine". A man too much attached to wealth is frightened at the demand for *dakshina* and does not approach Baba. A trifler with too much of self conceit like Londa will not pay it. A person who is ready to pay *dakshina* shows his readiness to part with worldly things and may also be ready to part with his worldly avocations and attachments and thus be prepared for intense love towards and surrender to the *Guru*. The love of the *Guru* is the one thing needed, for *Guru* is the sole *sadhana* The key to the readiness to part with money and get indifferent to relatives in earnestness, and that in turn is based upon faith. If one fully believes the *Guru Gita dicta*¹²² that the

Guru is an absolutely essential prerequisite for one's attaining Bliss or wisdom and to make sure that at death there will be no faltering or pain and that a *Guru* would ensure success and happiness in life and a happy death with his help as *Sathee Akaraka*¹²³ then one would be ready to sacrifice everything in order to secure such a *Guru*, and he would also be free from the vices of envy, jealousy, conceit, hastiness, and neglect of the *Guru* for the sake of relatives. Such a person would be anxious to approach the *Guru* and do service to him. He would not be a *Susrusha vimukha*, that is, he will not be disinclined to serve or service-shunning. Even when a *Guru* is not highly esteemed or has defects, the fullest respect due to a *Guru* must be shown by the *sishya* who should not become *Susrusha Vimukha*. Baba set a good example in his dealings with, the *Guru* Javar Ali who was not morally his superior though he was very well equipped and learned in Koran and Shariat and who forced Baba to be his *sishya* taking advantage of his principle of Non-resistance to Evil. Baba whom numbers of people served as worshippers served him by carrying faggots, lighting up fire, cooking, sweeping, and doing all menial services in the presence of all and with sweet complacency. That was due to the fact that Baba had no attachment, no self-conceit, and realised himself as the pure soul that is not demeaned by such services.

Name Manapamanow Sthah

I care not for honour and dishonour¹²⁴ was his view. Baba set the above example and expected people who went to him or to other *Gurus* to show similar earnestness and Baba realised that no one could serve him like that. Once Baba asked, Is there anyone who would serve me as I served my *Guru* H.S. Dixit, of all the persons mentioned in this book, was one of the best of the *sishyas* who could stick to the *Guru* and show his intense attachment to the *Guru* and non-attachment to worldly objects including wife, wealth, honour, and fame. Yet Baba kindly critical and watchful in order to develop his *Sthairya* and avoidance of *Asthairya* noted at times that Dixit was *Asthira* wanting in firmness though, H.S.Dixit. had more *Sthairya* than most devotees. Baba said on one occasion, *Vo-chalta*, that is, he is wobbling. He is not yet a full *Sthira*. Fullest faith and

surrender cannot easily get into a mans heart after he has spent 40 years, that is the best part of his life at the bar, in politics and in the world. Most people went to Baba without understanding that he was a *Guru* but merely out of curiosity or to get in a cheap way the benefit of serving a *sadhu* once in a way, and never thought of becoming his *sishtyas*.

Even in respect of some of these, Baba assumed the responsibility of a *Guru*¹²⁵. He once told D.V. Sambhare who had his foibles and faults, 'Once or twice I will warn. If the warning is not heeded, our end will be bitter'. Luckily Sambhare took the hint and dropped his vices. Most of the persons mentioned in this book failed to grasp the exact situation of mutual relations between a *Guru* and a *sishtya* and were not thinking of such ideal relations in their contact with Baba. So despite the very great sacrifices that Baba made, hardly one was found fit to become a thorough *sishtya* and his successor in point of spiritual eminence or at any rate possess a sufficient portion of his qualifications, to continue his mission and service from his *gadi*. As we have discussed at present, the question of a disciple's position to attain spiritual perfection and God-realisation at the hands of a *Guru*, we have to lay emphasis on each one of the above qualifications. If any readers are anxious to have such a *Guru* they will discover that the unseen Sai Baba is still such a *Guru*, and if one puts oneself into contact with him and adopts the fullest possible quantum of qualifications herein described, then he has the very best chance of being moulded by Baba into the perfection of sainthood, perfection of *Atma nishta* and *Brahma nishta sishya*. By his *vatsalya*, Baba is still going on, from his unseen position, undertaking the entire responsibility for the temporal and spiritual welfare of earnest devotees or disciples who get prepared and are eager to meet him.

This is the stage at which the question of the technique for getting a *Guru* may be taken up. The orthodox way of getting a *Guru* is slightly different in different regions. In the South, *Dakshinamurthi puja* and *upasana* are recognised as the best means and resorted to. In Maharashtra, *Datta Charitra Pothi* is considered the best means by which one can get a *Guru*. *Parayana* of *Datta charitra*, which is a description of the lives of the three *avatars* of Datta fills one with *bhakti* towards the *Guru* and has frequently helped

people to obtain a *Guru*. The *Guru* obtained is generally a *Guru* living in the flesh. But when Sri V.D. Bhave took a regular *Parayana* of *Datta charitra*, he got the vision of a tomb, and he discovered that, it was the tomb of Sai.Baba. But he was dissatisfied with getting only a tomb for the *Guru* instead of having a *Guru* living in the flesh. So, he went to Khedgaonbet of Narayan Maharaja who in a dream sent him back to Shirdi Sai Baba.

Twelve

Number and Change of Gurus

The number of *Gurus* is a question which can only be solved with reference to the particular subject involved and the circumstances of each case. With reference to secular education, though under the old system of *Gurukula* which involved both spiritual and secular education, there was only one *Guru*, still for those who desired varied education in several subjects, a number of *Gurus* was resorted to. The *Guru Gita* deals mainly with spiritual education, yet following *Srimad Bhagavata* it says that the number may be large.

Madhu lubdho yatha bhringah

Pushpat pushpantaram vrajet Jnana

lubdho tatha scishyo

Guror Gurvantaram vrajet¹²⁶

this means, Just as a bee anxious to have more and more of honey goes from flower to flower, so a student with a strong desire for *jnana* should or may go from one *Guru* to another. The Tamil translation adds here, in case the study is incomplete. Obviously this cannot have reference to the *Guru* who is expected to give salvation, that is, the *Paramaguru*¹²⁷. Verse 90 says, I bow to thee, *Paramaguru*, who is a combination of Siva and Sakti. The *Guru Gita*¹²⁸ set out the eminence of that *Paramaguru* who gives *Mukti* and who is the same as the Trinity. In *Jnaneswari*, the eminence of the *Guru* is said to be giving one everything. Such a person cannot and should not be given up. See *Vasishta's* curse of *Trisanku* who broke away from that *Kulaguru*. *Srimad Bhagavata*¹²⁹, also mentions the advantage of a number of *Gurus*.

Nahi ekasmat Guroh jnanam

Susthiram syat supushkalam

Brahma etat advitiam vy
Giyate Bahudha rishibhih.

This means, Verily, knowledge is not abundant enough nor strong enough, if only derived from a single teacher. God *Brahman* is One without a second. Yet so many *rishis* sing of it in so many ways. This is the statement of the *Avadhuta* addressed to King Yadu, after mentioning that he derived his knowledge from 24 *Gurus*. The 24 *Gurus* mentioned in *Ekadasa Skanda*¹³⁰, are earth, air, ether, water, fire, sun and moon, the pigeon, the python, the sea, the moth, the bee, the elephant, the honey gatherer, the deer, fish, *Pingala* the courtesan, the king fisher *kurara*, the child, the maiden, the arrow maker, the snake, the spider, and adding to the list lastly the body. These are not *Gurus* in the ordinary sense, but from their behaviour, lessons are derived by the *Avadhuta*. Of such *Gurus* twenty four are not sufficient. Even two hundred and forty may be insufficient. But really these are not *Gurus* having *Guru-shisya* relation with the disciple. They are *Gurus* only by straining the meaning of the term *Guru* and not actual *Gurus*. A *Guru* is one who is conscious of teaching and undertaking the duties of a teacher. But in dealing with the actual physical *Guru* at the head of a *Gurukulam* or *Rishi ashrama*, the *Guru* is the only head. In the *Ekadasa Skanda*¹³¹ Krishna advises resort to a *Guru*. He says,

Mad abhijnam Gurum shantam upasita mad atmakam.

that is, Serve the calm teacher who is in close contact and who has become identified with me. Under one such *Guru*, ordinarily the aspirant for salvation can advance sufficiently and attain his object. People like Narayan Asram who got a push or some slight help cannot be regarded as Baba's *sishtyas*. They should and usually did resort to other *Gurus*. Even Das Ganu who got marvellous help from Baba did not regard Baba as his *Guru* but went to *Guru* Islampurkar for initiation and treated him as his *Guru*. In special cases, a *Guru* might not complete a student's course and might direct him to go to others. Amongst *sadhus*, they seem to recognise some as forming a particular class or group. Members of such class or group send their disciples to other *Gurus* of the group. Following this principle, Akkalkote Maharaj, when his body was about to be dissolved, sent

some of his devotees Ramachandra Naik and another to Baba. Madhavanath Maharaj, Bhidekar Maharaj, Kusha Bhav's *Guru*, the Poona Bhimasankar temple Sadhu¹³² Kaka Maharaj of Dhopeswar¹³³ acted similarly and sent their devotees to Baba. Gajanan Maharaj¹³⁴ was recognised as *Gurubandhu* by Baba.

Guru Gita points out the absolute necessity for a change when one has had the misfortune to get under a *nishiddha Guru*. A *nishiddha Guru* is one who draws the pupil to *mantras* with lower aims¹³⁵ such as *mohana*, *marana*, *vasikarana*, and kindred sordid purposes. The soul is bound to get more worldly and *tamasic* under such a *Guru*. Srimad Bhagavata¹³⁶, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*¹³⁷ and Baba deprecated these *siddhis* and warned devotees against their meretricious attractions. When one realises his mistake in getting under a *nishiddha* and has had the beginnings of *vairagya*, Guru Gita¹³⁸ says that the *sisya* being a *vairagi*, a higher *Guru*, a true *desika*, will contact him and draw him to God realisation, that- is, *Brahmanishta*. Verses 288 to 294 describe the glories of this *Parama Guru*, whose very sight will fill one with joy courage and peace. Such a *Guru* is absolutely free from all attachment to *Kamini-kanchana*, that is, women and wealth, fame, *yoga siddhis*, and even the glories of Brahma and Vishnu. They are of two classes, namely the *Vagmi*, who talks, teaches, and trains, and the *Mount*, who spreads silent influence.

So there may be desirable and authorised changes of *Gurus* as mentioned above. Without such or similar pressing causes, a change of *Guru* should not be thought of. The loyalty of a *sisya* to a *Guru* must be more powerful than the loyalty of a chaste wife to her husband. A flagrant breaking of one's ties with the *Guru* may have a serious consequence on one's spiritual progress and in some cases may involve a curse as in *Trisanku's* case. *Vyabhichara* in both the above cases leads to ignominy in the eyes of all reasonable people and thorough wreck in every respect. The pangs of *Guru droha* may also render a sensitive *sisya* miserable. Sai Baba therefore dissuaded people from leaving their own *Gurus* and seeking contact with him. But mostly as Sai Baba was and is an all comprehensive *Samartha Sadguru*, and as most people had no intense attachment to a *Guru*, there was usually no

difficulty. People felt that Baba, the *Sarva Antaryami* was their own *Guru* and their *Ishta Devata*. The first real feeling of having a *Guru* came to most only from Baba. A very interesting case of change or supposed change of *Gurus* will be found in the chapter of P.R. Avaste. He had been initiated into *Siva panchakshari* of some sort by a lady *Guru* at Poona, and he was, with difficulty, persuaded to go along with Sri M.B. Rege and see Sai Baba and Ramakrishna Ayi who also had developed some psychic powers and was acting as *Guru* to some at Shirdi. At the first visit, the oppressive feeling that he was committing *Gurudroha* in going to Shirdi upset his mental balance and made him crazy. He was behaving erratically under strange delusions and fears. Sai Baba directed Sri Rege to take him away from Shirdi. Leaving Shirdi Sri Avaste regained his normal self. By Baba's grace, in his later visits, he was free from such obsessions and he was able to adopt Sai Baba as his *Guru*. As Sri Sai Baba was a *Samartha Sadguru* with vast powers¹³⁹ God has agents everywhere, they have vast powers, I have very great powers', and as he could clearly see the exact state of ideas, feelings, and emotions of everyone coming to him. he could ease difficulties like the above. To a *sishya* of Dolap Maharaj Guru Mule Sastri, he appeared as Dolap Maharaj wearing *kashaya*, and removed his fears of *Gurudroha*. Similarly beyond just loyalty to particular Gods being affected by appro-proaching Sai, to those who had particular fondness for particular Gods, he could show himself in those forms. To a South African doctor as to the Madras Ramadasini who was devoted solely to Rama, he showed himself as Rama. To a Datta *bhakta*, he could show himself as the three-faced Datta. Most Hindus cannot escape fragmentising and localising God, not merely at the start but for their entire life. They feel compelled to adhere to a particular place and a particular form or *Murthi* in their effort to contact God. This localisation and particularisation however necessary or useful to begin the God contact ought to be out-grown and true ideas as in the case of Namdev should replace the earlier ones. Sai Baba, the realiser of *Ekam Sat* with his perfection of power of *Samartha*, could include within himself and show within himself all *Murthis* as they are all parts of God, Bhagavad Gita¹⁴⁰ says,

Angani Anya Devatah

that is, From a part rise to view the whole. Being *Nirakara*, he could be *Sahara* at any time whether he was in the flesh or beyond the flesh that is, after *Mahasamadhi*. Thus he serves as the ideal *Guru*, though he is not in the flesh, as he can and does appear in his old form to deal with his old and new devotees. Several people felt and feel that a *Guru* who is not in the flesh does not suit them, as others feel in exactly the opposite way. But by Baba's grace, all these have been drawn by him to his feet.

In some cases a person is fully saturated with the doctrines of Srimad Bhagavata¹⁴¹

Yat driscyam tat Nascyam, or

Drashtam Vinashtam

that is, all things seen are perishable and therefore not the real Brahman and the Upanishad teachings are that *Brahman* cannot be seen,

Yat chakshusha na pascyati,

yena chakshumshi pascyati,

tadeva Brahma tvam viddhi,

nedam yat idam upasate

which means, *Brahman* is not that which is seen with the eye but that which makes the eye see and *Brahman* is not that which people in the world worship, to such as, no seen figure commands the belief that it is Real and God or *Brahman*. Such a person cannot therefore surrender himself to any God or *Guru* that is seen. To such a person, Baba is a great boon or blessing.

Sai Baba snuffs out of him the critical spirit which says, You are seen and not God. How can I bow to you? Baba's action is not external reasoning but internal unspoken and unseen working. That takes away and clean wipes off all traces of the critical spirit and substitutes for it a humility that says in effect 'I am a worm, Thou art all power and mercy. Protect me, shed light on my path. Take me as a helpless baby in your arm and deal with me as you like'. This is beginning of that person's feeling that the Unseen *Guru* is alive, is powerful and can lead and only he can lead him right on to the goal.

The former *Gurus* of such a person whether *Kula Guru* or adopted *Gurus* have never influenced him, as they were not *Samarthas*, interested in him. So there is no possibility in such a case of any idea of change of Guru or *Gurudroha*. Baba makes such a person feel that Baba is the same as the previous *Gurus*. Baba is *Sarva Antaryami* and makes persons like the above and like Upasani Maharaj, Mule sastri, feel that he is the same as the former *Guru*. Baba elevates the devotee and enables him to see Him as the one underlying force or personality appearing in various forms and called by various names *Vyabhichara* by resort to whom is unthinkable.

In getting Baba as a *Guru*, one is helped on to the Supreme realisation of *Jiva Brahma Aikya*. Those who refer to Baba as a single *Guru* or saint with a particular shape in one place are indulging in their tendency of materialism, localisation, and fragmentisation. The real fruit of Baba's influence is perceiving him as the All-every thing includes one's old *Guru*, one's *Ishta Devata* and oneself. When one has reached that stage, no question of the number of *Gurus* and justification for change of *Gurus* can arise.

Thirteen

Guru Sishya Mutual Relations and Conduct Rules

The nature of the *Guru-sishya* relation may vary from individual to individual amongst the *gurus* and *sishyas*. But on the whole there are certain well defined principles. We shall here take the best *Guru* and the best *sishya* to show what the mutual relations and conduct rules should be. Sai Baba was the best *sishya* and as *Guru* was the best *Guru* that we can think of. So his behaviour and conduct may be taken to establish rules for others. Guruship of a mere technical or commercial sort cannot lead us to correct behaviour or conduct. If the engagement of a teacher is a mercenary affair, then very few of the following rules would apply, though in any case a teacher must be treated with some respect, whatever his capacity or failings may be. But in respect of the ideal, that is, Baba's ideal, a *Guru* is loved heart and soul by the *sishya* and the *sishyas* forsakes everything including his kith, kin and property, and relies entirely upon the *Guru* for looking after his temporal and spiritual needs. The *Guru* responds

with equally strong love to the *sishya's* love. In such a case, it is not necessary to go to the *sastras* to find out what the mutual relations should be. Perfect love casts out fear and shows preparedness for any sacrifice and every sacrifice. A *sishya* like Aruni is prepared to give up even his life to save the water in the wet fields of his master.

Sariram vasu vijnanam
 Vasah Karma Gunan Asun
 Gurvartham dharayet yastu
 Sa shisyah Na Itarah Smritah.

that is, He who maintains his body, wealth or property, knowledge, residence, work, qualities, and life, barely to serve the purposes of the *Guru*, is called a *sishya* and others are not *sishyas*. The counterpart of this is the *Guru's* duty which *Rishaba* mentions to his sons in Srimad Bhagavata,

Guruh na sasyat Svajano na sasyat
 Pita na sasyat Jnani na sasyat
 Daivatn na sasyat svapatih na sasyat
 Na mochayet yas samupeta mrityum

that is, He is no *Guru* nor kinsman nor a father nor she a mother nor he a husband nor he a God, who does not save one's life when one is threatened with imminent death. The *Guru-sishya* relation is perfectly mutual. If the *sishya* must sacrifice even his life for the beloved *Guru's* property, the *Guru* also sacrifices his life and everything for the sake of *sishyas*. Baba's *Guru* saved him from being stoned to death by ordering the brick that came near his head to stand still in mid air, *Sthambhanam*, and it stood. Baba himself said he would give up his very life to save those who were constantly thinking of him and were absorbed in him¹⁴².

It is noted in G.S. Khaparde's diary that Baba pointed out to him that his body had got emaciated, his digestion impaired, and his food reduced to bare bread and water, due to worries of looking after innumerable devotees. Yet in spite of this, he must, up to the time of his departure from this world go on doing his duty whatever be the consequences. Baba put his hand¹⁴³ into the fire *Dhuni* at *Dwarakamayee* to save the life of a blacksmith's child that had fallen into a

blacksmith's fire elsewhere. And, when asked about the pain and the trouble caused by burning. Baba said that he had saved the child and that God would cure his burn. It is believed that when Baba passed away in October, 1918¹⁴⁴. Tatya Patel was lying ill in a critical condition, and Baba gave up his own life to save the life of Tatya, his much favoured pupil to whose family he was indebted all his life, especially in his earliest days, for sustenance. Giving up life is very dramatic. But what is more painful and requires greater ability perhaps is to devote one's life to constant service not minding any question of health or comfort. That is the real *Seva* referred to in the Bhagavad Gita¹⁴⁵, as commented upon by Baba himself. The *sishtya* as stated by Lord Krishna has to render perpetual service to the *Guru*, having dedicated to him at the very beginning his *Tan, Man, Dhan*, and he must not retain any idea when rendering service to the master that he is free either to render or not to render service, but think he is only carrying out his surrender of body and mind by devoting every little power possessed by him to the service of the master. Instances may be found of *seva* in various parts of this book, and the instance quoted in the earliest Sanskrit authorities on the subject of *Guru-sishtya* relation is generally the collection by the *sishtya*, of fuel for the *Guru*. In ancient days forests abounded and fuel could be got by any one who went into the woods to collect sufficient dried branches. Fuel was wanted for maintaining the. sacrificial fire as well as the fire for cooking the food, and the third fire in each *Ashram*. Therefore, the *Mundakaupanishad* says,

Tat Vijnanartham sa Gurumeva Abhigachchet

Samit panih scrotriyam Brahmanishtam.

that is, For obtaining learning or wisdom, a student ought to go to his *Guru*, well versed in the knowledge of *Brahman* that is, a man of God realisation carrying a bundle of faggots in hand. This might be thought inapplicable to modern days by reason of our reserved forests, but in Baba's case, when he was taken by Javar Ali as a *sishtya* to Rahata, Baba did such work, namely, carrying faggots, heating water and cooking the food for his *guru*. And the *Guru Gita* says that one ought to do menial service and stand like a menial servant waiting upon the *Guru* at all times *Nati Dure Nichavat*. That is, like a peon at the beck and call, he must wait

for the *Guru*'s orders. Baba did such work not minding the hardships involved. Baba always set the example in everything that he undertook, and his services to Javar Ali were a good example set to others for what they ought to do for their master. Many pupils however go out from life to *Gurus* as lawyers, retired teachers, and merchants, and they cannot be expected to carry faggots or cook food for their master. But even these are seen in several *Ashrams*, like those in the Himalayas and other hills, to be rendering service of various sorts suited to each one's capacity. The essence consists in self denial and a readiness to serve willingly a master from whom one expects the most valuable aid if not everything. That is why, the Gita lays emphasis on *sevaya* in the above verse. Incidentally it may be noticed that service is only one form in which the disciple chooses to help or favour his master. The master's interest must always be treated as the interest of the pupil and the master's reputation, property, good name and economic welfare, must all be the chief interest that guides the conduct of the pupil. This is the basis of the several rules we shall note below as laid down in the *Guru Gita* and other books. The pupil has to render service and this is both a gain and a burden. Physically it is a burden. Sentimentally it may be a burden, though it ought not to be felt as a burden by a really enthusiastic disciple. Such enthusiastic devotees take pride and pleasure in serving their master. The gain is chiefly the privilege of *Satsang* of being always in attendance upon and under the eye of a great and powerful *Guru*, a perfect specimen of purity, wisdom, courage and goodness. Such a *Guru*, a real saint, will purify one of taints, *durvasanas*. All previous traces of bad tendencies and habits would be burnt up by such contact. *Guru Gita* says *Dussanga* has to be avoided by a *sisya* in order to become fit to be a *sisya*. But the traces of *Dussanga* may still be there, and the *Guru* burns up all such evil traces. Apart from bad company and vices, there are a number of defects in the pupil, and the constant companionship and advice of the *Guru* will remove these and make the *sisya* fit to take further steps on to reach the highest goal of knowledge and perfection. The *sisya* has generally, in spite of himself, a tendency to be proud of his caste, his learning, his good qualities, his wealth and his family. These are called

Ashtapasas of the *sishya*, and the *Guru* has to bum up all these eight pasas or knots, obstacles or hindrances of the pupil. The *Guru Gita* says in verse¹²⁹,

Karuna Khadga patena
Chitva pasa ashtakam sisoh
Samyak Ananda Janakah
Sadguruh sa Abhidhiyate.

that is, The *Guru's* grace is the sword with which he cuts off the eight bonds of his child, the pupil and thereby provides for his happiness. Such a person is called a *Sadguru*. The eight bonds are stated to be,

Daya compassion wrongly directed like Arjuna's compassion for his foes in battle
Shanka doubts,
Bhayam fear,
Lajja false sense of shame and shyness,
Ninda tendency to scoff or find fault,
Kula pride of family, caste,
Seelam pride of high breeding and
Dhanam pride of wealth.

Of course, these are only some instances of the teacher's attention to his pupil's nature. The perfect *guru* has himself perfect freedom from all vices and defects, from all ignorance and delusions, and by constantly being with such a *Guru*, a competent *sishya* absorbs all the qualities of the *Guru* in himself. By intimate contact between two loving people, each absorbs the likeness of the other. They talk alike, they think alike, they feel alike, and they behave alike. In consequence they become of the same nature. A powerful fearless, ever self-sacrificing, ever luminous, and calm *Guru* turns his *sishya* into an equally fearless, self sacrificing, ever luminous and calm person. *Jnana* thus flows from the *Guru* on to the *sishya* through these moral traits as also by the *Gurus* direct action on the soul. The *Guru* engages in *dhyana* and *Atma Nishta* and the *sishya* by intently concentrating on the *Guru* gets his *Jnana Nishta*. He is able to shake off all attachment, become thoroughly *sattvic*, and to rise to the fullest understanding and appreciation of *Brahma Jnana* or *Brahma Nishta*. The *Mahavakyas* which

get not merely repeated but also embodied in the Guru soak into the *sishya* and he also becomes an embodiment of them. This is the highest achievement of the *Guru*. It is for that the *Guru* is approached by the *sishya*. But many other feats are achieved before and in addition to this final achievement. The *Guru's* grace is bread and milk to the pupil and the *Guru* is treated as the only *sadhana* by him. These are not merely the words of Baba but are also found in the *Guru Gita* written centuries ago in *Skanda Parana*. Baba though never taught reading, was an All-Realiser and did not require any study of any *purana* for his purpose, being thoroughly absorbed in his *Guru* who gave him all knowledge, wisdom, and realisation which is the goal of all discipleship. Baba never having touched a single book, so far as we know, in his life and was never taught even the alphabet of any language, knew languages, thoughts, had all achievements, intellectual, moral, mental and could interpret any part of any scripture¹⁴⁶. How did he get that knowledge? By *Guru seva*! That was his answer. So, *Seva*, though looked down upon as something menial and disgusting and as a thing to be avoided by fashionable people, is the potent means by which Baba achieved the highest goal of life. One of the disqualifications, noted in a previous chapter, for a pupil is *Seva Vimuka*, that is, Disinclination to serve. One sees what a fatal drawback it will be in a *sishya* to assert himself and say 'I will not serve'. Such a person lacks humility and can achieve nothing. Tasting the *pada tirtham* of the *Guru* is said to be the means of attaining knowledge.

Perfect faith in the *Guru* and treating him as God, enables a man to take the water used for washing His feet, either in his mouth or on his head, as being more valuable than all the *tirthas* in the world and thus derives the fullest benefit. That is, to get rid of all bad *vasanas* or evil tendencies and by purity of his heart to be fitted for perfect *sattva* and illumination.

Conduct rules are the result of very great respect and regard for the *Guru*. *Puja* is enjoined. Avoid familiarity. Avoid contact with the irreverent and avoid listening to *ninda*, that is blame or disrespect of *Guru* or of saints.

Kularnava Tantra says, If any talk ill of the *Guru* shut yours ears and go away very far so as not to hear the talk and then have *Guru Namasmarana* to restore *Bhakti*¹⁴¹. Baba endorses this view.

MUTUAL RELATIONS OF GURU AND SHISYA

We have already noted that the *Guru* has to be treated as not in the least different from God, but as identical with God, on the authority of the Upanishads and numerous other works. A proper *sishya* must have therefore *Para bhakti* and *Dridha Sauhruda*, that is, strong devotion and attachment to his *Guru*. The latter returns the love and proves it by looking after and undertaking to look after everything that concerns the disciple temporally or spiritually. Behaviour naturally follows this heart felt love. The *sishya* feels there is nothing higher than the *Guru*

Na Guror Adhikam Na Guror Adhikam,
Idam eva Sivam, Idam eva Sivam,
Idam eva Sivam, Idam eva Sivam
Viditam, Viditam, Vijanam, Vijanam Viditam,
Viditam, Vijanam, Vijanam.¹⁴⁸

this means, There is nothing higher than the *Guru*. This is God, This is unique, This is known and experienced.

By meditation *Guru jnana* dawns upon the pupil¹⁴⁹. The *Guru Upadishta Marga* that is, the direction of the *Guru* has of course, to be strictly followed for purifying the heart. The ever changing phenomena are fleeting and unworthy of attachment. Hence turn the mind away from them on to the *Real Brahman*. This advice of the *Guru* must be followed¹⁵⁰. Peace of mind follows by *Guru's* grace¹⁵¹. The numerous directions in the *Guru Gita* as to the propriety of behaviour follow from the above attitude and relationship. The conduct rules are as follows.

A *sishya* should not and can never be blaming his *Guru*, and should not feel pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, contempt or entertain any similar feelings towards the *Guru*. Of course, he cannot threaten the *Guru*¹⁵², nor treat himself as equal¹⁵³. But on the other hand, he must fall at the *Guru's* feet, drink the

Padatirtha water washing the *Guru's* feet and always think of the *Guru* as long as his body lasts.

Guru is the *Sathee Akaraka* that is, the last moment helper, the one person or force that can help to save the *sishya* at the moment of his death and make the end happy, which wife, children, wealth, fame, cannot positively do, which infact they render painful. If the *Guru* has been rejected or forgotten, then at the last moment, the *sishya's* mind will be greatly perturbed and agitated or frightened¹⁵⁴.

The *Guru's* orders must be strictly obeyed and carried out personally and not delegated to others. Nothing should be done without consulting the *Guru*.

In the *Guru's* presence, the *sishya* must avoid:

Playing the part of a master and giving *upadesa* or orders,

Drinking spirituous liquor,

Sauntering about jauntily,

Shaving,

Placing oneself on a cot,

Stretching one's legs,

Getting oneself shampooed or having other similar enjoyment,

Dressing foppishly or ornamenting oneself,

One must day and night attend upon the *Guru* like a peon.

One must not take the *Guru's* property.

What he gives must be respectfully received.

The *Guru's padukas, asana* must all be respected and not touched with the *sishya's* feet.

When the *Guru* moves, the *Sishya*, like a shadow, must follow him.

The *Guru's uchchishta* remnant of his eatings, must be consumed reverently as sacrificial offerings and not given away¹⁵⁵.

No untrue or harsh, proud word or command should be uttered in the *Guru's* presence.

The *Guru* must always be addressed as *Prabhu, Deva, Kulesa, Swami, Raja Maharajah* with reverence¹⁵⁶.

The *Guru* saves the *sishya* from curses of Gods and men and even from death¹⁵⁷.

The *Guru's* name must be used as the Supreme *Mantra*¹⁵⁸ which will work wonders. By bare service to the *Guru*, the import of the *Mahavakyas* will be absorbed by the *sishya*¹⁵⁹. The *Guru* is full of *Mahavakya* illumination and the *sishya's* torch is kindled from that flame and *Atma Jnana* is the result¹⁶⁰.

The *Guru* must be meditated on, *dhyana*, and bowed to *pranama*, as being the Universe and all Gods¹⁶¹ as *Paramatma Swarupam*, as *Satchidananda Bhavatita*, *Nitya Puma*, *Nirakara*, *Nirguna*, within one's own self¹⁶². This is illustrated by a mirror reflecting a mirror, *Soham* represents that state¹⁶³. The *Guru* must be treated as *Angushta Matrah purushah*¹⁶⁴, in the heart¹⁶⁵. According to *Bhramara kita nyaya*, *Srimad Bhagavata*¹⁶⁶ the *sishya* thinking of the *Guru* becomes That, *Tat*¹⁶⁷

Yatra Yatra manodehi dharayet
Sakalam dhiya Snehat
dveshat Bhayatvaapi
yati tat tat sarupatam.

that is, Intense thought by love, hate or fear on a form transforms one into that form

Guru dhyanam tatahkritva
Svayam Brahma Mayo bhavet
Pinde pade tatha rupe
Muktas tena nasamscaayah.¹⁶⁸

this means, The *sishya* becomes a liberated soul in *Pinda*, that is in *Kundalini Sakti*, in *Pada*, that is by reaching the *Hamsa padam* and in *Rupa*, that is by attaining .the *bindu* and finally becoming the *Rupatita*.

The above summarises the conduct rules for the *sishya* and the benefits he attains thereby. Whether these rules are contained in *Saivaite purana*, *Skanda Purana*, or in *Bhagavata Vaishnavite Purana*, the course of conduct prescribed and the fruits are the same.

Fourteen

Obstacles and Objections to Sai worship

The obstacles to Sai worship that have existed from the very beginning of Sai's rise to public notice and which continue up to now are numerous. Only some have been mentioned till now on account of the great and prominent part those obstacles played in the initial stages of the Sai movement. We shall notice, however, some more obstacles to Sai worship. Obstacles spring not merely from those who are against religion and who care nothing for saints or god, but also from those who are religious and professedly religious too and exulting in their orthodoxy as the special form in which God has to be approached and religion exercised. Orthodoxy in all religions played a great part in the resistance to the Sai movement. The Gita declares that all greatness is from God¹⁶⁹ and its worship is the worship of God¹⁷⁰, opposition to Sai worship is greatly toned down among Hindus in this century. Persons who have fixed ideas, a sort of straight jacket for religion, and who assume that everyone must bend to their views, or be considered irreligious is the best description we can give of Ultra orthodoxy. These look askance at anything new which they have not understood. In the case of Sai Baba, he was very little understood in his life time, and even now, after so much trouble has been taken to unearth all the experiences of many devotees, and to arrange them and see what light they throw upon Baba, his ideas, his methods, and the plan he had, still we are left in considerable doubt about Baba on many an important matter. No wonder orthodox people with self-assurance as to the correctness of their modes and as to their being in high favour with God, on account of their religious orthodoxy and proud of the position given to them in society, fail to understand Baba or his methods and work. Of course it is not all orthodox people that object to Sai. If Baba turned water into oil, several of these orthodox would not get convinced thereby, but explain it away as a piece of magic worked with the help of some inferior power and for some worthless purpose. Even Syama alias Madhav Rao thought so at first. They would not take the trouble of calmly studying all the facts and arriving at a conclusion as to how that particular *chamatkar* came to be exhibited, what Baba's motive was, and how Baba intended that the *chamatkar* should operate.

Baba was really anxious to humble the two *vanis* who uttered lies and said that they had no oil when they had it, and to make them realise that God has various ways of helping *bhaktas* like Baba, when people like the *vanis* should refuse their help. Baba used that occasion for teaching very good lessons to the offending *vanis* and perhaps incidentally realised that the effect upon large portions of the masses would be to make them no longer deal with him as a negligible *fakir* but as a person who enjoyed at least some of God's powers, if not all, and who is really a Godman. The very highly orthodox, however, would not draw these conclusions. They kept up their attitude and would not take any notice of Baba and his work. The immediate result of the *chamatkar*, namely, worship of Baba in the Mosque by some unsophisticated villagers, would and did stiffen the backs of several of the orthodox and make them abhor its result, a Mohammadan worshipped by Hindus in a Mosque. To treat that as a good act of religion was something unthinkable for them. They could only condemn this as being a great evil a doubly bad affair and the *chamatkar* that produced this as a still greater evil. This explains how the railway personnel at Kopergaon and various people like the Valambi Station Master and others continued lecturing to people that Baba was a dangerous and immoral man or at least not a person for any good work of God. Many of the orthodox also have a sort of group feeling and they hold on their ideas decade after decade uninfluenced by the progress of events. Unfortunately, in the case of Sai Baba, for a long time, there was no history or explanation of Baba like the present work, nothing that could enlighten even a fairly calm and impartial member of the orthodox group or help him to study Baba and arrive at correct conclusions. No wonder that Sai Baba was misunderstood by many in the regions around Shirdi and in Maharashtra. Even now a number of the orthodox in the various States, to which the Sai movement has spread, continue to be moving and thinking on the old lines. All sorts of flippant and frivolous objections to some act of Baba or some fact about Baba which comes to their notice are raised and considered important by them. Even in January 1955 some one ran up to the All India Sai Mandir and said that an objection was raised as to the inconsistency in Baba. He asked, 'If Baba was Venkusa's *sishya*

and Venkusa was a worshipper of Tirupati Venkatesa, then Sai Baba ought to have worn *Namam'*, that is, three perpendicular marks on his forehead, whereas several pictures of Baba exhibit him with three horizontal lines on his forehead. This person who raised this objection was a very well meaning and educated man. Yet the objection struck him as a forcible one. Then he had to be shown that.

Baba did not wear any mark at all on his forehead,

The pictures that the objector had seen were pictures drawn by worshippers of the present day who knew only that Sri Babu Rao Chandorkar and some other worshippers had put on Baba horizontal lines on the forehead to which Baba finally yielded assent and nothing more.

The whole thing was a mere external observance of very little significance.

That if Das Ganu and similar Vittal worshippers could put on Baba's head vertical marks, Baba would have raised no objection either. Baba's explanation for his submission to these forehead marks was, 'What am I to do? This worshipper believes that I am his *Guru*, Kaka Dhopeswar, and puts marks on me which he put on his *Guru*.' Therefore, it must be understood that Baba was neither *Saivaite* nor *Vaishanavaite*, either in his views or in his external observances as to painting his forehead, and that he took no interest at all in all this.

Baba was perfectly neutral and submitted to the peculiar idiosyncracies of his worshippers in order to avoid offending them. Left to himself Baba would have no mark on his forehead. Baba did not believe at all that there is a separate Siva and a separate Vishnu as Gods. To him, there was only one God, and that might be called Siva or Vishnu, Vittal, Rama or Datta, Khuda or Khandoba or Devi or Allah or Hari with equal justification, for a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. God is only one and not many. To him, God was to be pleased by the right loving approach from the heart, while the external marks and observances or names might be varied and be either indifferent or worthless. Another objection raised by a Hindu at Madras was that Sai Baba had no right to allow the performance of his worship by Hindus or for that matter by anybody.

This objection was raised also by a European Missionary at Rahata to whom the worship of Baba was a mortal sin. This worship shows that he puts himself on a level with God, so said that missionary. The missionary's objection was stated with reference to another Baba but that objection applies equally to Sai Baba or anybody else who is being worshipped. The orthodox objection is also the same that Sai Baba, being a man, ought not to be worshipped, and allowing himself to be worshipped shows that he is unfit to be respected even. It would take a very long time to convince each of these objectors and show how Baba's worship was first objected to by himself and finally acquiesced in by him in the interest of the vast masses and of the nation and of humanity and that his worship is the *Guru* worship ordained by the *sastras*. In spite of all our arguments, such critics would still continue unconvinced, because their heart is not convinced. A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. Therefore, wise Sai *bhaktas* do not wish to waste their time in trying to convince such hopeless opponents. But here we may point out the answer to such criticism. Sai Baba's agreeing to his worship, as has been stated already, was not because he wanted plantains, coconuts, edibles, camphor, *stotras* and all the rest. It was justifiable even according to Hindu scriptures and was productive of various benefits, individual, national and international. It has the remarkable support of every sacred book of authority amongst Hindus whether *Saivaite*, or *Vaishanavaite*. The *Acharya* or *Guru* is in every Hindu community to be worshipped with the same reverence as God¹⁷¹. It is only in that case the fullest benefit of divine influence can reach the *bhakta*, through the *Acharya*¹⁷². A powerful and pure *Vairagi* like Sai Baba gains nothing by anything done at the worship. Baba could command all wealth and all conveniences by his wonderful powers, but he did not care for any of these. It is not for these petty things that *Acharyas* like Sai Baba agree to be worshipped. They agree to be worshipped to carry out the divine plan that the vast masses of pious people should approach God through a Godman, and derive all the benefits which they wish to attain, temporal and spiritual alike. Such answers do not easily convince our orthodox friends. They continue to contend that the existing gods and institutions provide sufficient scope for one's religious

inclinations, and that the addition of an extra god called Sai Baba is unnecessary and wrong. In the first place, it must be remembered that Sai Baba is not an additional god. If you have reverence for him and treat him as God, he is God, and there is only one God. If, however, any one is accustomed to think always in terms of polytheism and wants additional gods, one after another, he is at liberty to manufacture out of Sai Baba an additional God if that suits his need. But really each person that is worshipped is not an additional God. The objection that there are 33 crores of gods and that there is no need to add one more to that very large number fails because the number of persons worshipped according to the Upanishads and *Sastras* is not 33 crores but more. Every *Acharya* is a *Deva*, just like every *Pathi*, husband and parent to the person concerned, and so if we count the number of *Acharyas*, fathers, mothers, husbands and who are worshipped or who can be worshipped, it will run into many hundreds of crores. This is a patently frivolous objection, because we are not concerned with the number of gods. No earnest man is bothered, when he is going on with his *puja* or worship of his own gods in his home or temple, about the existence of other gods whom others are worshipping elsewhere or their number. Why should not others go on worshipping their own forms of God? What harm does that do to any one? The objections are so patently frivolous to one who has real *bhakti* in Sai that we need not dilate on the subject. We may stop with this, that is, that there is no end of frivolous objections that can be raised. There is a saying in one of the southern languages that if you do not like a person, say a wife, any touch of that person's hand or leg or anything else is an offence. So, we may dismiss this objection to Sai Baba worship on the ground of adding to the number of gods worshipped in the country as due to prejudice and not worthy of further attention.

Another obstacle that arose to Sai worship was from the conservative set, who consider it wrong for Sai Baba's devotees to ignore what they insist on as the essentials of religion, for instance, the putting on of marks and the observance of ceremonies. It is not true to say that Baba discouraged the orthodox people from following the use of these marks or the performance of ceremonies, where the usage still lingers. He distinctly encouraged the

performance of the post funeral ceremonies, in the case of several of his *bhaktas*, for instance, of S.B. Nachne, S.B. Dhumal, and Upasani Baba. In fact when people were beginning to doubt whether there was any use in performing post funeral ceremonies for fear that they might never reach the departed or prove of any use, the fact that Baba rendered help in the above cases and assured all of post-mortem life has made some of the loving *bhaktas* follow the usual postmortem ceremonies with greater faith. Baba knew that the subtle body or *Sukshma sarira* survives the *sthula* gross and that certain benefits could be derived and would be derived by the recently departed soul by the observance of these ceremonies. Therefore, he never objected to these ceremonies. He, however, had the remarkable power of guiding and directing the departed souls at the moment of death and thereafter, and his advice and action in the matter are of special importance to Sai *Bhaktas*. Baba told S.B. Dhumal to perform the *Masik sraadha* ceremony for his wife at Shirdi and added that he would see that her soul was benefited. It is clear that Baba attached some meaning and value to these ceremonies. But the main interest in the case of departed people is not merely the feeding of the hungry *Sukshma* or *Linga sarira*, astral body. The main interest is the help one can give it to reach God, which is the goal of the above mentioned states or our present life. On this matter Baba said If a devotee should die even a thousand miles away, I draw the spirit to myself and see that it is helped. About Upasani's third wife he said to the greatly agitated Kasinath Upasani Maharaj that her soul had come to him. As Baba is identified with God, the statement can only mean that the departed soul had reached God. Such a solace is a very valuable solace and Baba gave it to several people, not only to Sri Upasani Maharaj known as Upasani Baba but also to M.B. Rege who lost his child. This matter is dealt with later on in another chapter. At present we shall only say that the objection that Baba interfered with the customary and orthodox ceremonies for the living or the dead is not true and sound. Baba allowed everyone to carry on whatever he considered proper unless there was any direct harm in allowing it. However objections are not always well thought out and based on reason. It is the conservative feeling that all is well with the objectors;

that they are safe with God and with men, that is at the root of the objections. If some one starts something outside the accustomed circle and groove of ideas, several at once condemn it as being totally wrong, for to them, only their ideas and their practice are right. When we realise that such is the nature of orthodox and other objections, we can see how orthodoxy and similar criticism failed to stem the torrent of the Sai movement. That movement is based upon very sound principles of religion, morality, philosophy and the fact that Sai Baba is a God realiser of the highest level working to benefit humanity itself, that he was a *Parama Bhagavata*, a *Parama Jnani*, and a perfect master of all *yoga*, whether understood from the Sufi or Hindu or Muslim stand point. Throughout his life he carried on a very noble mission and acted mostly unperceived as the *Guru* and protector of many souls, though expressly and avowedly acting as *Guru* to some. The basis of Baba's dealing as *Guru* with such *sishtyas* has to be explained and understood, and that is why a number of chapters in this book have been devoted to the headings of *Guru Worship*, *Qualifications of Gurus and Sishtyas*, their relations, number of *Gurus*, before a detail account of the *sishtyas* is given. For Baba has acted for many decades as the *Guru* and had plenty of instances which are covered by what has been said in these chapters. A small percentage of his earlier *sishtyas* were orthodox to some extent. The extreme opposition by the orthodox to such Sai worship would naturally fall blunted and made ineffective where the worship of and adherence to Baba was by such learned and eminent persons like Narayan Govind Chandorkar, Deputy Collector, B.V. Dev, *Mamlatdar* and so many others, all at the head of orthodox circles. As time went on, the number of orthodox men in eminent positions joining the Sai movement and treating him as their great Divine *Guru* increased, and that is what is going on even now in the twentieth century. It is clear that it was Baba's intention to overcome orthodox objections by mere lapse of time, allowing the Sai worship by its intrinsic merit to extend and overflow to all parts in India and thus make the orthodox realise that the great oceanic movement has vast force, Divine force, behind it. Even one of a very dull imagination would be forced to see that the movement which has covered the whole country and in so short a

time, say within the past 20 years, must be Divine as explained by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Yadyad vibhutimat satvam

Srimat Urjitameva Va

Tattat eva avagachcha tvam

Mama Tejo Amsa Sambhavam.

this means, Whatever has abundance of splendour or has all prosperity, or strength, know that as a manifestation of a small fraction of Myself. So, says Lord Krishna. The essence of the tenth chapter of the Gita is to point out that whatever is powerful and splendid in every class or genius in existence is a manifestation of God, like the lion amongst the animals and the ocean amongst the waters. Thus, the slowly thinking and slowly working mind of even the torpid ultraorthodox objectors at last comes to realise that this movement is of God and cannot be resisted, and that the best thing one can do is to make the best of it, for Sai *Bhakti* offers excellent chance of individual benefits to all and sundry, provided they summon up some faith and act upon the same.

Truth is one and falsehoods are many. The sorts of objections that are raised from time to time to Sai worship or that have been or can be raised are so varied that it is not possible to give an exhaustive list of them, nor is it worthwhile. All these have been washed away by the tide of the Sai movement and more of them are now being washed away. When the flimsiness of these objections is realised, the fact that the objections are so flimsy adds to the strength of the Sai movement. Objections to the Sai movement have been raised in some quarters with reference to *Sastraic* texts such as that *Brahmins Srotrias* are the highest class and others are lower and that *Brahmins* should not worship persons of the lower class or adopt a *Guru* from the lower class. This raises again the old vexed question about caste and class which luckily in the present state of Independent India is dying out. There is increasing recognition even from political or social standpoints that class and caste fetters are out of date, that the formerly accepted standards of class and caste are not being kept up by everyone coming under the group name, and that there is no justification for the limitations and

disqualifications imposed on members of the several classes. Above all this objection begs the question as to caste. As has been discussed amply elsewhere, if there is any caste still surviving. Baba's caste cannot be peremptorily fixed as being of this or that caste. Baba is to be treated as a *Brahmin* according to the definition given of that word in various scriptures¹⁷³. For instance, it has been said that he who has got intense *bhakti* to God is a *Brahmin*. Baba was the embodiment of God devotion, God love, and was preeminently, therefore, a *Brahmin*. Again only realisers of *Brahman* should be called *Brahmins*. Under this heading Baba is a person about whom we can feel confident in asserting that he had realisation, that he identified his soul with that of God, Brahman, and as a corollary, was the *Antaryami* of so many creatures. He was ever remembering God and was for many decades immersed in his concentration on God, and this could not have but produced perfect *laya* and perfect absorption in God. Therefore, being merged in God, he must be treated as *Brahman* and therefore, as a *Brahmin* if one wants that class name. We have elsewhere pointed out the absurdity of enquiring into the caste status of a *Parama Jnani* and *Parama Bhakta* like Sai Baba and quoted not merely Scripture but also latter day sayings of saints to the same effect¹⁷³. So the objection to Sai worship on the score of his caste position raised still by some of the orthodox section cannot be considered sound or worthy of further attention.

The objection to Sai worship did not come always from the orthodox sections. It came mostly from the inertia of human nature. People do not wish to move out of ruts into which they have fallen. It is so unpleasant to be called upon to realise new situations. The old lines of demarcation have all been washed away and new lines are forming. But still there are several Rip Van Winkles who have not awakened themselves to the fact that the world has marched on since they last took note of it. *Sai Bhakti* is now a fact of very great religious importance to millions of souls in this country and the Sai light is being carried across the waters to illuminate distant corners of the earth. There is no good blinking the fact that *Sai Bhakti* is a live force. It is operating and moulding the destinies of human beings here and elsewhere, and it will go on doing the same whether we

care to face the fact or not. It is much wiser to take note of facts as they are and to make the best use of the movement for individuals and society.

Sometimes persons turn up and ask, Do you ask us to give up our Rama worship and Siva worship? And if we have those worships, why should we worship Sai? Why should you go on promoting propaganda of Sai and not Siva or Rama? In the first place, one has to give up all hope of satisfying such curious objectors, because the objection arises not from reasoning of an earnest *sadhaka* anxious to advance his temporal and spiritual welfare by learning the truth but from the underlying mentality or emotional factors. It is these factors that have to be treated and not a reasoning to be met in these cases. Anyhow, the question having been put, the reader would expect an answer, and let us give the answer.

The first objection reminds us of the oft quoted illustration of a leading question, Have you left off beating your mother?

Answer yes or no. There is a vicious assumption which is patent in the question about the mother. It ought to be equally patent in the above mentioned objection. No respectable *Sai bhakta* ever objected, and this author certainly does not object nor did Sai ever object to people worshipping Siva or Rama. The truth is exactly the opposite. Sai Baba sent Appa Kulkarni to go and worship at a Siva temple Mohiniraj at Nivas before appearing to answer the charges framed against him by the Deputy Collector in a departmental enquiry. Similarly he sent Shama to worship the goddess Vani on a hill and Megha to worship Khandoba and all the other gods and he blamed Nana Chandorkar for avoiding *darsan* of Datta¹⁷⁴. Baba promoted faith in Gods¹⁷⁵. Sai allowed all legitimate worship, and his *bhaktas* do the same. So the question, Why do you object to Siva or Rama worship is just like the question about stopping the beating of the mother. As for the rider added to that question, namely, whether, when Siva and Rama are available for worship, they should be given up in favour of Sai worship, this again is a baseless assumption. Nobody asked, certainly Sai did not ask people to give up Siva or Rama worship and take Sai as a substitute. The question may be however referring to the fact that several hereditary worshippers of Siva or Rama

or other gods have taken ardently to Sai worship which at the final stage drowns all other worship in it. One ought to remember the *Na Hi Ninda Nyaya* which says; When one gets very fond of a particular form of worship, one is apt to ignore any other form of worship as a needless diversion of his thoughts and energies, which however involves no condemnation of other forms. On the other hand, Sai becomes finally the One God and so the same as the other forms of God, such as Siva, Rama and others. The *Vedas* thus praise God in One form only in each place. This is interpreted liberally by *Na hi Ninda Nyaya* but is called Henotheism¹⁷⁶, worship of one form at one time and another form at another by Max Muller. To that extent the above question may have a basis, and if an explanation is wanted for that fact, the explanation is furnished by such worshippers. They find enormous, unmistakable, and clear benefits accruing to them from the heartfelt Sai worship that they are going in for, and above all the presence of Sai as an ever present guardian with them, undertaking to safeguard and advance all their temporal and spiritual interests *yoga keshemam vahami aham* and carrying out the undertaking by most miraculous or remarkable means unavailable to such worshippers and undreamt of by them till they came to Sai Baba. This ought to be a sufficient answer. Unfortunately, the combatant mood still persists, and such objectors ask, Cannot the same benefit be derived by that worshipper by his proceeding with Rama or Siva worship instead of Sai worship? This is a hypothetical question which we must decline to answer. The worshipper also would be entitled to decline an answer. In the first place it is the feeling of the worshipper and this writer's feeling and that of many *bhaktas* that Sai is not different from God, that Siva, Rama, and other *Murthis* are not different from God as truly proclaimed by Baba himself¹⁷⁷. Therefore, when a person goes on sincerely and earnestly worshipping Sai with all his heart, feeling that he is worshipping god, the absence of one name or another, Siva or Rama, Allah, Khuda or Hari, in the particular process of worship is no objection to his persistence in his formula. Feeling alone counts. *Vishnu Sahasranama* gives a thousand names, and nobody should insist on every worshipper mentioning all these one thousand names. Some are satisfied with Rama alone, and say,

Sri Rama Rama Rameti Rame Rame Manorame
 Sahasranama tat tulyam
 Sri Rama Nama Varanane
 Raghupati Raghava Rajaram Patita pavana Sitaram
 Iswara Allah Tere nam Sabko Sanmati De Bhagavan
 Rama Rahim Krishna Karim Sabko Sanmati de
 Bhagavan.

This means, Siva tells Parvati, I repeat Sri Rama, Rama Rama, O dear one, I delight in that name Rama, That name Rama is equal to one thousand names, That is the unique power, charm and value of the Rama nama to a Rama worshipper. It might with perfect truth and sincerity be uttered about Sai also, by a zealous Sai devotee in which case it would run thus,

Sri Sai Sai Sayeeti Sayee Sayee Vadamyaham
 Sashranama Tat tulyam Sainama Varamparam,

which has the same meaning, as the above *mutatis mutandis*.

This quarrel over names is very difficult to escape, as there is the law of association of ideas and feelings working in the region of language. Mahtama Gandhi in trying to effect a *rapproachment* between Hindus and Muslims started the formula noted above in which Rahim and Ram are put together, and made his Hindu and Muslim followers repeat the formula or *mantra*. But some fastidious and over zealous adherents of each group unable to overcome the effects of the above law started up with an objection. One set said, Why not omit all reference to Allah and Rahim and content ourselves with our usual Hindu names. The other set, equally tenacious upholders of Muslim or Arabic names, said, Why not omit all reference to Hindu names and retain only the Arabic or Urdu names. To both Mahatma Gandhi had to point out that the object of the compounded formula was to familiarise the ear of impartial and co-operatively minded Hindus and Muslims with the admixture of both so that both may get into use with an inclination to hear both Muslim and Hindu names without loss of equanimity. This would become easier and inspiring by habit for future generations. That was the great object of Mahatma Gandhi's formula. Our

objectors belong to the separatist fold and object to anything that seems new. Baba's standpoint on this matter was similar to Mahatma's and was 'Live and let live', to unite persons in using common joint formulas as far as possible. Baba added to Gandhiji's plan of work. He secretly worked on the hearts of all. But if each wants to get on in his own way, the way that suits him best, by all means let him do so; he should not be hindered. This is the only way in which all sincere worshippers can be drawn together; and worship of Sai by sincere *bhaktas* is in no way different from worship of God. That is their feeling and according to correct metaphysics and philosophy, there is no difference between the worship of Sai treated as God and the worship of God under any other name or any other form. Both achieve the same ends.

Ye yatha Maam prapadyante Taams
tathaiya bhajami aham

that is, In whatever form you surrender to Me, in that form, I respond¹⁷⁸.

As regards the objection to any propaganda being done for Sai, the short answer is this. The honey and flavour in the flower do propaganda for the flower to attract bees and carry on the work of reproduction of the plant so that the earth may be replenished and more fruits may be had. This is Nature. Similarly many a propagandist, who is perfectly sincere, is unconsciously a propagandist. His devout *bhakti*, having achieved various rewards and the supreme reward of getting Baba for one's powerful guardian, the all round guardian, to look after every interest, is so grand, alluring and contagious. The *bhakta* after achieving so much of his welfare desires, in his heart wants to share it with others, and therefore communicates his experience to others so that others may also have the same benefit following the well known principle or aphorism *Ekah Svadu Na Bhunjita* which means When you get nice things to eat, do not monopolise it, but share it with others. In the case of the author of this book, that rule has been his life principle for numerous decades. Having discovered the great benefit of approaching Sai, he cannot resist the desire to communicate it to others so that all in the world may have the same benefit. Perhaps our readers have been told of Sri Ramanuja's conduct. His *Guru* gave him a sacred *mantra* for *moksha*

consisting in the utterance of the holy name of God, and added the advice to him that he should not reveal it to others but keep it a profound secret, in accordance with the Stanza which says,

Ayur Vittam Griha Chidram Mantram Oushada
Samagamah Dana Manapamanascha
Navagopya Manishibhih,

that is, The wise men conceal these nine things, including *mantra*, or *Gurum prakascayet dhiman Mantram Yatnena Gopayet*. The wise men conceal that *mantra* but proclaim the *Guru*. What did Sri Ramanuja do? He got on the top of a tower and shouted the *mantra*; that is, the holy name of God, and said, 'If I have committed a sin, let me go to hell. But if this *mantra*, being heard by others, will save them, let all these innumerable people who hear get saved thereby. I am willing to be damned to save all'. That is exactly the feeling of this writer and of many other propagandists of Baba. The word Propaganda has, unfortunately, gathered a bad odour in English.

During the war the term propaganda meant downright falsehood. In our case propaganda is downright truth without the least tinge or taint of falsehood in it. Warlike propaganda was selfish and false. The present Sai propaganda is unselfish and absolutely true.

Fifteen

Stages of Baba's personality

Baba's direction to his biographer¹⁷⁹ is that he should be a humble chronicler of ascertained facts, but the demand of the modern, scientifically trained reader of a biography is that there should be a scientific presentation of even saints lives, showing the how and why of each part and how the parts fit into or grow out of each other. It may be difficult to reconcile these two. Still we are bound to attempt in this book, the *via media* presenting as much as possible of Baba's life in as scientific a way as possible without sacrificing the inspiring effect of a saintly biography or its truth. The predominant interest must be to note all the words, the sayings, the deeds, and moods, that indicate or prove the saintliness and form the super human or divine features of life. The subordinate

interest is to note if a scientific presentation of progress or development is possible of these parts of the sacred life, especially when such presentation may explain, sustain or add charm to the holiness or saintliness. The idea of development of personality is very widely accepted, and in the case of a number of human lives, even of saints, development is studied and noted, for development, after all, is mostly treated on the ethical plane and therefore there is ample material for study, and though the ground is hard, useful work can still be done. But yet to many, tracing the development or growth of the divine element in Baba looks almost hopeless as the inner life is hidden and there is very little information available about the earlier stages of his life. Personality is easily understood and dealt with in modern psychological or philosophical treatises by following the behaviourist plan. Take a personality as it is presented by each person and try to express what it is, namely the sum total of the various facets and portions that make up the man's personality as understood by himself and by his neighbours. That gives the current opinion of the man's personality. This is the behaviourist method of treating the self. This is mainly an external method. The internal is only to be inferred and cannot be easily got at. It is hard for a man even to observe the internal kernel of his own line of thought and action; and what is observed or felt is often found to be inexpressible. A good and full study of the Personality requires Baba's divine power of getting into and reading the heart of another, that is, getting to be *hisAntaryami*, the soul of his soul. Hence that cannot be expected here. So, we are left almost wholly where the behaviourist leaves us. But even so, there is something to present, and with the help of observations made by Sai Baba and other saints and the *Rishis*, we may try to present some sketch of the development of spiritual personality. After all, the development of spiritual personality must run on the lines prescribed for God-realisation or for reaching *Brahman* as set out in text books like *Vivekachudamani* and the *Bhakti sastras*, namely, *Bhagavata*. We shall see how taking the *Bhagavata* and *Brahma Sutras* and *Vivekachudamani* as our guide, what steps were being adopted by Sri Sai Baba from the earliest times and how

he progressed. That is an extremely interesting study, the materials for which, however are extremely scanty.

It is agreed practically by all that divinity is reached only by aloofness from the world's attractions, that *Asanga* and *vairagya* must be at the base of any course which leads to divinity, and contact with those who are in the light is necessary to kindle the torch within us to perceive the light within. Hence the study of such contact is the next course. Taking up the first course, in Baba's case, *vairagya* seems to have been centuries old and almost hereditary if not in the physiologists and psychologists sense, at least in the spiritualists' sense. Baba in his previous births, *janmas*, as reported by himself in his occasional references to his past births, was full of *vairagya*, thorough self-denial, and was working for the benefit of others and had conquered all his desires¹⁸⁰. He always sacrificed his own interest to promote that of other people, a brother, a step-mother or a neighbour. In all these cases he acted without any expectation of reward and purely out of regard or compassion for them. So, the readiness to work for others good, not caring for one's own pleasures or benefits, and its presumable basis the perception of the real nature of one's self as above the material body and its animal urges, were the leading features of his past lives; and these must have been so deeply ingrained in his soul that from his very birth, he must have had these elements at least potentially within him which later got the chance of fuller growth and fruition.

Purvabhyasena tenaiva hriyate hyavasco api sah.

Tatra tambuddhi samyogam Labhate pourva dehikam^m,

this means, The man not completing his *yoga sadhanas* in a particular birth is reborn in a *yogi's* or other suitable family and resumes the tendencies and aptitudes developed in the former birth. He is swayed unwittingly by the force of his former tendencies. Providence gave Baba the best stepping stones in the nineteenth century life also. Desertion by parents at a very early age and being brought up by a begging *fakir* who appears to have been a highly advanced *Sufi* and the fairly rapid death of both the original parents and *the fakir* and his wife, after arranging to leave him in the care of the Selu *zamindar* as an absolutely

helpless dependent having no claims whatever and no pretensions whatever; are all stepping stones. These are obviously the very best plot and manure for faith, trust, purity, *vairagya* and godliness, that is aloofness from the world and Love of God to grow, develop, and come to fruition. *Bhakti* is the best field or manure. Even for a *jnana* or *vichara margi*, it is highly important. *Moksha Sadhana samagiam Bhakti reva gariyasi. Bhakti marga* in the form of *Guru bhakti marga* was the whole course or sole *sadhana* of Baba's life. He fed on *Bhakti* alone, and by means of that alone became all that he was. For *bhakti*, which transformed itself into *Jnana*, after providing the *sadhana chatushtaya*, his absolute dependence served a very good purpose. As a child he must have been fondly loved by the *fakir* and his wife, and as a slightly grown up child or boy, he was loved and brought up by the Selu *zamindar*, Gopal Rao Deshmukh or Venkatesa. Here, therefore, we find the elements that make up a saint, absolute dependence or the fullest trust in the *fakir* and in a master, begetting no hatred but trust and deepest love, a love into which adverse elements like jealousy, envy and hatred, could not enter. The *sastras* declare that the qualification of a *sishya*¹⁸² is that he should be free from pride, jealousy, sense of possession. A child absolutely dependent upon the foster father and mother or the chieftain and getting everything needed through love is bound to be totally free from such defects. These negative virtues are mere trifles. Positive strength of love ensures the presence of the negative virtues and a great deal more. It is not a mere negation that can build up divinity. It is love that can do it. God is Love. As Sir Walter Scott says, 'Heaven is Love and Love is Heaven', not merely in the enjoyment of it, for it is so happy to be loved, but also in the ultimate philosophical analysis and its result. On examination of the nature of divinity, *Satchitananda*, it is Love, Bliss and its fullest expression is the perfect saint in the flesh who ultimately after *Mahasamadhi* is recognised as nothing but *Prem Rupi* or God. This positive development of love can hardly be traced stage after stage. The course of true love never runs smooth. However, in Baba's life, hindrances, came. These may be studied. Usually we find obloquy, ill treatment and unkindness, would interfere with love. In Baba's case, he met with everyone of these. As a protege of the

Selu *zamindar*, he had envious opponents hurling brickbats at him with a view to kill him. But what was the response of this loving soul? Not the slightest impulse to revenge or hatred. On the other hand he revived the villain whose stone hit his master, and who, according to ordinary notions and feelings, would be reckoned as a mortal enemy. Enmity had no place in Baba's soul. His soul was nothing but fullness of love. Love that neutralises and chills the fire of enmity hurled at it. Love that serves for *Vairagya*, *Viveka* and for *Sama*, *dama*, *titiksha*, *uparati*, *Sraddha* and *Samadhana*. He pardoned all and proceeded onwards in his own march of love not minding opposite currents. Again when he came to Shirdi, mischievous boys pelted stones at him. Did he revenge himself on them? No. Hatred and desire for revenge were not within him. On the other hand he recognised that even those who were molesting his body were really his father's children and therefore objects of love for him. He forgave them readily and into the tinyhand that hurled stones at him, he placed sugarcandy, and the boys and children were wondering what sort of creature this *fakir* was who returned sugarcandy for stone pelting. They found mango trees gave fruit for pelting, but no man acted like those trees. They had not seen such *Vairagya* and *Viveka* and other noble qualities before. Again when the *Vanis* were having their laugh at him for being a crazy fellow and whom they wished to see deeply dejected for want of light him, as they had refused oil for his oil lamps, what did Baba do after converting water into oil and when they were down on their knees praying for forgiveness and praying also that he should not curse them? Baba's nature was never for cursing. What does a mother do when her angry infant puts its hand into dirt and flings the dirt at the mother's face? She quietly chides the child, washes its hand and advises it to behave better in the future. Baba's loving heart was the mother's heart. These *Vanis* were the erring children, and with his divine loving heart, Baba behaved just like a mother. He gave them good advice warning them against the evils of falsehood and rejoicing in other's sorrow. He reproached such conduct and took promises that such bad conduct would not be repeated, just like a loving mother. The reasons for his conduct on the above and other similar occasions were seldom avowed or expressed by him. But they can

be inferred from the attendant circumstances and from the analysis of similar mental states found in the books. He frequently recommended for his devotees *parayana* or basic spiritual study and endeavour. Eknath Bhagavat XI Skanda, which Baba referred to as *Brindavan Pothi* when recommending its earnest study to H.S. Dixit and which, he declared to Uddavesa Bua, constituted his own teachings as Krishna to the *Dwapara Yuga Uddava* and as Sai Baba to the *Kali yuga Uddhavesa Bua* throws considerable light on the basis for his forgiveness and avoidance of anger or hatred. Hence we may proceed to examine the reasons given in that holy text as the basis of such forgiveness and avoidance of hatred though Baba did not state his reasons.

What is the effect of Love upon the various thoughts, feelings, desires, aversions, capacities, incapacities, and the tendencies or impulses found to be the main features of various personalities? Self-love and self-assertion, resisting and overcoming the efforts of other selves adversely disposed are basic urges for ensuring the safe maintenance and progress of the physico-psychical organism in the ordinary individual. But altruism or care for others, even adverse individuals, to the detriment of one's own material interests but in promotion of one's higher or nobler side is also found. It may be weak in many but in the saint it gets quickly developed and overshadows or overpowers the earlier self-love and self-assertion of the brute or lower level. This altruism and active care for others form the important facets of Love. Love grows stronger by exercise, by *Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*. By constant altruism one becomes *Sarva bhuta kite ratah*¹⁸³ that is interested in the welfare of all creatures; all creatures get to be identified with oneself. Thus Love unifies, synthesises and strengthens one's self or moral nature, especially by the perception of unity of one's self with other selves. *Sarva bhutatma bhutatma*¹⁸⁴ becoming the self of all creatures, one becomes by love.

Atmoupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati Yo Arjuna!

*Sukham Va Yadi Va Dhukham Sa Yogi Paramo matah*¹⁸⁵

this means, The perfect *yogi* feels the joys and sorrows of other men and creatures as his own and treats them as himself. His identification with other

selves is so perfect. This perfection is wrought by love. It can stand the rough test or violent and cruel conduct of others towards oneself. The various considerations or reasons or ways of viewing others that would enable one to put up with vile and cruel treatment at the hands of others are amply set out in the *Bhikshu Gita*¹⁸⁶. Some of this reasoning or feeling may be quoted here, just as examples of the high level of thinking and acting that goes to make up perfect love or *Atma Nishta* even. The cruelly treated monk feels that the cruel tormentors and he are really one and the same or that they are parts of one universal system along with him. The teeth and tongue are parts of the same body. Sometimes it chances that the teeth bite the tongue. Then whom is a man to blame and quarrel with? He must quietly endure it with all placidity. Sometimes one limb hits against another. Who is to blame them? None. So the monk feels that the mind must be completely controlled and freed from all trace of hatred, blaming tendency eradicating the old and popular ways of reacting. Love is the best trainer and helper in mind conquest. By such conquest, it is easier for a person to raise himself from identification of himself with a narrow self with its needs and faculties confined to a particular body to identification with the universal self - the *Paramatma* or Divinity. By loving the *Guru* intensely, one achieves this result without going through all the arguments in favour of self-expansion or identification with the Supreme that are set out in this *Bhikshu Gita*, which Baba declared to be his teaching.

Are there stages in this expansion? Is there development from one level to higher levels? Probably there are. Acts first prompted by reason become habits and natural. The soul gets more and more mature, just as a small mango fruit emerging from the mango flower grows bigger, develops its parts, stores up acid, starch, and turns them all into sugar with an attractive covering or skin enclosing a hard seed. But it is not practicable, or necessary or possible to dissect Baba's self to see when he had the tiny size, the acid, and the unattractive skin and when the starch was stored and turned into sugar. Love generally beams out in action and very often the extent and nature of the love within is indicated by the extent and nature of the acts.

This is a general rule but in the cases of many and especially in the case of Baba, there are rules of conduct, principles and practice of secrecy, self-suppression and concealment which prevent the beholder from guessing the existence or the extent of the internal love. The popular maxim of Kabir *Jo paya unhe chupaya* which means He who has got something wealth, power and ability conceals it, may be taken with Srimad Bhagavata¹⁸⁷,

Budho balakavat kridet kuscalo jadavat charet

Vadet unmattavat Vidwan Go charyam Naigamah Charet

which means, that a *sadhaka* or saint should not betray his fullest development but though wise should sport like a child or boy, though clever should behave like a dunce, though learned should talk like a crazy or insane person, and though versed in the scripture should act like a brute, for thus, his concentration within himself will remain undisturbed by other. It is thus the *Avadhuta Jnani* behaved¹⁸⁸, that is *Jadonmatta Piscachavat* like a dullard idiot or obsessed man. Tiruvannamalai Seshadriswami feigned madness and advised a *sadhaka* to feign madness. A too open hearted man, one who reveals all the workings of his mind, is at the mercy of his surroundings and his soul development will be hindered. For instance the revelation of a little advance in virtue might evoke praise which in turn may raise up self conceit and vanity, and hinder further spiritual advance. Some error, some false step when confessed to outsiders might evoke severe censure, contempt or even hatred, and these may depress a man and even produce an inferiority complex. Just as solitude is helpful for spiritual practice, a screen of silence, a willful octopus like spread of blinding blackness preventing the idly curious from knowing one's inner working is useful or even necessary for one's proper attention to oneself,

Ayur vittam griha chidram mantram

Oushada samagamah dana mana apamanascha

Nava gopya Manishibhih

these are to be kept secret and *mantram* includes spiritual *sadhana*. Throughout Baba followed the rule of secrecy for himself, and except under strict necessity did not reveal his spiritual courses. For that matter he never communicated his

name, his antecedents, and only late in life, shortly before he passed away, he revealed his Brahmin parentage at *Patri* and his breeding by the *Fakir*, and even his *Guru's* name was rarely mentioned though the rule is

Gurum prakascayet dhiman,
mantram Yatnene gopayet,

that publish the *Guru* but conceal his teaching is the wiseman's rule. The course of instruction he obtained from his present *Guru* was revealed to Radhabai Deskmukh first and next to Anna Saheb Dabolkar alias Hemadpant. He revealed his dealings with his *Guru* and others at times, and several of those revelations are set out in the Gospel of Baba but they seem mostly to refer to former births of Baba. Of these former births, he mentioned a good number without giving dates and places. So we are often left in doubt whether Baba derived any teaching or other benefits in the last *janma* or previous *janmas*. Some of these trainings are remarkable and the experiences mentioned by him are always valuable, whatever *janma* they may refer⁹⁰. In reference to his making enquiries about realisation along with three other *sadhakas* and his determination not to rely upon bookish knowledge to reach the highest goal but to rely completely upon surrender to a *Parama Guru* called a *Vanajari*.

Ananaya prokte gairatra Nasti
Aniyan hyatarko Anupramanat¹⁸⁹

that is As the matter is subtle, there is no other way for realisation except another's teaching. His three friends and fellow *sadhakas* did not believe that a *Guru* was necessary and trusted to then-book learning to achieve spiritual progress, that is, *Atma Jnana* and *Brahma Nishta*. They came across the *Vanajari Guru* who offered to help them. The three companions disdained the help and went away. Baba alone went to the *Guru* and accepted help and nourishment from him and placed himself completely at his mercy. That *Guru* tested the extent of his trust and confidence by tying up his legs with a rope and making him hang down from a tree at the brink of a well just above the water. Baba stood the test. Four or five hours after the test began, the *Guru* who had gone away came back and asked him how he fared. Baba instead of fidgeting

and fretting, fuming and cursing, as some others might have done, was calm, cool and happy because of his complete faith that the *Guru* would not do anything except what was best for him. The *Guru* having thus sufficiently tested his faith admitted him into his school of love and confidence and enabled him by many years probation to reach perfection. This was without any reference to dates, but taking into consideration his probation under the *Fakir* and the *Selu zamindar Venkatesa*, this training was probably by a *Guru* of a former life. Anyhow the teaching is very useful for *sadhakas* for governing their own selves though it may not be easy to fix up this training in the present history of Baba. Even if it was in a previous birth, that *purva abhyasa* was deeply ingrained in Baba and served as a basis even for the latest life.

Some readers might however desire that the development of Baba in this last birth, with which we are mainly concerned with, should be dealt with as our main interest. Hence we shall proceed to consider that alone.

The proper way of dealing with such a difficult subject as personality appears to be after all the common sense way of treating a personality as viewed by the world. In the case of Sai Baba we have his earliest period with his original parents who had deserted him or had gave him away and with whom his stay was far too short for any noticeable development or change of personality. The next stage of life reached by Baba was the stage when he stayed with the *fakir* to whom he had been handed over. This appears to have continued for at least four or five years, almost from the first to the sixth year, the most impressionable period of his whole life. This *fakir* appears to have been a very advanced *Sufi* and he and his wife appear to have loved Sai Baba tenderly and brought him up with all attention and care. The events, if any, of that period are not known, but might be inferred from the fact that in later life when Baba referred to his *Guru*, he used the term *Fakir* to denote God or *Guru*, and hence taking it that the term *Fakir* referred to this *fakir* to whom he was handed over, it is clear that he regarded him as his All-in-All, as God, and as *guru*, and, therefore the relations must have been of the most perfect sort, that is implicit and thorough faith and confidence on the one hand and complete support on the other. That is the ideal

relation between God and his devotee. The life of Baba was to be a life of perfection which, after *Mahasamadhi*, should be fully recognised as the Divine operating without limitations of time or place, and for the benefit not of one individual or of one country but for all. Therefore the grounding for that must be in the earliest perfection of love towards God or towards anything regarded as God. The *fakir* having been regarded as God and as everything to Baba was loved with perfect faith and bliss. Baba had therefore, we may presume, a thorough grounding in love which is the positive side. The negative side that goes with it, rather the obverse of it is freedom from attachment to the world. Ordinarily love of parents, love of sisters and brothers, love of friends, wealth, and possessions crowd into one's soul and crowd out the idea of God or leave it as a faint outline just impinging upon the other items occupying the soul. In the case of Sai Baba, the Father and mother are the earliest gods. So the *fakir* and his wife must have given him the God idea and must have responded to his love and his need for protection; and thus the positive and the negative go together in this early period, namely thorough detachment from the world and thorough attachment to God or the *Guru* representing God. This epoch continued only for a short period of five or six years though it might be of great importance in making up Baba's life. On the death of the *fakir*, Baba was taken to the Selu *zamindar* Gopal Rao Deshmukh, who was a perfect lover of God under the name of Tirupati Venkatesa. So the next period of stay of ten or twelve years with that Master or *Guru* to whom the *fakir's* widow handed him over, was the most important in Baba's life. As part of Baba's destiny, the *fakir's* widow died soon after leaving him under the care of his master who had become All-in-All to him. Here again Baba's destiny was that his previous line of thinking, feeling and being should be continued and not disturbed. The love which began under the *fakir* became still more powerful, we may presume, under the care of Gopal Rao Deshmukh or Venkatesa. Gopal Rao treated him as the reincarnation of Kabir, himself having been Ramananda of Kasi, Kabir's *Guru* in a former birth of his. The love of Ramananda to Kabir, pure, perfect and unalloyed with any wordly taint, must have therefore prevailed between Venkusa and Baba. Baba had no care for

anything and was not distracted by any education or what is usually called education, namely, learning. He was perpetually attending upon Venkatesa Gopal Rao Deshmukh in a way which the *Guru Gita* aptly describes as the proper attitude. *Nati Dure* and *Nichavat*, That is, Baba was like a peon, ever ready at hand to carry out the Chieftain's orders. There was no distraction of games or playmates or rivalry or any examination to trouble Baba. His whole heart ran on to the Master. Baba himself gives a description⁹⁰ which applies here also, 'I loved to gaze at him all the while, and even for a few seconds if he were not there to see, I would not like to have eyes at all. I did not wish to go back. I forgot all things but the *Guru*. My life was concentrated in my sight and my sight in him. That was the object of my meditation. In silence, I bowed'. These words referred to a *Guru* of a former life probably. But the description of the contact with the latest *Guru*¹⁹⁰ is on the same lines and as follows,

'For 12 years I waited on my *Guru* who is peerless and loving. How can I describe his love to Me? When he was in *Dyanastha* that is love trance I sat and gazed at him. We were both filled with *Bliss*. I cared not to turn my eye upon anything else. Night and day I pored upon his face with an ardour of love that banished hunger and thirst. The *Guru's* absence for a second made me restless. I meditated on nothing but the *Guru*, and had no goal, or object, other than the *Guru*. Unceasingly fixed upon him was my mind. Wonderful indeed, the art of my *Guru*! I wanted nothing but the *Guru* and he wanted nothing but this intense love from me. Apparently inactive, he never neglected me, but always protected me by his glance. That *Guru* never blew any *mantra* into my ear. By his grace, I attained to my present state. Making the *Guru* the sole object of one's thoughts and aims one attains *Paramartha*, the Supreme Goal.

This is the only truth the *Guru* taught me. The four *sadhanas* and Six *sastras* are not necessary. Trusting in the *Guru* fully, is enough.

The above is a true narration of the actual facts by Baba, the soul of truth. It is by learning these facts that one can understand and appreciate texts like *Narada's Bhakti Sutras*¹⁹¹, for example

Having which, *Bhakti* or Love one relinquishes all desire, grief, hostility indulgence in worldly pleasures, and all efforts at selfish advancement.

Knowing which, one becomes ecstatic, quiet, and happy in oneself,

One renounces all worldly concerns and even *Vedic* rites.

Concentration on love, apathy towards everything, against it.

Giving up all other supports than love, that is, having no other *sadhana*.

Narada says Love surrenders all actions to God and feels extreme restlessness in being without Him.

God and his devotee are the same.

This is the highly romantic love which even between sexes and at very early ages is so hard to find. But in Baba's life, without any intrusion of any sex and without any incorporation of mere romantic stories, this love was at its height. Baba felt that the object of his love was flowing to him. It is under such circumstances that *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*, naturally flow on in one's soul and end in perfect *samadhi* or perfect *laya*. The lover gets absorbed in the object of love, and Nature works a unity between the two, the lover and the loved. *Apana Sarika Karitat Tatkal* is what Tukaram says about the work of the *Samartha Guru* towards his *sisya*. That is, the *Samartha* turns the *sisya*, without any difficulty and without requiring any period of time, into his absolute likeness. This process of love which Baba describes as subsisting between himself and Venkatesa was the one course calculated to carry out Tukaram's dictum, that is, the turning or transformation of the pupil into the perfect likeness of the Master. It is not as though it were the result of willing on the part of the Master though that also may have been the case. It is a purely natural process. The mutual attraction of soul to soul and the passing on of the nature of one to the other was the same as in the case of a huge magnetic dynamo and a piece of iron brought into contact with it. Therefore this long period of ten or twelve years at *Selu* sufficed, we may presume, to complete the course or training which Baba had to undergo for reaching perfection of Sainthood or Godhead to fit him for his life's work of transforming all that came into contact with him or that would come into contact with him decade after decade, and it may even be century

after century, into the model of his soul or his own likeness. Love is the one force which upholds the Universe, and love is that force which can overcome the innumerable obstructions to the manifestation of love which arise in our imperfect civilisation between individual and individual, group and group and nation and nation. All bitterness, hatred, rivalries and antagonism will melt into thin air at the contact of powerful love, and such love has to be directed to the world in existing conditions and in increasing measure to enable it to cast aside the darkening clouds that cover it and restore to it the blissful light of love. The ultimate future of humanity cannot be and should not be mere ruin and wreck. It must be an integrated whole, integrated by the force of love.

For that, the proper dynamo that can work upon the world is the dynamo that we call Sai Baba.

In the above three stages, we notice how the dynamo was prepared and fully charged and came ready for this work. It is after leaving Selu that the seeds so well sown in the three periods came to bear full fruition. *Vairagya* means detachment from the world. After leaving Selu, Sai had no one to contact himself with, The world was all before him, where to choose? He went on going through jungle and village hills and deserts, and after some time he came to Shirdi in obedience to the command of his Master that he was to go due west from Selu. Shirdi being due west of Selu on the banks of the river Godavari, Sai Baba came to this place. His first appearance at Shirdi was noticed by Nana Chopdhar's aged mother. In 1900 she declared that Baba came there when she was young. Baba came to Shirdi as a young fearless lad full of *Vairagya*, with a bright beaming face when she was there. After that first visit, Baba was frequently moving about from place to place, and this nomadic stage of Baba may be taken to have ended shortly after he returned to Shirdi with Chand Bhai Patel of Dhupkeda, who was his host for a time at Dhupkeda. Even after arriving with that Chand Bhai Patel's marriage party, Baba was rambling into the jungles as an *Aniketana*, a homeless person. Narada¹⁹² says Saints resort to solitude, sunder worldly ties, have no *mamata* or sense of possession and want no reward and¹⁹³ surrender all action to God. They have no homes. Finally Baba took up his

residence at the *Masjid*, later on known as the *Dwarakamayee* even then, If sleeping is the best mark of residence, Baba had no single residence. Baba slept alternate nights at the Mosque and at the *Chavadi*. A Mosque is identified with the Muslim faith. The *Chavadi* is open to all. So Baba even as denoted by his sleeping places was not a Muslim alone but was a Muslim and a cosmopolitan. That is, he could not be confined within the four corners of the Muslim faith. He had to take up his residence at the Mosque for the very excellent reason that the only other temple that he could occupy, namely, the Hindu Khandoba temple, was barred and banned to him by Mahlsapathy the man in charge of it. Baba's first idea was to stay at least for a time at the Khandoba temple outside the village, but when he remarked that it was an excellent place for a hermit like him to reside, Mahlsapathy objected and said that a Muslim as Baba seemed to be would not be allowed to put his foot into that Hindu temple and hence he was driven to choose the mosque. It was Hobson's choice. Here at the outset we find him faced with Hindu-Muslim antagonism. Baba's whole life was the conquest of this antagonism, which is best typified by what happened to Mahlsapathy himself. The very man who objected to Baba putting his foot into Khandoba's temple was the first to worship Baba and make him his *Guru*; so that Baba's feet far from soiling or tainting Khandoba's temple would be sanctifying it. And Baba did visit Khandoba's temple many a time thereafter, for example, when Upasani Maharaj was doing his *japa* or *dhyana* there. Baba had to stay in the Mosque as stated already, as temples are said to be the best place for hermits, and no other temple would accommodate Baba but the Mosque. Allah is the same as Khandoba in Baba's view. It was thus that the dilapidated Mosque became his residence, and perfected his aloofness from the world.

The extent to which the nomadic habits of Baba helped his development has only to be guessed. Such habits have the great advantage of preventing attachment and promoting independence and *Dhriti*, that is courage and self possession which are very essential for a great soul force like Sai Baba. And *Narada Bhakti Sutra*¹⁹² says, He who resorts to lonely places sunders all ties of the world, rises above the three *gunas Satva, Rajas* and *Jamas* and gives up all

sense of possession. *Bhakti* is gained by surrendering all sense pleasure and contact with the world¹⁹⁴. But Nature after all puts a limit to the youth and versatility of the human body. In Baba's case, the nomadic habits must naturally have ceased with his increasing contact with the villagers of Shirdi and with the development of his service to people and their *bhakti* to him. *Bhakti* has different manifestations in youth and old age, as is seen in the lives of many saints. Even in a great saint like Sai Baba, there is a marked difference between the thoughts and activities of youth and those of his advanced age. The exuberance of the emotional side in youth comes out in saints in a slightly different way from that in which it emerges from the worldly people. Baba's pure heart, quite as much as the young lover's heart, required some scope for its manifestation and exercise. Students of the *Chaitanya Marga* would note how in the earlier portion of a *bhakta's* life, the soul comes out in a highly emotional manner. Sobs, tears, raving, dancing, and knocking about in apparently lunatic fashion, are the characteristics of budding *Bhakti*. Srimad Bhagavata enquires¹⁹⁵

Katham Vina Romaharsham dravata chetasa vina

Vina anandascrukalaya seudhyet bhaktya vina ascayah.

that is, Without *the Ashta Bhavas*¹⁹⁶ manifesting the exuberant flow of love towards God, how can the heart get pure? The full force of youth will make the young *bhakta* dance about and give full scope for the inner *bhakti* to work itself through nerves, blood vessels, muscles, throat, and the whole frame. The *Bhagavata* verse means that it is only by yielding to such a complete manifestation of love, the heart can forget the lures of the world. Baba in the earlier years used to visit the *Takia* which was a place for travelling Muslims arriving at Shirdi to rest. At nights, he would tie *salangai* or tinklets to his feet and sing rapturous songs with *kanjira* in hand. He would sing songs of Kabir, Arabic and other songs, giving him full scope for expressing his overflow of love. This trait was in him for many decades after he had stopped his nightly dance at the *Takia* for, in 1910, when Rangari of Thana visited him, he mentioned that the singing of holy songs by the devotees the previous night, drowned him. He expressed that with the words, They abused me'. Rangari said, 'As music goes

on, the *bhakta* will be lost in joy and tears and in various other ways', which Baba entirely endorsed as what he meant by the words? 'They abused me.' Therefore, in the earlier preparation or development of Baba, music played the necessary part, and the many sided perfection of his soul, we may presume, was the one which great mystics have reached through music also. Tyagaraja says,

Geetartamu Sangeetanandamu Nita Ulo Unnadi

which means, O Maruti, the aim of the Bhagavad Gita or of songs and the bliss of Music are within your self, Rama remarks to Mamti. Baba was obviously completely absorbed in the God idea; and that idea takes at one time the form of the dancing and flute playing God Krishna, and at another the form of the fighting Rama. Baba had many of those aspects of God, and developed every power necessary for his life work. As for the subsequent development, it is enough to mention that some milestones appear to be indicated by Baba¹⁹⁷. Baba refers to his obtaining *Sakshatkara* of God and consequently giving up his practice of administering herbs and drugs for the cure of disease, and beginning the administration of only *udhi* and *Asirvada*. We may take it that the perfect *laya* trance of concentration that he enjoyed resulted in *Sakshatkara*. But that cannot be the only flower or fruit that *laya* or trance yields. In the Bhagavata¹⁹⁸, after describing how perfect *laya* is obtained by concentrating on God, Sri Krishna adds that, as part of the results of such *laya*, various *siddhis* accrue to the person enjoying the *laya* or trance concentration. *Laya* makes the human divine at least for the *nonce* and then the human having become divine, the divine powers, capacities and nature naturally stick on to the human. Thus Sri Krishna explains how the various *Ashtaiswaryasiddhis* or eight *siddhis* as part of divine nature pass on to the person who is enjoying the divine nature by *laya*. The other ten, the total number of *siddhis* is 18 are said to be the offspring of *Gunas*, that is various qualities of the *Jiva* and, therefore, their manifestation in the body of the devotee who is having perfect trance or *laya* naturally follows. Baba therefore having had one fruit namely, *Sakshatkara*, had also other fruits, namely, various *siddhis* such as the power of turning water into oil, which is called

Yatha sankalpa Samsiddhih

that is achieving all desires and *Swechcha Marana*, the power to give up life at will referred to in Bhagavata Skanda¹⁹⁹. This power was exhibited by him in 1886 when he told Mahlsapathy that he would leave the body to go and see Allah, but that he might return three days later or might not. The power to return to the body, Resurrection, is another *siddhi*. The power to be anywhere *Apratihatagati* and do whatever one wants are other powers mentioned in the same chapter and Baba exhibited several of these in his dealings with the devotees prior to 1886. Therefore, we may take it that *siddhis* or the extent of *siddhis* alone would not furnish a proper criterion for dividing Baba's life into different periods. It is rather the work which he sought to accomplish with the aid of those powers that ought to be the criterion. Baba upto 1886 was apparently not working for the grand aim of infusing love into all and turning out on a large national scale the approachment of all persons to promote Hindu Muslim unity and other unities. So, 1886 marks an epoch. We may call it the noticeable starting of his Mission.

Sixteen

Baba's Mission

Sai Baba during his sojourn on earth kept himself at various levels and devotees meeting him treated him as occupying various levels at one and the same time, a fact which is well brought out in Justice M.B. Rege's Introduction to Baba's Charters and Sayings. Those levels which might all occur on the same day in any order, included those of the ordinary *poor fakir*, the saint, and the *Paramatma*. And as M.B. Rege points out, after Baba left the body, his devotees' proper way of treating him is as *Paramatma* only, though those accustomed to other *Gurus* may keep on viewing him as a Guardian Angel, as a *Guru* as a good friend, or guide. There is however another level, hidden under these, that of the *Avatar* with a mission.

The term Mission is derived from the Latin root *Mitto* meaning send. So, a missionary is one who is sent with a message or direction by God, and as used in Christian literature, a mission was the most valuable characteristic of the lives of such great Prophets as Moses and Jesus. Jesus's mission was, to absolve mankind from hereditary or original sin, that is, the sin derived by being the

descendants of the first sinners and rebels, Adam and Eve. His death on the cross was considered a sacrifice on behalf of the entire humanity. Other's mission, for example, Moses, was to lead the Jews from captivity in Egypt on towards the Promised Land and also to make laws that the Jews should submit to, and so he proclaimed Laws of the 12 tables. The idea of a missionary is practically that of an agent. In the case of Sai Baba, he declared God has agents everywhere. They have great powers. Baba added, I also have great powers implying thereby, that he also was an agent of God. He also expressly told D.S. Rasane, 'I can do nothing except what God orders'. He did not give a *kupni* to G.G. Narke saying, 'The *Fakir* has not permitted me to give you a *kupni*' that is the robe of the *sanyasi* or *fakir* as G.G. Narke was to be a family man, an earning *grihastha* according to God's plan, and not a beggar. As an agent, he said that he had vast powers, that is, divine powers. The powers and the mission have a close relation. The mission has to be worked through the powers given and the powers are given only for carrying out the mission. Baba had by concentration on God practically every *siddhi* that one can think of, and Srimad Bhagavata²⁰⁰ says 'What power is there that cannot be got by concentration on God with conquest or control of mind and senses and breath?' So, his possession of vast powers both acknowledged and proved, was always utilised for the benefit of mankind, promoting individual benefits that were obvious, seen and well understood, and general benefits which were not so equally obvious or well seen and understood. Now we have to consider the mission of Baba based on the possession of his powers and notice what general benefits were conferred on the country or mankind, though these are not yet obvious to most people.

Proceeding further with the question of the stages in Sai Baba's life we see one marked difference between his life before 1886 and the life thereafter. Before 1886, the main stress of his activities and view appears to be on doing good to those who were near him and connected by *rinanubandha* or prenatal obligations. But *rinanubandha* cannot stop within definite geographical limits. By reason of that principle, people from afar had to benefit, and in working it out, he achieved other things also than doing good to the immediate comers. The

benefits derived by others consist in the development and spread of Sai faith intensively and extensively that is all over the country thus arresting the spread of Atheism and Agnosticism and the unification thereby of *dharma* and religion regardless of existing diversification and divisions of religion, caste and creed. The main benefit is the unification of the Hindu faith within itself and of Islam within itself, and, by purification and refinement of both, the building up of one common central religion or faith that is fitted to be the world faith which has been touched in a previous chapter. Incidentally, India's national problem of unifying conflicting groups is helped to solution. This is referred to as Baba's mission in the daily noon *arati* at Shirdi,

Avatarasi tum Yetam
Dharmatem glanim, Nastikanam
hi tum lavisi Nijabhajani
Bheda na Tatwim Hindu Yavanancha Kahim
Davayasi Jala Punariapi Naradehi
Pahasi Premanem turn, Hindu Yavanamhi
Dhavisati Atmatvanem Vyapaka ha Sai
Jayadev Jayadev.

this means, 'When *Dharma* is ebbing, you incarnate. Even Athiests have faith in you. In principle there is no difference between Hindus and Muslims. To show this, you again came into the world with a human body. You look upon both Hindus and Muslims with equal affection. "This Sai shows himself as All prevading, as *Atman* or Soul of all".

There will be plenty of occasion in the following pages to fully establish the truth of the above. Baba did really promote Hindu Muslim unity, and a separate chapter also may be devoted to the consideration of that in detail. But for the present, we may note that it will be wrong to confine Baba's life to a single achievement and refer to that as the Mission of His life. Baba was a God realized soul, prepared by his *Samartha Sadguru* for the attainment of full divinity and the consequent establishment of himself as a *Samartha Sadguru* to continue the *Guru Parampara*. He had numerous *rinanubandhas* or connections with

innumerable people in former lives, and, when taking up a human body, he naturally had to give the benefit of the former connection to those formerly connected. But this cannot be said to be the main object of his life. The main object of any life is simply the unfolding of the life as part of God's plan. Innumerable benefits may follow from there in addition to the above two pointed out. But the unification of India's two faiths with the erection of a central world religion bulks large enough to make one stress it as the main object of divinity taking shape in a human body. The *Upanishads* followed by the Gita mention the main purpose of such an incarnation, or *Avatar*, as it is called in the *Puranas*. The Bhagavad Gita²⁰¹ says,

*Yada yada hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya Tadatmanam Srujami aham.
Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinascaya cha Dushkritam
Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge.*

these means, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, Whenever righteousness and *dharma* fade and unrighteousness is on the ascent, then, I incarnate. I incarnate, age after age for protecting the good and destroying the evil, and for the establishment of *dharma* or righteousness in the world.

Dharma samsthapana or the establishment of righteousness is a very wide term, and the work of a *Samartha Sadguru* may well be said to be that of establishment of righteousness or maintenance of the universe. Baba was trained by a *Guru* with God realisation or self realisation and divine powers, and was equipped with those powers at the *Diksha*, a potentiality that is gradually to be developed or in full development, and he had to use them to find out who were to be benefited by him merely by reason of previous contact, that is, contact in previous lives, and who were to be crushed out as the oppressors of the good. But incidentally one thing would be clear, that is, when the good are being helped they do not attain merely worldly benefit but also spiritual advantages. They grow more into life, light and love and they absorb more and more of Baba's nature by constantly dwelling in their hearts upon him on account of their love or gratitude towards him. They get more and more like unto him, and, if any of them should

have the capacity, they might develop even into the fullest likeness of Baba. The incidental consequence of the development of such virtues and superior nature, is to attract others. Both good and evil are infectious. Persons who lead highly moral lives naturally affect their neighbourhood, and all persons that come in contact with them rise in their grade of morality and spiritually. Some of them may get into the position of *Gurus* for others. Thus, the line of *Guruship* would be continued from Baba through these on several grades, grade after grade, though none of the latter may be *Samartha Sadgurus*. It is exactly like a dynamo attracting some pieces of iron and thereby converting them into magnets. Other pieces of iron or steel come near the first mentioned pieces and get by contact their properties which are really the properties of the original dynamo. Thus we see one powerful magnet drawing to it needles in succession, and the central magnet is responsible for all the remotely attracted needles also. The *Avatar* saint may also be likened to the little leaven in the mass of dough or better still, to the powerful Sun. The *Avataric* rays are extended in all directions like the rays of the Sun. In this very process, He is establishing *dharma* and eradicating *adharma*. In the course of the eradication of *adharma*, meaningless hostilities and wicked hatred often cloaking themselves under cover of religion are removed and thus internecine fights between religion and religion tend to disappear when true religion like Baba's gets to be spread around. Every great soul working like Baba on principles of contact with the one loving, eternal Father of All must naturally diffuse such love and avoidance of hatred to even the remotest persons that come in contact with him. Therefore, Baba's influence tends more and more to the removal of hatred and the spread of mutual love between religions and groups, economic groups and other groups also. Baba's functions may therefore be well described as bringing the Hindu and Muslim units in India together by showing them that they are all working under one common loving Father, and that their differences are immaterial and undeserving of any stress. Baba has done this and is doing it artistically and artfully without drawing critics attention to it, and this will be described at length later on as a process that goes on generation after generation and age after age, very little perceived before fruition.

Baba's main work was that of a *Samartha Sadguru* who had to diffuse religion and help the good and remove the evil that oppressed the good. Even before 1886 he was possessed of vast powers used for this purpose. In 1886, he had a small body of worshippers who might all have been benefited both temporally and spiritually by reason of *poorva rinanubandha* or present contact. But was his life work to end with that petty group? One day in 1886 Baba told Mahlsapathy who was by his side, '*Arre Bhagat*, I am going to *Allah*. You had better guard this body for three days. If I return thereafter, I will look after the body. If I do not you may thereafter have this body interred in that place' pointing to something near the *gode neem*. After saying that, Baba reclined on Mahlsapathy and was soon a corpse. Breathing stopped. The body heat disappeared. The colour of the body also turned livid. Soon the rumour got round that Baba was dead. The village officers as well as the police came. An inquest was held. An inquest report was drawn up wherein it was said that Baba was dead. The Police Officers wanted Mahlsapathy to bury the corpse as it should not remain in the Mosque. But Mahlsapathy quoted to them Baba's own words saying that he might return in three days. The Police Officers and others who obviously did not believe revival possible tried to induce Mahlsapathy to change his mind. But he stuck to his guns and pointed out that Baba was a *Yogi* of wonderful powers and that it was possible for such persons to return to life after three days. The police thought ultimately that it was safer to leave the responsibility of keeping the body for three days with Mahlsapathy and other devotees of Baba. the body remained there for three days, a perfect corpse, no sign of life at all being seen. But after three days suddenly a finger of Baba began to move. Then his eyes opened. Then he sat up with breath and all. After this, for 32 years he led a normal life, and it was only in 1918 his life finally passed out of his body. His body was thereafter interred in its present place, the Buty Wada.

What did the passing away from earthly life and the return to it in 1886 mean? Baba evidently returned to the world because more of the *prarabda* of the Sai body that is the original intention of his coming into this body, his mission,

remained unfulfilled, and therefore he had to get back into the same body to work out the remaining portion of the present life. This is a noticeable or remarkable feature of his life, that is, leaving the body and returning to it, which we do not find²⁰² ordinarily in other cases. Now what was the main thing that he did after his return? By observing the nature and results of his activities after return, we can easily see why he returned to the body in 1886. If he had left the body finally in 1886, no person in India, certainly not in the South and in the other States, and not even in Bombay or Maharashtra, nor even in the other parts of Ahmednagar District, would have heard about him or felt his influence, and all the grand work of his that is being described in this book would never have taken place. The essential part of Baba's life is that which comes after 1886, perhaps that which is yet taking shape though this is grounded upon the earlier part, especially upon the training he had and the work he went through in the earlier stages. The *Guru's* training and the further concentration of his entire soul upon the *Guru* in solitude all ripened this plant called Sai Baba so that it might produce an exuberance of flower and fruit. That flower and fruit we have partly and roughly described in this book already and more of it is to follow. We shall now point out, after careful study and observation the first prominent flower or fruit that the Sai tree *Kalpataru* produced, ignoring for the present the earlier petty pioneers like Gopal Rao Gundu, Revenue Inspector. That first flower or fruit is Narayan Govind Chandorkar. He may be termed appropriately the first apostle or Saint Peter of Baba. We shall see how Baba sent for him. Sri N.G. Chandorkar was Personal Assistant to the Collector of Ahmednagar, and was camping at Kopergaon for *jamabandi* that is Land Revenue Settlement work. All *karnams* of the taluk had to attend at the *Jamabandi*, and the Shirdi *karnam* also had to attend. No one left Shirdi without permission of Baba, as the experience of everyone was that by leaving with Baba's permission he was safe, and leaving without permission he ran into many dangers. So the Shirdi *karnam*, Appa Kulkarni, went to Baba and asked him leave to go to Kopergaon for *jamabandi* work, as the Personal Assistant to the Collector Narayan Govind Chandorkar was there.

Baba gave him leave, and added, 'Tell your Nana to come here'. Nana is the contracted form of Narayan which can be used only by equals moving on intimate terms. Appa Kulkarni was astounded at the message. He considered that he was too insignificant a person, and that Baba also though a Weird Being of the village was too insignificant to invite the Deputy Collector, a high Gazetted Officer of the Government. But Baba insisted and told him that he might inform the Deputy Collector that it was Baba who invited him. With great diffidence the *karnam* at the close of the day approached the Deputy Collector and told him that Sai Baba, a *fakir* of Shirdi, invited him to come to Shirdi. Chandorkar was astounded. He thought that it could not possibly be, and told the *karnam* that he was a stranger to the *fakir* and the *fakir* was a stranger to him, and that he, the *karnam*, must have some purpose of his own to invite him to his village. In spite of the *karnam's* protests, Chandorkar would not believe him and sent him away. When the *Karnam* reported his failure to Baba, Baba repeated the invitation, and again the *karnam* with considerable diffidence approached the Deputy Collector the second day and repeated the invitation. The second invitation had the same fate and for the same reasons as the first. That again was reported to Baba, and like the Prophetess Sibyl of Rome, Baba tried a third time and with success. Baba pressed the hesitating *karnam* to repeat the invitation for the third time. This time the invitation had effect. Nana Chandorkar thought that there must be something in it, and so he told the *karnam* that he would visit Shirdi but not immediately. Chandorkar did keep his promise. Sometime after going to Ahmednagar, he did go and pay a visit to Shirdi. After making a present of sugarcandy and almond with some reverence to Baba, Chandorkar asked Baba whether it was true that he sent for him, and when that was admitted, why had he sent for him. Baba said, 'There are thousands of persons in this world, and do I send for them all? Should there not be some special reason why you alone should be sent for?' Chandorkar said that he was unable to see any special reason. Then Baba made the solemn statement, 'You and I have been connected with each other in four former births. I now invite you to come and again have your contact. When leisure serves, you may come'.

Chandorkar was surprised by this statement, and in any case was not fully impressed. He left the place with the impression that he need not return to Shirdi. But he did come, details of which are found elsewhere and began his grand work of carrying on propaganda for Baba. With that, Baba's mission and life, and personality enter on a new stage.

Seventeen

Nature and functions of Baba

When discussing the personality we found it a very nebulous though familiar term used about both saints and ordinary persons. When we talk of nature, that is, nature of particular beings, we appear to have something more definite than when talking of personalities. But the difference is rather elusive and nominal than real. The word nature is very broad and is applied not merely to personalities, human or other, but also to everything else in the Universe. We talk of the nature of the elements, of various entities and objects dealt with in the material sciences, for example the nature of hydrochloric acid or of sulphuric acid or of oxygen, when what we really mean is the way in which they act in matters of chemical combination, and we talk of the nature of our judgements. Anyhow nature is applied to inanimate objects and abstractions. We shall now exclude the vegetable kingdom and even the animal kingdom. Monkeys, cats, birds, have their nature but we are just now concerned with the nature of higher beings namely, men, angels, and God or gods. *Satpurushas*, that is powerful God Realisers, for instance, are said to have a particular nature. Here we notice the constant confusion between power, modes of action due to power, and nature of a being. Power is not the supreme feature in nature, though part of it, that is, though nature might largely depend upon the possession or absence of power, power is the first item we think of when talking of *siddhas*, for instance. But from the bare possession of power, the nature of all *siddhas* cannot be determined, as power may be used for good, evil or indifferent purposes. But a *Samartha Sadguru*, who is a *Satpurusha* undertaking the duties of a *Sadguru* is not merely clothed with power but with other attributes and functions, and the nature of a *Samartha Sadguru* can be and must be discussed in dealing with a life of a

saint like Sai Baba who was undoubtedly a *Samartha Sadguru*. The nature of angels, of gods and goddesses, is constantly mentioned in Hindu religious literature, and resembles the nature of saints. Nature depends upon power first, upon position or relation to other entities next, and thirdly upon the attitude of any particular self towards the surroundings, in which term surroundings we have to include God also. The nature of men in general has been discussed in books of Ethics, Theology, Sociology, Anthropology and Biology. On the basis of general humanity, one might begin to form an idea of the basis of a particular species of human beings known as saints and amongst them, a further subdivision known as *Samartha Sadgurus* like Sai Baba.

Nature refers to the way in which a particular being acts and is understood by others. Kindness, cruelty, serviceability, tolerance and sympathy are said to be parts of nature, and these refer to the relations between a self and its surroundings. In the case of saints, the relation is generally that of a beneficent superior entity dealing with inferiors that may crave contact with a view to protection. In developing one's contact with externals, it is not merely one's nature that decides but also function. Any entity along with others forms part of a joint whole or a system, and functions are assigned by Providence to each part. So the saint has some functions to fulfil in society and the question what these functions are naturally arises. These functions are closely connected with and in fact dependent upon the nature of the saint, and his surroundings and as a rule the greater the power, the greater and wider the responsibilities and functions.

So far we have been dealing with general statements, but what is more important to us here is the application of these general statements to our particular case, namely, Sai Baba. The question is asked, What was and what is Baba's nature? People considered that he had one nature, when he was in the flesh, and now that he has passed away from the flesh, he has another nature. Let us first take for consideration the nature of Baba as understood by those who came in contact with him when in the flesh, that is before his *Mahasamadhi*. Here there is a puzzle, persons with a crude understanding took him to be a mere

man, an odd *fakir*. See what happened to Sri Krishna. He says in the Bhagavad Gita,

Na mam Dushkritino Mudhah
Prapdyante Narathamah
Mayaya apahritajnanah
Asuram bhavam ascritah II³⁰³

Here it is pointed out that men following evil courses are obviously fools with an *Asuric* nature. They can neither understand divinity in Krishna nor surrender to him. Their *Maya* is too strong for any clear vision.

Avyaktam Vyaktim apannam
Manyante maam abuddhayah
Param Bhavam ajanantah
mama avyayam anuttamam²⁰⁴

It is explained that they can only take superficial views and can see in Krishna merely a human personality and cannot dive within to see that He is the unborn and unique *Para Brahman*.

Na aham prakaschah sarvasya
Yogamaya samavritah
Mudho ayam na abijanati
Loko maam Ajam avyayam²⁰⁵

The same is stressed here. *Maya* of God, by which the Krishna form was taken is a screen, the mass can not see through. They cannot know Him as the Unborn and Undying, that is the Supreme beyond birth and death²⁰⁶.

It is in Bhagavad Gita²⁰⁷ that mention is made as to who can know Sri Krishna to be the Supreme. It is the refined lofty souls, of *Daivi Prakriti*, that is divine nature as fully described in Bhagavad Gita²⁰⁸.

Avajananti maam mudhah Manushim Tanumasritam
Param Bhavam ajanantah mama Bhuta maheswaram²⁰⁶

Sri Krishna says,

Mahatmanas tu maam Partha
Daivim Prakriti masritah

Bhaajanti ananya Manasaa

Jnatvaa Bhutadim Avyayam II ²⁰⁷

that is, That the deluded persons treat him as a mere man, because *Param Bhavam Ajantah*, they were ignorant of his real essence and his identity with the Supreme Self or *Paramatma*, and²⁰⁷, that great souls recognise him as the Imperishable Source of All and worship Him solely fixed on Him, and that is due to their *Daivi Prakriti* that is godly nature. What happened to Sri Krishna is what happened to Sri Sai Baba also. The vast mass took him to be a mere man, a begging *fakir* who was putting up in the Shirdi Mosque. And his nature was deduced from the premise that he was a beggar intent on getting his food and was wasting his time doing nothing useful to anybody. This was the exact opposite of the truth. But the mass did not know the truth at first. Others more refined and sensitive who came into closer contact and had eyes to see the truth were the hermits like Devdas who noticed that Baba was a saint of rare merit. Persons like Ganga Gir Bua of *Punthamba* treated Baba as something very precious, a gem without expressing in what way he was precious. Good souls like Mahlsapathy began to perceive the high moral and spiritual position that Baba occupied through his perfect selfless acts, his equal minded beneficence and freedom from ordinary reactions like greed and anger, and began to serve him and wait on him. Other classes of persons came to him finding that he had certain powers of discovering the truth, that is powers like clairvoyance, clairaudience, television, omnivision, knowledge of the past and future and wished to benefit thereby. Each of these understood his nature differently from others. The biographer of Sai Baba has to give a gist of a fairly correct understanding of Baba's nature by all these classes.

The first point, the point of greatest interest and importance in the history of Sri Sai Baba is the mass view point, that is of the impulsive, unsophisticated souls who learnt of his excellence and powers, began to worship him as God, and placed utter and absolute reliance upon him for all their needs. These expressly declared him to be God and would not brook contradiction of that view either by Baba or by anyone else. A Bandra youth was asked by Baba to attend a *pothi*

scripture study class where saints were discussed and dissected and some were declared to have a few definite powers which, however, would not make them God. That youth was greatly disgusted and went to Baba and complained that the *pothi* readers were defaming Baba by saying that he was not God. Baba then said, What is the harm in that? I am only a *fakir*. I am not God. Who can compare with God? The question or simple issue therefore arises Whether Baba was God or not. Many acting upon the rules of procedure or Law of evidence would say that an admission by Baba that he was not God, being an admission against one's own interest is conclusive proof against him that he was not God. But the Bandra youth was not a lawyer of that description. He waited awhile, and suddenly Baba blurted out when talking to some one thanking him, for the marvellous rescue from a very serious crisis or accident, 'What am I to do? I spread four, four hands at a time to save my devotees. I will not allow any harm to befall them'. The youth at once said, 'Baba just now you said that you were only a *fakir*. How can you have four hands?' Baba gave him a smile of approval. Four hands is typical of Godhead. The youth, therefore, was more firmly convinced than ever from this admission of Baba that he had four hands and therefore he was God. Godhead is not easy to define. So when the question is put point blank, 'Is Baba God or not God' the answers are quick, varied and depend upon the answerer's stock of information, attitude towards life, and contact with higher beings including saints, angels, and gods. For our purpose, we may take it that when a person is worshipped with the fullest feeling that God is in him or that he is God and when benefits ensue as they should, the procedure is obviously right. Baba has stood this test for scores of years and on innumerable occasions and to use a very expressive but vulgar argument, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Baba must be treated as God, for by treating him so, persons found and find that they derived and derive adequate benefit, the same benefit as they would derive by worshipping God. This is sufficient proof that Baba was and is God. Many acted and act on that faith. A vast number have acted on this faith and derived confirmatory experience during his life time and are acting now also, that is proof. Myriads affirmed and reaffirm, Baba was God

and Baba is God. This is the unmistakable position, and yet what are we to do with the other statement made by Baba that he is not God? Baba made a very similar statement when one Mr. G.S. Curtis, Revenue Commissioner of Bombay, wanted to do Shirdi and do Baba, just as people do Rome and do the Pope because Shirdi and Baba had got well known to the public by that time in 1917. Baba expressed utter contempt and said, Why do these rascals come? I am only an ordinary human being with normal limbs and organs. Baba said, 'What is there to see in me? I am only a *fakir*'. Here Baba was referring to the attitude of Mr. Curtis and his set who thought only of Baba's and Shirdi's external appearance and that he was something like a Lion in the Zoo to be seen out of curiosity. Baba was not a monster or a fit subject for idle curiosity. There was nothing special to be seen in him with the ordinary eyes. The special features of Baba should be seen not with the ordinary eyes but with the eye of devotion and love. Seen with ordinary eyes, Baba was a man and a poor *fakir* living in a dilapidated Mosque, but seen with the eye of devotion, Baba was God or a guardian Angel.

Soda Sannihitam Gudham,
bhaktya maam drakshyate Bhavan

that is, the eye of devotion will see him as an unseen but ever near guardian of the *ankita* devotee.

It is exactly the same with God in other forms and other names also. Take for instance Tirupati Venkatesa which is but a localised and particular form of the Supreme. A person who goes to Tirupati and sees the holy image with the eye of geologist absolutely without any touch of devotion, would only note the species of rock to which the Tirupati Venkatesa image would belong, and would certainly deny that there is any God in that stone. But to the mass of highly devout persons who pour out their souls in love and devotion to Tirupati Venkatesa in the presence of that image, Venkatesa is not a stone at all. The stone is wholly forgotten. Venkatesa is God, the fullest embodiment of mercy and love ever anxious and ever ready to help His devotee and this alone is the true devotee's

feeling. It is not sanctified images alone that thus serve as symbols of the Divine. Saints also are such symbols.

God is not one of the terms found in the material sciences and is not capable of exact definition. It is a term used by persons dealing with emotion and unseen entities and acting in ways which are not the ways of material science. Hence whether anything is or not God, cannot be demonstrated scientifically to the satisfaction of anyone who insists upon satisfaction on the lines of science and logic. But for practical purposes, the term God has a definite meaning and for purpose of this, we must depend upon the reader's popular idea of God. On that basis we proceed. Subtle distinctions as to whether a person with a few powers, usually termed divine powers or *siddhis*, is to be treated as God or not, we shall avoid. In the Bhagavad Gita²⁰⁹, Sri Krishna recounts various embodiments of power or greatness which signify Godhead to the worshipper and which may be used by him for purposes of meditation and worship. But Gita also adds that every soul is a fraction of the Primordial force called God, that is an *Amsa* of God

Mamai vamso Jivaloke Jivabhutah Sanatanah
that is, Every *Jiva* or soul is an eternal part of myself²¹⁰. Therefore, every creature having consciousness of a Self is a spark of God and may therefore be treated either as God or as an *Avatar* of God. *Taittiriya Upanishad* commands or recommends the worship of God in the Parents, the Teacher *Acharya* or *Guru* and the Guests. Very often however term the *Avatar* is restricted only to *Vibhutis* that is, entities wherein there is a superabundance and exhibition of power, greatness and splendour as that term is used in the Bhagavad Gita²¹¹ Lord Krishna says:

Yadyad Vibhutimat Satvam
Srimad Urjitam Evava
Tat Tat Eva Avagachchatvam
Mama Tejo Amsa Sambhavam

that is, whatever is superb and excellent and powerful, know it to be a part of My splendour.

In practice, it is the latter usage that prevails. Referring to all creatures as God or *Avatar* causes only confusion, however useful it may be for the practice by serious *sadhakas* to see God in all creatures. Though it is good for children to worship parents and wives to worship husbands, the parents and the husbands are not God to the public. In this chapter, we shall use the term God to mean *Vibhuti* of God that is, one who can be worshipped with benefit by any one, unlike parents and husbands who are to be worshipped by their children or wives only. Using it in that sense, the question, Is Sai Baba of Shirdi God or not, can only have one answer, which is, that he is certainly God or a *Vibhuti*. Those who know enough facts about him find that he knows everything everywhere at any time, that he has power to do anything everywhere, that he has power to control the movements and the hearts of creatures, and even the elements of nature like rain and fire, that he had a mastery of the knowledge of the past, present, and future, even innumerable centuries away from the present, and that he had the highest moral principles of selflessness, service and love to all including the meanest beings. So they treat him as God, for our notion of God is one with vast unlimited power equally listening to the prayers of all and responding to all as a Universal Mother should do. God is the Universal Soul and the Universal Mother. Therefore, Sai Baba was and is rightly termed God and worshipped as God by those who noted his *Antaryamitwa* which means acting as the soul of various creatures. And he was not termed God by those who did not have such experience. So Baba was both God and not God, just as Tirupati Venkatesa is both God and not God. Venkatesa is God to the vast mass of Hindus but is nothing to an Australian or to a Chinese.

A biography of a saint like Baba must be highly illuminating, elevating, inspiring, and in every way practical. Taking the question of practicality, we note the fact that a very wonderful and unique personality like Sai Baba is yet unknown even to many parts of Maharashtra and Southern India, the two States where he is best known, while he is hardly sufficiently known to other States or Countries outside India. There is absolutely no reason why this state of affairs should continue. It is not the wish of Baba to hide his light under a bushel, but to

place it on a hill top so that everyone all around may share the benefits and have light, life and love. The natural course of things, the *Asuric bhava* of people prevent their understanding Sai Baba, has made the progress of knowledge of Baba very slow, but henceforth there can be no reason why those who have higher and refined natures in all parts of the country and elsewhere should not immediately be apprised of all the facts about Baba, atleast of the important fact throwing real light upon his *nature* and the benefits that it confers on those approaching him. Just as in the mango season, mangoes go around the whole country, similarly this is the Baba season and everyone can benefit by Baba. This season is provided by Providence for greater knowledge about Baba so that all people may approach him for benefit either individual, political, social, spiritual, or of other sorts. There is a very vast field for propaganda, though unfortunately that term has fallen into bad odour on account of the absolute lack of conscience in the manner in which diplomacy is carried on and propaganda is another name for deliberate, unjustifiable, and selfish lying of the worst sort in order to delude and ruin others. But the original sense of the word ought to be restored and everyone must feel that he has a duty to propagate and publish all useful and inspiring facts such as those that have been already set forth about Baba herein and may be set out in the latter portions of this book. A great soul like Baba appears in this world in order that his life, light and love, may be absorbed by all and not only by particular sections or classes or individuals. Hence the question we have set out to discuss in this chapter as to the nature of Baba may be easily dealt with for purposes of propaganda. Baba is undoubtedly a beneficent universal power responding to prayer, responding to appeals of every sort by those who are sincere, true, loyal and faithful. This is our conception of our God and Baba answers to that conception and stands the test at the hands of every sincere and honest soul. He will prove himself to be divine and the bestower of innumerable divine blessings to everyone that approaches him. Therefore without further discussion of the question as to whether Baba is God or is not God, we shall deal with it as Sri Krishna dealt with the question of his being viewed as God in the Bhagavad Gita²¹². Low natures deluded by *Maya* and driven by their own low

impulses to a life of sin and vice, can never see beneath the surface, and are content to know the outside or the external and treat Baba or Krishna as a mere human being. But persons who have a fraction at least of *Daivi Prakriti*, who can put down the impulses of their lower nature and yield more and more of power to their altruistic and other noble impulses, will get their natures more and more refined and will be able to perceive Krishna's and Baba's real nature. As stated in *Srimad Bhagavata* nothing more is needed as a *sadhana* to achieve this purpose than mere listening to accounts of Sri Krishna and Baba. Sri Krishna's in *Bhagavata* and Baba's in this biography and in the numerous books on Baba which can be got in any language²¹³.

For purposes of fuller treatment of this subject, let us take the alternative that any particular reader is not able to treat Baba as God. Still, is there any use he can make of the facts about Baba contained herein or in other books? The answer is undoubtedly in the affirmative. We are not interested in Theology or in development of religions as religions. We are concerned solely with souls as such and with benefits to humanity at large. That is a grand enough object for anyone to concentrate all his energies on. Baba's great purpose in life was to benefit humanity. Many a person who for some reason or other is unable to treat Baba as God is still able enough to perceive some of the highest elements in Baba such as his miraculous power and beneficence and approach him either for aid or for any other purpose, and will undoubtedly derive all round temporal and spiritual benefit. We should certainly not dissuade any person who thinks that Baba is a sort of powerful saint though not God from approaching him for obtaining various temporal benefits, for example urgent relief from various troubles that make life bitter. There are numerous persons of this sort who want very urgent relief and Baba is the person who will grant the relief to them. The method of obtaining such relief can be easily discovered by going through books on Baba. Generally by reading about Baba, more information is obtained, as also faith, but such faith need not be faith, in him as God, but faith in him as a *Sadguru* or as a *Satpurusha*, or simply as a *Mahatma*, will suffice. That will benefit the public. Such is Baba's nature.

From the above one can see that the nature and functions of Baba can be viewed in so many different ways. First, those who are able to view him as God have one set of ideas about his nature and functions. This set may be all embracing, as God's nature and God's functions are so vast and all embracing. If God is defined as *Brahman* in the *Upanishadic dictum*

Sarvam Kalvidam Brahma

that is, All this in the Universe is *Brahman* or God, then the functions of God are the functions of everything in the Universe and, therefore, infinite and undefinable. But many may object to such a wide definition of God, especially our Christian and *Madhva* brethren for example, who wish to contrast and restrict God, who would say that God should not be demeaned and identified with so many low, worthless, and meanest things in the world. God is excellence, purity, and all nobility, the height of *sattvic* quality, and should not be degraded to the level of highly *rajasic* and highly *tamasic* entities, such as the devil or *Satan* is in Christian conception. These friends of ours would say that God is inside or immanent in all such low creatures but is not identical with them. This may puzzle others. But whatever is the correct theological view which we need not discuss here, we can take even our Christian and *Madhva* conceptions of divinity and find an almost unlimited field for our sketching out the nature and functions of God or of a divine person like Sai Baba. In a treatise like this, it is impossible to attempt even a rough outline of all the excellences of divine personalities, and we must content ourselves with just sketching out a few prominent features, just as in the *Bhagavad Gita*²⁰⁹ where Arjuna asks Sri Krishna, 'What are the excellent manifestations of God', Sri Krishna gives two or three dozens of illustrations and then says that a complete list is impossible, and He winds up with the stanza

Yadyad Vibhutimat Satvam

that is, Wherever there is nobility, splendour, success, fortune on an unprecedented scale, feel God is there.

We appeal to persons with such qualities, for help in our difficulties. Sai, being clothed with such divine splendour, is appealed to for aid by persons in trouble and badly in need of help. We may, therefore, close this chapter about

nature and functions, with the remark that such nature and functions will be beaming out almost everywhere in this book, especially in later chapters, where we sketch Baba's dealings with a few prominent devotees and refer to his achievements in various fields including the occasion of death and provision of *Sadgati*.

Sadgati is deemed to be almost the highest help which any one can have. What is this life for? What are we to do with it before Death's icy fingers wipe out our life, and at the moment when the actual wiping is going on? This is a matter of supreme interest dealt with in a special chapter devoted to it, and the function of Baba in that matter would be regarded as his most important function by many. After all according to *Guru Gita*, that help is only one of the items of help which the *Samartha Sadguru* like Sai Baba confers upon his surrendered devotees. All persons do not think alike and persons especially with a phlegmatic or sanguine temperament steeped in the world's quest of joy and success may consider various other matters as of greater interest than *Sadgati*. Highly advanced souls, unruffled by loss and gain also may take the same view. To them also we may point out that other matters also are dealt with in this book, though not arranged in a strictly scientific fashion. We may wind up this chapter on nature and functions of Baba with one observation.

Ye yatha mam Prapadyante

Tam Stathaiva Bhajam Yaham^{2U}

This means, In whatever way people approach Me, in the same way I respond to their appeals, says Sri Krishna. Baba's many-sided nature enables him to deal suitably with an infinite variety of people of all castes, creeds, ages, and mentalities approaching him for their various purposes. This suiting to their needs and answering their needs, is by no means the least important function of Baba. Baba's infinite possibilities cannot be exhausted by human science and skill. Let us each bite off only what we can chew and digest.

Eighteen

Baba's Love of Devotees and Appreciation of Prema

Baba has stated that he loved devotion *and prema*, that is, devotion at its highest and intensest form. This has also been shown in action by him²¹⁵. In this chapter we may deal with these. But as a preliminary, the question may be raised whether this love of devotees and *prema* may not be conflicting with His *samatva* or equality. Students of the Gita would have been puzzled by Sri Krishna's statement²¹⁶

Samoham Sarva Bhuteshu
Name Dweshyo Asti Napriyah
Yebhajanti tu mam bhaktya
Mayi te teshu cha Api aham

this means, I am the same to all creatures. There is no one whom I hate as my enemy and no one who is dear to me. Those who devoutly worship Me, they are in Me and I am in them. Now with reference to the statement that Sri Krishna has no *priyah* or dear to me, *Priyo Asi me*²¹⁷

Manmana bhava Madbhakto
Madyaji Mam Namas Kuru
Mameva Eshyasi Satyam te
Pratijane Priyo Asi me.

this means, Let Your mind rest on Me. Have devotion to Me. Worship Me. Prostrate to me. You will come to Me. This truly I affirm. You are dear to me. Again, in the same chapter, the words are,

Nacha Tasmad Manushyeshu Kaschin Priya Krit tamah
Bhavita Nachame Tasmad Anyah Priyataro Bhuv²¹⁸

this means, There is no one dearer to Me than one who repeats the Gita to others. These and other stanzas in the Gita show that Sri Krishna repeatedly says, Arjuna is dear to Me. And yet he has said, There is no one dear to Me, and there is no one hateful to Me. Is there any conflict here, and, if so, is the conflict only apparent or real, between the above said statements? The answer to this question is obtained by examining the words of each verse. Sri Krishna first states the general proposition that He as God is equally inclined to help all and

favour all. But as for an enemy, there is no one who can be styled his enemy, because, to be an enemy, one must be in a position to stand against Sri Krishna. Yet, there are persons who fancy they can stand against Sri Krishna, and in their fancy they may be enemies, but in reality, they cannot be counted as enemies. A person who begins to hate Sri Krishna like *Kamsa* ends being absorbed by Him, just like the dear ones and *bhaktas* of Sri Krishna. The primary proposition that at the outset, all are in the same position towards God, gets modified by the subsequent actions of various people,

Ye Bhajanti tu Mam Bhaktya

Those who with deep devotion direct their minds to Me, they are in Me and I am in them, says Sri Krishna. If He is in them and they are in Him, they are certainly His *priyas* or friends. Yet this is not a contradiction of the earlier statement. It is a natural law that the human mind partakes of what it dwells upon. If we dwell upon love for Sri Krishna and view him as a friend and protector, then the ideas of love, friendship, and protection of Sri Krishna, all roll up into one and seize the thinking soul. The *Jiva* immerses in those thoughts and loses hold of other thoughts, especially, thoughts in a contrary direction, and, therefore, the *Jiva* turns into what it thinks of. This is a fact of psychological science, and there is nothing in it which contradicts Sri Krishna's statement that he has no loved ones and no enemies. Sri Krishna is the *Antaryami* or soul within and *Prakriti* nature of all, and acts like a mirror. If you laugh at a mirror, you get back a laugh. If you turn a frowning face at a mirror, you get back a frowning face. If we indulge constantly in hatred, like *Kamsa*, and hate Sri Krishna, then we constitute ourselves into Sri Krishna's enemies. Ultimately, however, hatred does not survive. It is swallowed up in the general law of love. That is how *Ravana*, *Kamsa* and others got quick salvation and became part of God, may be earlier than many weak-willed persons. What has been stated about Sri Krishna applies also to Sri Sai. He was once asked by a *Prarthana Samajist*, 'Shall I ask you a question?', 'Yes', said Baba. The *Prarthana Samajist* asked, 'Do you look upon all people equally?' Then Baba said, 'Yes, I look upon all equally'. It requires some sense to ask a question. The point is that Baba had several persons to whom he

showed great consideration, for example Nana Chandorkar, Tatya Patil, M.B. Rege and others just as Sri Krishna showed special affection for Arjuna. Baba distinctly stated that he was anxious to help Chandorkar, Patil and Rege, and did actually help them. Yet, Baba has said that he is impartial and does not prefer one to another. What is the explanation? The same as in Sri Krishna's case. If any one has previously been loving Baba and getting attached to him with repeated efforts, the natural law of psychology and of ethics makes Baba respond to him more vigorously and constantly than to others. Thus he seems to favour those persons who have been constantly drawn to him in the past. Nana Chandorkar had been his *sisya* for *fourjanmas*, and the affection of four *janmas* cannot go for nothing. That is why he sends for Chandorkar when he has not sent for any one else in the world. Similarly he takes the *naivedya* of Mrs. Khaparde first without touching any of the previously offered ones, because for several *janmas*, one after another, she has been anxiously and lovingly taking up *naivedyas* and giving milk and food to him²¹⁹. Baba said, The food she gives me is sweet, with her love. Similarly towards Tatya Patil, Baba showed considerable concern, and helped him to get a large income on which income-tax was levied. He was well known to be the pet of Baba. The reason was what Baba himself gave out and what everybody knew. Tatya Patil's parents were greatly attached to Baba from the very beginning of Baba's visit to Shirdi when he had made no name and exhibited no powers. Tatya Patil's mother would run into the jungles taking food in her hand to feed Baba, a self-forgetful *fakir*, who did not care for his food. She was looking after Baba with so much love even in this *janma*. Baba's nature like *Bhisma's* nature had gratitude as its bedrock, and he could never forget such ardent and loving service. He also explained that Tatya's mother was his sister in several previous *janmas*, and she was always feeding him. Therefore, Tatya, being a son of his sister of so many *janmas*, was expressly called by Baba his Nephew, and Tatya always called Baba his *Mama*, that is, maternal uncle. The effects of so many *janmas* cannot be forgotten or brushed aside, and that is why Baba paid so much attention to Tatya. Tatya's own conduct towards Baba was also one of great surrender and attachment.

Tatya used to sleep in the Mosque along with Baba and Mahlsapathy for many years, that is as long as he was a bachelor, and Baba used to attend to his body and soul. Baba would massage his legs, make passes over his head and see that he did not come to grief. Tatya was a person of no education, and would ordinarily get easily ruined in the countryside. But Baba's company kept him up to a pretty high mark of culture and morality, and thus saved him from spiritual and moral shipwreck. There were also factions in the village, and bickerings of various sorts were common. Baba occasionally helped Tatya even in those bickerings where he had sufficient reason. He would help him even with *chamatkars*, that is super normal powers. Some men of Tatya's faction like Raghu were charged before the Kopergaon Magistrate for outraging the modesty of a *Marwadi* woman. On the evidence of six eye witnesses, Raghu and his set were all sentenced to imprisonment. This was the result of faction. The case was not true. When Raghu was crying in the Ahmednagar Jail, Baba appeared to him in a dream and told him that he would be released quickly. Tatya took up the appeal papers first to some lawyers in Ahmednagar who thought that the case was too strong to have any success in appeal. But when the papers were taken to Baba, Baba ordered the papers to be taken to Bhav, S.B. Dhumal, Pleader of Nasik, to be presented by him with an appeal memo before the Ahmednagar District Magistrate. Baba by a wonderful *chamatkar* gripped the mind of the District Magistrate and made him acquit Tatya's whole set of men, Raghu and others without sending for the papers or reading the judgement or the appeal memo, or issuing notice to the respondent. This might be considered to be a very strong piece of evidence showing Baba's love of Tatya leading to the disregard of Law. That is true. But still, if Baba secured justice without caring for and observing the formalities in a special case, there seems to be nothing wrong in it, for in the annals of civilian trials, there may be several extraordinary instances showing disregard of laws of evidence and procedure. Coming back to the question of Baba's love for his devotees, his love for Rege was the return of a powerful love by the young Rege to him. In Rege's vision, Sri Narayana appeared and pointed out the figure of Baba to him as his *Guru*. In a vision Baba

had told Rege that he was bound to him and that he Rege, need now bow to Him. On the first day of Rege's visit at Shirdi, Baba appeared to give Rege a rebuff, but told him in the afternoon that Rege was his child, and embraced him. He loved Rege and encouraged Rege, because Rege's *bhava* was *Putra*, that is, the child of Baba. Baba offered to give any promotion that Rege wanted or anything else that he wanted. But Rege wanted only that *janma* after *janma*, Baba should be with him. He cared for nothing else. That is the proof of his strong affection. *Aham bhakta Paradenah* that is, I am subjugated by the love of my devotee is a statement not merely of Narayana but also of Sai. Baba also said, If one ever dwells on me in his mind and will not even taste food before offering it to me, I am his slave. So also if he hungers and thirsts after me, and treats all else as unimportant.²²⁰

I am *bhaktaparadheena* the bond slave of my devotee. I love devotion²²¹. He who withdraws his heart from wife, child, and parents and loves me is My real lover and he merges in Me like a river in the sea²²².

Sai Baba was merged in God and, therefore, his reactions to *bhakti* are exactly the reactions of God as shown in Srimad Bhagavata and Bhagavad Gita. Baba's consideration for his devotees, made him exercise all his powers their behalf. He underwent considerable personal trouble and undertook to risk his health and even life for the sake of his devotees. He drew plague to himself to save Balwant Khaparde, son of Mrs. Khaparde, He drew also a Superintendent's plague at Goa to himself. He offered his own throat to Mir Jaman, who wanted to cut the throats of all the Hindu *bhaktas* at the *chavadi*; in order to save his *bhaktas*. As stated by Baba to G.S. Khaparde, a fact noted in his diary, Baba was steadily ruining his health for his devotees' sake. He could not but respond to every appeal made to him by night and day from every place, and, in consequence, his digestion gave way, his general strength gave way, and he knew that this would continue up to the time of his leaving the body. But, he told G.S. Khaparde, 'I do not care for my life. I care for my *bhaktas*.' Therefore, love towards loving *sishtyas* is not a detraction of any general principle or moral law, but enforcement of the general principle that every action produces a reaction,

that good begets good, love begets love, and Baba wanted his devotees to make use of the general principles and laws of nature for developing themselves. Baba's sacrifice for the masses and for the public, has been characteristic of him, *janma* after *janma*, as we see from an account of his recitals of his own past *janmas*. In every *janma* we find that he was self sacrificing and working wonders, and always helping people, especially those who put their trust in Him and were attached to Him.

Nineteen

Ankita Children

The use of the term children for the pupils or disciples of a master is very ancient and very common. *Guru Gita*²²³ says, that the *Guru* removes the eight bonds of the child by cutting them off with his knife of mercy, the bonds being *Daya, Lajja, Bhayam, Ninda, Kulam, Vidya, Dhanam* and *Seelam*.

Karuna Khadgapatena

Chitva Pascashtakam scisocoh.

this means, Having cut off the eight bonds of the child that is the pupil by using his mercy, which may be viewed or termed as the knife. We have earlier referred in this book to the intimate relation between the *Guru* and the *sisya* that prevailed in ancient days in the *Gurukulas* and which must still prevail in the case of very ardent *sisyas* who get everything from the *Guru*, and who hope to achieve all that they want from the *Guru*. The *Guru* and his wife were father and mother to the pupil and fulfilled or more than fulfilled the functions of the God-father and Godmother. This was specially easy in those days, because the pupil left his parents, home and village and went as a tender child into the care and custody of the *Guru* remaining there till he attained majority, his interest being identified with the interest of the *Guru*. As an excellent illustration, it was pointed out that the pupil Arum gave up his life to save the water, needed for irrigating the fields of his master, from being lost to him. It has also been shown that the *Guru* himself should give up his life for the sake of his pupil. Baba expressly stated²²⁴ that he was giving up his very life for the sake of his devotee who is constantly dwelling and relying entirely upon him. In *Srimad Bhagavata*,

Rishabha says to his sons that a person who hesitates to save the life of his *sisya* is not fit to be called a *Guru*. Such being the intimate relation between *Guru* and pupil, one can easily understand that every possible facility is afforded to the *sisya* to rise to the full height of his stature, as the *Guru* himself being a man of perfect realisation, the *sisya* attains to the same. There being mutual love between the two and no sense of rivalry, everything known to the *Guru* is imparted. In more selfish persons, for example a father partitioning property between himself and his sons, the former conceals something and does not give a share to the son. Worldly *Gurus*, fearing that the pupil might eclipse their reputation, withhold sometimes part of their knowledge or power from the pupil. It was however recognised as part of the work of a perfect *Guru* that he should turn the *sisya* into his own likeness. The contrast between *Chintamani* and the *Guru* is that *Chintamani* or *Kalpataru Kamadhenu* gives only what is prayed for, but the *Guru* gives more than what is known and what can be prayed for, such as altering the nature and being of the *sisya* who knows not what he is and needs, and gives himself away to the *sisya* by converting him into his likeness. God-realisation or Self realisation is not a thing given, but the pupil is given the necessary preparation and facilities to attain the state. Then, the saying of Tukaram becomes true.

Apana Sarika Karitat Tatkal.

this means, The *Samartha Guru* turns the *sisya* immediately into his own likeness. Allowing some latitude for hyperbole for purposes of effect, there is substantial truth in this saying. Hence one may recognise that the highest use which any sane man can make of a *Guru* is to get the very highest benefit possible, namely, Self-realisation and God-realisation.

This is the highest but in the vast circle of *sadhakas* and of our readers, there are many who would not think of the highest at all, but would have their own hankerings or longings, which are by no means to be treated with contempt. For instance, the achievement of the position of an *Ankita* child may be referred to as one of the smaller or preliminary gains of the *sisyas* when approaching a

Samartha Sadguru. What *Ankita* means will be seen by the following stanza, which is part of Narayana's daily *Arati* song sung in places like Sakori and Shirdi.

Jo Saducha Ankita Jiva Jhala

Tyacha Ase Bhara Niranjana.

this means, Where a *sadhu* has earmarked a pupil as one for whom he undertakes complete responsibility for both spiritual and temporal welfare and for the entire period of his life or lives, there every responsibility concerning that pupil's welfare rests upon the shoulders of that *Nirajan*, that is, one who is almost God in respect of his power and nature. This appears to be a truism or platitude, but is really a revelation of the existence of *Nirajans* and their *Ankitas* in present day life. *Nirajan* strictly means having no *Maya* or having crossed the borders of *Maya*²²⁵.

Daivi hi Eshaa Gunamayee Mama May a Duratyaya

Mameva Ye Prapadyante May am Etam Tarantite.

that is, This three fold *Guna*²²⁶ constituting My *Maya* is hard indeed for anyone to cross. But he who takes refuge and surrenders *Tan, Man Dan* to Me Iswara crosses this *Maya*. So, *Nirajan* is one who has crossed the three-fold *Maya* who has identified himself with Iswara and is possessed of *Ashtaiswarya* divine powers that can bear every responsibility of another soul without regard to place, time, or extent of time, that is, whether it is generations or centuries. One may be aghast at the idea that any responsibility can be undertaken indefinitely or for centuries. But Baba, being a *Nirajan* expressly undertook such responsibility. When Mahlasapathy was afraid that the Muslims would come and beat him for worshipping Baba with, sandal paste after he left the Mosque premises, Baba assured him that neither those nor any other persons could molest him either in this life or in any future lives of his. Baba told the Bandra youth, who prayed to him that he should be always with him in future lives, that he had already been along with him in previous lives and had been looking after him, and that for the three more lives that were necessary for him to be born to work out his remaining *karma*, Baba would be reborn and be with him. Similar assurances were given for indefinite periods to M.B. Rege. One reading the

Gospel of Sai Baba²²⁷, would notice that Baba referred to ten thousand years back, saying 'I was here ten thousand years ago'. He told Shama that for 72 *janmas* or births he had been with him and that he had never touched him at all till then. That is, he recalls events of 72 *janmas*, and knows he has been protecting his devotee all these *janmas* that is, over 2,000 years. Especially in this *janma* when Shama, an almost illiterate and helpless villager was obliged to depend entirely upon Baba, Baba looked after all his interests and provided him and his children also with means of subsistence, with comforts, with safety, and position as he provided so many others. When G.G. Narke was introduced to Baba, Baba declared that he had known him for 30 *janmas*. If a *janma* is roughly taken to be even 30 years, this takes us nearly a thousand years back. Hence, to give an undertaking which appears to be indefinite in point of time, is nothing for a *Niranjana*. The undertaking is also unconditional and indefinite in respect of the sort of attacks that may befall a *sishya*. Sri Rama said,

Sakrudeva Prapannaya Tava Asmi Iticha Yachate

Abhayam Sarva Bhutebhyo Dadami Etat Vratam Mama.

this means, If a person once surrenders and takes refuge with me saying, I am yours, I undertake to protect him from all creatures. This is my vow. Sri Rama does not limit either the time or the nature of the attack upon his dependants seeking protection. Similarly Baba, who is nothing but Sai Rama, gave undertakings indefinite in point of time, persons, or things, attacking devotees or the place. As far as we are able to see, both Ayodhya Rama and Shirdi Sai Rama kept up the promises that they made. See how Baba protected Gown and the coward Basappa, birth after birth²²⁸.

Some people thought and some may think even now that a *Niranjan* or God realised soul is wasting his time and attention in attending to such trifles as looking after the needs and comforts of the body of persons age after age and in place after place. In Baba's Gospel, it is pointed out that a devotee named Damia Rasne objected to people going to Baba for temporal benefits, employment, money, children and cure of disease²²⁹. Baba said in response to a devotee who

objected to people going to Baba for temporal benefit such as employment, money, children, cure of disease.

"Do not do that. My men first come to me on account of that only. They get their heart's desires fulfilled, and comfortably placed in life, they then follow me and progress further. I bring my men to me from long distances under many pleas. I seek them and bring them to me. They do not come of their own accord. I bring them to me".

Things like health, employment and other such concerns may appear to be trifles to outsiders but to the concerned devotees, they bulk so large as to shut out all idea of spirit or spiritual progress, and therefore great *Gurus*, *Samarthas* like Sai make use of the devotees' necessity to turn them into highly grateful devotees and persons prepared to march on under Baba's guidance towards the goal through the way that he may chalk out. In fact he said truly that though devotees thought that they themselves were going to Baba for such relief, it was Baba working unseen with them that was pulling them like a boy pulling a bird with a string. Baba, "However distant, even thousands of miles away, my people might be, I draw them to myself, just as we pull birds to us with a string tied to their foot".

Baba recognised no doubt the importance of *Paramartha*, that is, reaching the goal of life²³⁰, proclaiming that taking the devotees to their goal was his function, and incidentally for that he might take so many other steps. Baba having assumed responsibility for his *sishyas* regarded them as his trust and himself as their trustee. He said²³¹, 'I will not allow my devotees to be lost. I will account to God for all those that have been given to me', that is, all his *Ankita* children.

When the position of an *Ankita* child seems to be so grand and excellent, it is a wonder that people brush that idea aside and run after trifles and gewgaws. Baba said about himself, to Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar of Poona²³². This is a *Brahmin*, a white *Brahmin*, a pure *Brahmin*. This *Brahmin* will lead lakhs of people to the *Subhra marga* and take them to the Goal right up to the end. This is a *Brahmin's* masjid.

To this *Ankita* child, the author, Baba gives many high and precious gifts and gives them even unasked. The mother does not wait for the child to say that the child is hungry but at the appropriate time gives it excellent food. Similarly acts the mother Baba. The wish of serious minded people is,

Anayasena Maranam Vina dainyena Jivanam

Dehi me Kripayo Sambho Raksha Raksha Maheswara.

this means, O Maheswara Siva, graciously grant me two things, first, a life lived without misery and secondly, a painless death at the close. Sri Sai without waiting for such a prayer from H.S. Dixit assured him soon after he went to Shirdi of both. As for life and the things of life, he told him, '*Arre Kaka, Tula Kalji Kasli, Maje Sara Kalji Ahe*'. That is, 'O Dixit, why have you any cares or worries? All care and responsibility are mine'. As for the second, Baba said that he would carry him, *Kaka*, in a *vimana*. Usually happy souls who go to Heaven after leaving the earth are said to be carried in a *vimana*. Tukaram who went with his human body to heaven is said to have got into a *vimana* that came to him. Srimad Bhagavata²³³ say that by *vimana*, happy souls are taken up to Heaven and enjoy in Heaven. In the case of Mr. Dixit, no visible vehicle arrived at his death, but his death was extremely happy and absolutely without pain. He had spent long hours in blissful communion with Baba along with Hemad Pant alias Anna Saheb Dhabolkar. Both went to board the train at Ville Parle, Kaka to go to Bombay and Dhabolkar to go to his own station. Looking at their watches they found that they were three minutes late, but luckily for them, when they went to the platform, the train also was three minutes late, and they were able to board it. Having got into comfortable berths, Kaka remarked to his friend, How gracious Sai Baba is! We ourselves are late and Sai has made the train late for us, for if it had already arrived in time and gone away, we would have to be stuck up for long hours. Shortly after that Dixit got into a comatose condition, and his friend thought that he was trying to sleep and put bolsters behind him. But the friend discovered that there was no breathing and no sign of hearing or of life. Thus the actual death was so peaceful, so quick and so happy. If this is not being carried in a *vimana*, what else is it? If one gushes with joy and gratitude to Baba at the

time of death, one reaches Baba. Such a happy death Baba has given to others also. But talking of *Ankita* children, Dixit is preeminently a model of the *Ankita* child. About the death being painless, we must add that it is not merely the question of absence of pain at the particular moment of death. What precedes and what follows must all be lumped together. What is that which follows death? Life in the hereafter. The Gita²³⁴ says,

Yam Yam Vapi Smaran Bhavam Tyajati Ante Kalebaram

Tarn Tarn Eva Eti Kounteya Sada Tadbhava Bhavitah.

this means, Whatever form or object a person thinks of all the while and at the moment of death, he is transformed into that object after death, that is, in the next life.

Tasmāt Sarveshu Kaleshu Mam Anusmara Yuddhyacha

Mayi Arpita Mono bhuddhih Mam Eva Eshyasi Asamschayam

this means, Therefore at all times, O, Arjuna, think of Me and carry on your fight. With your mind and reason resting on Me, when you die, you will surely reach Me without doubt. These are highly important stanzas of the Bhagavad Gita, and people at the close of their lives are naturally very anxious to see that they attain the goal of life by thinking of God at the moment of their death and thus reach Him. As this concerns the ultimate object of being, one cannot overestimate any help that can be rendered to the devotee to gain it. Some superficial people might fancy that the whole thing is very easy, that at the moment of death, to think of God at once. For instance, keep a friend *Sathi Akaraka* by at the moment of death to remind one of God! They may be sustained in such a view by what happened to *Ajamila*. *Ajamila* was once a noble and pure soul studying the *Vedas*, thinking of God, and living righteously. All of a sudden his ways changed, and he discarded a virtuous young wife for no reason and took to a mistress of low caste, and was living with her and got several children from her, the youngest of whom was named *Narayana*. When leading such a degraded life, death overtook him. At the moment of death, he suddenly out of affection, called out for his youngest child saying, *Narayana*. Then his breathing stopped. Naturally he ought to have been taken to Hell for punishment for all his degraded life.

Therefore, *Yama dhutas* promptly appeared on the scene. Just at the same moment, angels appeared by his side in order to take him to Heaven. *The Yama dhutas* wondered and argued with the angels stating that the dead person was a sinner fit only for Hell. But the angels pointed out that the last word that he uttered with his breath was *Narayana*, a name of God. Then *Yama's* messengers said that was only the name of his child that he called out and that he was not calling out for God. Then the angels explained.

Ayamhi Kritanirveso janmakotyamhasamapi
Sanketyam Parihasyam va Sthobham Helanam eva va
Vaikuntha nama grahanam Asceshagha haram Viduh²³⁶

this means, That the name of God whether uttered involuntarily by a man merely as a sort of token for some worldly thing or out of joke²³⁷ or fun or for purpose of an oath or for any other reason, still has its value and being uttered at the moment of death, all his sins are wiped out and the utterer must go to Heaven. Therefore *Ajamila* was ultimately taken to Heaven. But all are not *Ajamilas* and all have not his luck. Sai is the best *Sathi Akaraka*. Therefore a verse in Pandava Gita²³⁸ says,

Krishna twadiya Pada Pankaja Panjarantam
Adhyaiva Me Viscatu Manasa Raja hamsah
Pranaprayanasamaye Kapavata Pittaih
Kanthavarodhanavidhow Smaranam Kutaste.

this means, O Krishna, at the time of my death, when the three humours of the body that is wind, phlegm, and bile, choke the throat, where is the chance of my uttering your name?²³⁹ So, immediately now, let my mind, which is a *Raja Hamsa* enter the cage of your lotus feet, This is the same in effect as²⁴⁰ and means, Let us remember God now and be in Him at once.

Sri Sai Baba made and makes His *Ankita* children remember Him and pronounce his name constantly by giving them frequent opportunities so many times each day by perpetual provision of comforts and necessaries, pain and trouble, enough to compel frequent or constant prayer, humble supplication and

providing *satsang* and surroundings of various sorts serving as reminders of his gracious, powerful yet merciful and many sided personality.

One preliminary question may be raised by some as to what exactly *Ankita* children denotes and how they are different from ordinary children. Has Baba got ordinary children and again *Ankita* children? It looks a somewhat crude notion to have children for whom you have no responsibility. Of all persons, Baba will be the last to avoid responsibility for children. Baba recognised that devotees in general were his children, and he also affirmed his determination to protect them. Baba said²⁴¹, You devotees are my children. 'I am your father. You have to get everything from me. You should not say like that and say Sai is not God'. This was addressed to Narke's friends who went and complained to him that Narke was saying that Baba was a man. Baba was pointing out that those devotees who were relying upon him entirely for all their benefits were getting those benefits merely because they were feeling that they were children of Baba, *Babacha Lekhru*, and that his responsibility was there in respect of those who felt that they were his children. Baba may create that feeling no doubt, but one must begin with some sort of rudimentary feeling at least that he is Baba's child and begin to make efforts to love him as the father and provider. Therefore we may say that as a rule, normal children who feel that they are children and look to their father for help and provision, do get such help and provision, and in the spiritual field, those who feel that they are children of Baba, especially by total surrender to him of all their interests and activities, time, trouble and wealth to him, are especially His children²⁴². Baba says, 'If any one casts his burden on me and thinks of me, I look after all his concerns'²⁴³. Here is the undertaking of the responsibility of looking after all the concerns of the devotee, and the condition of it is that the devotee should cast all his burdens on Baba and think of Baba all the while as the provider. Baba says²⁴⁴, Look to me and I look to you. 'Trust in the *Guru* fully'²⁴⁵. He adds, If one devotes his entire mind to me and rests in Me, he need fear nothing for body and soul. If one sees Me and Me alone and listens to talks about Me, and is devoted to me alone, he will reach God, *Chaitanya*. This is the modern paraphrase of what Sri Krishna said,

Man Manabhava Madbhakto madyaji Main Namaskuru

Mameva eshyasi yuktva Evam Atmanam Mat parayanah.

Complete responsibility is undertaken by Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita in respect of any one who treats Sri Krishna as his *parayana* that is, the be all and end all of his existence, and who turns his mind, worship, observances, and prostrations all to Him²⁴⁶. He says²⁴⁷, Repeat my name. Seek refuge in Me. This refuge is *Prapatti*. The Gospel closes²⁴⁸, with

Ananyasachintayantomam Ye janah Paryu Upasate

TeshamNityabhiyuktanam Yoga Kshemam Vahamyaham²⁴⁹,

this means, If one thinks of Me and Me alone and resorts to Me completely, and is ever attached to Me, I look after his interests in obtaining and securing benefits. This is the same as Baba's undertaking. Now so far we have referred to the declarations of the *Dvapara Yuga* Krishna and the *Kali Yuga* Sai showing that where there is a divine protection offered to any person and it is accepted, then, as Narayana says in his *Arati* song, the devotee becomes *Ankita* and the entire responsibility for him is undertaken by the *Niranjana*, Divine. It is quite obvious that if any person feels that he is a child of Baba and that he has sufficiently surrendered and is making every endeavour to make the surrender complete, Baba²⁵⁰ comes forward to undertake all his burdens, and that makes the devotee *Ankita*. For all practical purposes, a real devotee who really surrenders himself or tries his utmost to surrender himself, will surely be an *Ankita* child, that is, a person for whom Sri Krishna will bear responsibilities. These declarations of undertaking were in the Gita already before Baba appeared in the flesh, but how few came forward to surrender and ask for the undertaking to be fulfilled by Sri Krishna? This is a great defect in humanity. What is freely preferred is not appreciated. Faith is not vigorously forthcoming at the time it ought to be forthcoming. The consequence of lack of faith is that there is no readiness to take up the position of a child or devotee, to surrender oneself, and to await with confidence the performance of the promises made in the Bhagavad Gita and the Gospel of Sai. As pointed out in the Chandogya Upanishad, prayers in order to be effective, must be believed in. When you pray for any object, believe that you

are getting it. That is the surest way of getting it. If you are really a surrendered child, you will feel that the parent is there ready to confer it. Numerous previous experiences would strengthen that belief. This is really as it ought to be. Unfortunately, what ought to be is not always the fact. People do not surrender, do not believe that they are getting benefits, and consequently there are a few cases reported of *Ankita* children of Krishna, but when the season comes, belief comes, and there is a large number of surrendering and believing persons. The lack of faith that is prevalent even after hundreds of cases of super human, miraculous aid being given by Baba to his *Ankita* children, is something astonishing. Of course there are parallels. We find one example in what Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa quotes, that is, the story of belief in the efficacy of Ganges water to wash away sin. The following is the verse,

Ganga papam sasci tapam Dainyam Kalpa taruh tatha

Papam Tapamcha Dainyamcha Hanti Sadhu Samagamah

this means, the Ganges water destroys sin. This has been repeated millions of times, and yet how many people believe in it? That is illustrated by the following account. Siva, wanting to show Parvati how little belief, people had told her to take the form of a very old *Sumangali* lady and to sit on the banks of the Ganges. He himself took the form of a very old husband of hers just now dead or dying. Parvati was crying out to all the people who gathered round, that her misfortune was making her a widow, but that some great wise man had said, 'Your husband will have a sudden death, but if somebody that is sinless puts in a drop of Ganges water into his mouth, he will revive'. So, the lady cried out and asked the crowd of people who had been taking bath in the Ganges, 'Is there no one who is sinless and who will put a drop of water in my husband's mouth?' No one was forthcoming. Each man was fully conscious of his sins and could not believe that the Ganges bath had absolved him of his sins. One young man came up and said, 'Mother! Wait. I am a sinner. But I shall have a dip in the Ganges. My sins being absolved, I will come with a drop of Ganges water and revive your husband'. And as he had the faith, his bath and the water he brought, revived her husband. This shows how rare is faith in the purificatory potency of Ganges

amongst vast masses of Hindus even though the praise of Ganges is sung by almost every Hindu and is known to every Hindu as washing away all sins, but not accepted with powerful faith.

Development of faith is a very large question, and if one arranges all the facts known to him, that is, after careful observation, he would notice first and foremost that faith develops where necessity makes one develop it. If it is to my interest to believe that a certain prayer will save me, I begin to believe in the efficacy of that prayer. If somebody thinks some practice is harmful, whether it is really harmful or not, he will certainly avoid that as he thinks that his interest is imperilled thereby. This is a far reaching principle and may be very largely utilised by those who make arrangements for the development of faith amongst large classes that approach them. Just as success begets success, faith begets faith. In order to develop faith in the *Guru*, the *Guru* must show himself to be expecting faith and deserving of faith. No faith will be placed in a person with patent defects, who is loose in his expressions, who is otherwise unworthy of trust or confidence. If a *Guru* commits such mistakes, faith is not likely to develop towards him. If, on the other hand, the *Guru* shows himself ready to do everything that a powerful *Guru* should do, and actually demonstrates his ability to do what faith expects and demands, then faith is readily placed in him. This is mainly the method by which faith in Baba has spread and is spreading now. We shall give one illustration. A propagandist went to Velappadi near Vellore and after his delivering an enthusiastic lecture about Sai's greatness, his wonderful powers of cure, and his uniform kindness to the poor, the wretched, the high class and the low class, at the close of the lecture, faith had been roused in some of the audience. One of them brought a young child of ten months and said that for eight months that child was having fits and God alone knew how it was to survive. Then suddenly the lecturer had the inspiration or the idea that in the name of Baba, he should take some *udhi* and apply it to the child and say 'hence forward, no fits should attack this child'. That was done. This was a prayer and an assertion. He returned from the village, and it was noticed that the child was really free from such attacks, thereafter. Henceforth, the whole village began to

believe in Sai Baba. Similarly where an educational officer's wife had hysterical fits and requested the propagandist to go and give her Sai Baba's blessings, the lecturer took up a picture of Sai Baba, made a very brief worship and offered *Kalpura Arati* to the Baba picture, and offered it to the patient telling her that she was Sai's child, that Sai was all powerful and that he could keep at bay any hysterical or other attack, whatever may be the source of the attack, and then he returned. So long as the lady remained in that place Kakinada, she had no recurrence of hysterical fits. This naturally roused faith in a large number of people all around. These are very common instances, and in fact it is such instances that partly explain how Sai Baba, who was not known outside Maharashtra twenty years ago, in 1932 A.D. is now known throughout the length and breadth of India. Coming to practical methods, if any one should ask, 'What is the actual step I am to take in order to develop enough faith to become Baba's *Ankita* child', the first answer is remove all influences adverse to faith. For instance, association with scoffers, with flippanant persons, with violent and wicked persons should be avoided. Close association with highly respectable and eminent philosophes and thinkers who complacently declare that they have no faith in Sai or in Rama is dangerous. Pride in being a philosopher adopting the principle of Descartes namely, 'Doubt all things' ad libitem or ad infinitum is ruinous, The Gita says,

Samscaayatma vinascyati

that is, The perpetual doubter perishes. The opposite of it, namely the company of *sadhus* or ordinary believers in Sai, should be sought. Gatherings of *bhaktas* either for *bhajan* or worship or study or lecture should all be attended as far as possible. There is one supreme rule. Repetition strengthens every habit, and faith is a mental habit. If for example, at the beginning I have no faith in Sai Baba's doing something that is prayed for, then I must force myself to have that faith on the first occasion, next a second occasion, a third occasion, and so on. If I profess or compel myself to have faith often, say a dozen times, faith will become a habit with me, 'I do believe, I will believe, that Sai will help me'. He always helps the poor and wretched even the scoffing *Akkalkote vakil*. Here one

is taught an important psychological law. People despise external observances thinking that they are excrescences in religion, and that it is only the spirit or essentials that are wanted. But this is ignoring one very important fact. The external and internal are closely associated. You hardly ever get at the internal without an external. For instance, if I want nectar or coffee, there must be a cup or vessel carrying it to me. Words and meanings appear to be external and internal. Yet they are so much imbedded in each other. *Vagartha viva sampriktou*. Above all, the association of the external and the internal operates in a very powerful way unseen and unnoticed. Let us take hypnotised subjects and sleeping or dreaming subjects as best instances for exemplifying the working of this law that the external and the internal have a very close connection and that the one draws the other with it. A person is hypnotised, and though nothing at all is said to him, his body is arranged in a pugilistic attitude with his fists stretched out ready for fighting and himself ready to deliver and receive attacks. Though nothing is said, the man if asked to speak, speaks fiercely and in a mood of attack. He is bellicose. Similarly, if a hypnotised patient is made to kneel down or fully prostrate, and his palms are arranged in *Anjali* fashion, that is invoking the grace of God, then though nothing is said, the man at once becomes humble and prayerful in mood. If asked, 'What is this?' he would say, 'I am praying to God'. It is the attitude of prostration and invocation that brings on the ideas of invoking God. These may be multiplied and infinite, but the present instances will suffice to show that the external and the internal have a very close association, and any one who is anxious to develop his faith should see that in himself, in his surroundings, in his library, in his company, and in everything around him, the externals are always suggestive or productive of faith. Above all the mind must be directed to faith, and how is that done? The company that we keep, our reading, practical details of *puja*, prayer, acts of service, preaching, then meditation, then yogic concentration, and above all a steady habit of prayer for the growth of one's faith and of another that one is interested in these will work wonders. Faith is a cultivable plant and requires proper selection of field, seed manure, and irrigation. One can develop, this subject at great length. Suffice it to

say that those who are desirous of developing faith in Sai Baba to become his *Ankita* children should begin with an ardent desire to become such, to repeat that resolve to themselves time and again, often and often, and they should make use of every opportunity that advances their eligibility for becoming his *Ankita* children. And above all, the extent to which they are prepared to make sacrifices to please Baba so that he may adopt them as *Ankita* children, will be a very important factor. Make reverent *parayana* or daily study of the Gospel of Baba²⁵¹ which deals with that subject. That will change even a stony heart.

Twenty

Baba's Samsara

The term *Samsara* is used by almost every Hindu and is supposed to be fairly understood. *Samsarati* is the derivation of the word; *Samsara* is that which perfectly cycles round and round. The whirl of births and deaths for each *jiva* is denoted by the term *samsara*. The generally accepted idea of a life from birth to death is that it is predominantly overladen with sorrow, and, therefore, it is the common desire of persons to escape *samsara* that is, to escape a very large round of sorrows in birth after birth. The question might be raised as to why stress should be laid upon the sorrows of life when in point of fact, if we examine honestly the life of any person or creature known to us, the predominant part of each life is joy or happiness. It is not correct to say that any body or child or any other person that we see is for the major portion -of the day mourning and in gloom. Life has been so arranged that the proper fulfilment of every function necessary for the maintenance and growth of the organism is attended with a feeling of pleasure. Pleasure is the index to the person or *Jiva* that it is properly functioning and guides it to the correct course which will enable it to maintain itself, prolong its existence and reproduce its kind thereby ensuring the continuance of its species. So, Providence seems to have dowered animal existence with an abundance of joys. There is joy in eating, joy in sleeping, joy in resting, joy in working, and joy in almost everything that we can mention. Yet it is the human tendency to emphasize that which is painful. And there are undoubtedly pains especially in the case of some people either on account of

their inability to find out how to manage their conduct in life or an account of extraneous circumstances. There might be a preponderance of pain, for some periods and for special reasons in the life of a good number. This appears to be the basis of pessimistic dicta in the *Sastras* which say that life is full of sorrow,

Anityam Asukham lokam

Imam prapya bhajasva mam.

This means, Having come into this ephemeral existence which is unhappy, worship Me. This is the saying of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita, and may warrant, in the view of some, the conclusion that life in the world means sorrow. But with reference to the principle that every statement should be referred to the context, and the circumstances in which it is made, we see undoubtedly a very good justification for Sri Krishna telling Arjuna that life is unhappy because the whole Gita begins with Arjuna's deploring his wretched lot. He said, 'Whichever way I turn, I find only sin, sorrow and trouble, and I do not find happiness. Whether we win or lose this battle, that is equally a painful event'. It is in that plight when he could see no gleam of light in his situation that Arjuna surrendered to Sri Krishna and said, 'Please order me what to do. I am unable to see any course that will lead to happiness'. To Arjuna at the time of the Gita, life was full of the prospect of pain and, therefore, the statement that life is *Anityam Asukham* was correct in the circumstances in which it was made. But if we take up any child who is romping and playing about practically all the hours of the day and having 10 or 12 hours of happy sleep, and say that its life is *Asukham* or unhappy that would not be correct. But all this apart, we may note in what sense the word *Asukham* is used in the *Sastras*. In the *Sastras* they say that everything is *Anityam* and *Asukham* compared with the ideal *sukham*. Sri Krishna says²⁵²,

Duhkam Kamqsukhapeksha

Sukham Duhkasukhatyayah

that is, Depending on sense enjoyment leads to unhappiness. Happiness is raising oneself above the ruffling caused by pain and pleasure. And he says²⁵³,

Asca hi paramam duhkam,

Nairascyam Paramam sukham.

that is, Desire is the cause of the greatest unhappiness, Freedom from desire is the cause of the greatest happiness. The ideal *sukham* described in *Taittiriya Upanishad*²⁵⁴ is that of *Brahman* which is pure, unalloyed bliss and perpetual bliss. Tables of happiness are given therein, the quality and duration of various joys are arranged, beginning with the unit a human or royal bachelor's happiness and proceeding in that way, the last in the table is said to be *Brahma* that is, the four-faced Creator's happiness. That may be suggestive of the happiness of God which is *Satchitananda*. It is a multiple of human happiness by a number which is hardly imaginable. And every sort of happiness, including that of *Brahma*, is said to be enjoyed by a *Scrotriya* that is Knower of the *Vedas* and therefore a Realiser of *Brahman* or God who has conquered desire. It is this desire which runs through life that consequently renders, according to the *Upanishad* and *Sastras*, life miserable or sorrow laden.

Now we may go back to the question as to what *samsara* is. We find that Nana Saheb Chandorkar on one occasion told Baba²⁵⁵, I do not like this *samsara*. I do not even want to touch it with a pair of tongs. Please let me get rid of *samsara*. This is similar to a lady's statement to Baba that he should be pleased to enable her to escape from *samsara*, that is, the round of births and deaths. To both, Baba gave the answer which is suggestive of the fact that these two questions were laying undue emphasis on the sentimental sorrows of life and the powerlessness of the human being to escape the miseries of life or the implied effects of life. To that lady Baba said, 'Have you come to die? Because *samsara* means round of births and deaths²⁵⁶. The lady was startled and then asked Baba what he meant. Baba asked her to think who she was, ordering her to make the enquiry, 'Who am I?'. That is, he asked her to make *Atma Vichara*. Her husband explained to her that *Atma Vichara* would lead her to the conclusion that her idea that she was a separate individual *Jiva* and not the Universal Soul or god, as declared by the *Sastras* and also by Baba, to be incorrect, that she should constantly identify herself more and more with *Satchitananda* and merge in it, and that was the only escape from *Samsara*. That is, if we are the Supreme Being above all creation, maintenance, and withdrawal, then there is no *samsara*

for us. Otherwise there is *samsara*. That seems to have been the teaching to that lady. To Nana Chandorkar, Baba went into more details and gave him the answer that *samsara*, that is the perpetual cycle of births and deaths, is the result of the law of *karma*. As long as there is the -body, which is the result of *Prarabdha Karma* one cannot escape going through the results of previous *karma*. Merely running away to a forest or leaving the family will not enable one to escape the series of events which must make up the present life. Baba said that even he himself was not free from *Samsara*. As long as there is the body he said, there must be *samsara*. Now, we shall go into the question of Baba's *samsara* in connection with Baba's body.

Baba's body had previous existence in previous states and lives, and Baba has given various accounts of himself in previous times and his connections with his *bhaktas* in previous *janmas* with some, even for *12 janmas* or 10,000 years. So Baba declared that *samsara* was binding him also. Now in a sense, that is obviously true. But still there is the counsel which Baba himself gives that one must behave properly in *samsara* and thus escape the effects of *samsara* that is *samsara* need not be painful if one acts properly. One may escape trouble, sorrow, and difficulties, and thus lead a life of *Asanga*, which is prescribed by the *Sastras* for escaping *samsara*. The *Sastras* order every one to worship God, in any form and thus get identified with God and lose oneself in God. As the Gita puts it,

Bhaktyamam Abhijanati
Yavan yachcha Asmi tatvatah
Tato mam Tatvato Jnatva
Viscate Tad Anantaram

this means, By *bhakti* or devotion, one knows Me, what I am and to what extent, and in what forms, I am truly. Then, having known Me correctly, he enters into Me, that is merges in Me or becomes part of Me. So, *samsara* is a necessity for a soul that recognises itself as *a Jiva*. The *Jiva* may realise itself ultimately as God as Sai Baba did. Then it is identical with *Paramatma*, or in the words of Baba, *Analhaq, Aham Brahmasmi, Main Allah Hum*. The Supreme that is bound by the I

am the body idea is the *Jiva* and a *Bandha*. The Supreme without that idea is the *Paramatma*. Therefore, according to one's modes of being a *Jiva* or not a *Jiva*, one is in *samsara* or out of it. In Srimad Bhagavata²⁵⁷ Sri Krishna says that the ideas of bondage and *moksha* are merely mental concepts and that in reality there is no *bandha* and no *moksha*. That is, when one reaches this state or Krishna or *Parabrahman*, there is no notion of *bandha* or bondage or *moksha* that is liberation. One fact has been mentioned above, namely, that treating various states of pleasure in life as important parts of one's life, life may be viewed on the whole as a mass of happiness preponderantly happy, and to meet this view, Srimad Bhagavata says, 'Let alone human happiness. Even the happiness enjoyed by the gods in the various worlds, is ephemeral'. Even the four faced god has to end his life at the fixed time. Kala, Time is to destroy even that Brahma, and therefore, all the joys of all the persons, celestial or human, are treated by comparison with *Satchitananda* as misery. It is only by our merging in *Satchitananda* that we get free from this state of misery. This is found in Srimad Bhagavata²⁵⁸. Hence one thing is clear, that is the course of one's conduct must be to get farther and farther away from the 'I am the body idea *Dehatmabuddhi* or the narrow notion of oneself as body, and expand oneself farther and farther so that one may realise that one is *Sarvabhutama Bhutama*. That is, the soul of all creatures, *Sarvantaryami*, Baba had achieved that position, and he declared that he was the *Antaryami* of all creatures. He was coaching up his best disciples to view him as the *Antaryami* of themselves and of all others, and gradually to deem themselves also the *Antaryami* of all, just as Baba is the *Antaryami* of all. By constantly thinking of Baba as the *Antaryami* of all, the devotee becomes the *Antaryami* of all. This is in effect the highest coaching that we find both in the Bhagavata and in Sai Baba's teaching.

Baba in giving advice to N.G. Chandorkar gave him practical directions and details as to the rules of morality that he had to follow and other precepts taking him on higher and higher in the scale of happiness. It is the exclusion of others from the self that is the source of misery. It is the inclusion of more and more of the excluded set so as to make it part of one's life that is the way to

happiness. In this programme, moral rules such as gratitude and love play an important part. Gratitude and admiration take us out of our narrow selves. And love binds us to the object of love. There is a narrow sort of love in one's saying, 'I love my child and will beat any one who interferes with my child'. This contains the germ of the crude principle of love, but has also much dross which hides and taints that crude principle. Ordinarily in human circumstances with people's narrow views of themselves as bodies or body bound souls, love of one excludes love of others. But the correct view of the soul, that is as a spirit unattached will enable one to see that love of one need not and should not exclude others. Love of one should be the love of all. If our centre be the body self as understood by ordinary beings, persons farther and farther away from the body self are thrown out of it and will not be loved. But if in imitation of great souls like Sai Baba, we fix our centre not in one place or body but in all places, then we shall have a figure for our soul with centre everywhere and circumference nowhere,

Ayam Nija paroveti gananalaghu chetasam

Udara charitanam tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam²⁵⁹

which means, Petty minds discriminate between their own and strangers. High souls view the entire world as their kin.

In this connection one may note the *Maya* theory that has been referred to in *Srimad Bhagavata* and in Baba's teaching.

In Baba's teaching, the word *Maya* is clearly indicative of darkness. That is, what binds one to darkness is *Maya*. It has *Avarana* and *Vikshepa*; the *Avarana* portion of it covers up our consciousness and knowledge and *Vikshepa* creates fictions over that *Avarana*. For example, a person who is a cooly dreams that he is a king, forgets his coolyship and assumes kingship and the whole thing is a miserable fiction. Therefore *Maya* does exist, and is a thing to be avoided. But *Maya* has another sense, namely that it is the creative power of God. Even in this sense it creates fictions and makes the world run on the basis of those fictions. But the conclusion drawn and acted upon by some people that everything in this phenomenal world is fiction is not to be accepted as its logical conclusion. Baba said no doubt that *Maya* is a covering over *Chaitanya*,

but he did not follow it to the logical conclusion that everything that is seen is merely a fiction and therefore to be disregarded. As long as we are in this phenomenal world with its rules and principles, we have to follow it. Therefore Baba gave many directions to his pupils and never treated his relations to pupils and to others as mere fictions. He was a realist quite as much as any other that we have seen, and he asked people to stick to truth, the truth understood in the phenomenal sense and not in the sense of *Advaitic* Philosophy, that is a reality which is not sensed but is merely conceived of in philosophy as beyond all time and place. Baba gave advice to Chandorkar as to how to behave in society. Baba himself behaved excellently in respect of every relation in society. What are the ties of Baba and what were the ties also of Baba in previous *janmas* and what would be his ties in future? Baba recognised in his accounts of previous births and of the present one that he had parents, and that he had to help and support his mother or his father, and his brothers and sisters. He recognised that sisters of his former *janmas* gave him support and took birth in this *janma* again to continue the support. Taty Patil's mother, Bayaji Bai was a sister of his previous birth and by that strong tie she took immense pains to see him fed, especially in his young nomadic days at Shirdi, when he used to wander into the jungles not caring for food. She would run up into those jungles and feed him wherever he might be. From the beginning of his life, this sister made it certain that he would have his food and not starve. For such a provision one must be indeed highly grateful, and Baba was grateful. Baba could never forget even the slightest offices done to him. On one occasion when he climbed up a house and wanted to descend and a ladder was brought to him, he paid Rs.2/- to the man who brought the ladder, saying that services should not be accepted gratis. Similarly when a Muslim applicant for dynamite, who had been twice improperly refused licence by the Collector, came to Baba for his intercession, Baba told Chandorkar that he Chandorkar must help that applicant with licence for dynamite for deepening his well. Baba said, this time let him present the application to the Collector, and the Collector will grant the licence. Baba added, This man has left a box with us, and it is not proper for us to say no when he

asks for its return. Chandorkar explained that statement to mean that applicant had done in a former birth some good service to Baba or to him Chandorkar or to both, and out of gratitude, he must be helped on this occasion. When Baba was so full of gratitude even for such slight services, he would be the last person to forget a life-long support for food such as Bayyaji Bai gave him. He never forgot it. In addition to that, her son Tatya Patil was attending upon him at the Mosque and spent his nights for many long years with Baba, serving Baba and sleeping with Baba. Baba, remembering all that, was very affectionate towards Tatya. Tatya would call Baba *Mama* that is maternal uncle, and Baba would refer to Tatya as *Puthna* or nephew. Baba would not get up from his bed till Tatya came up and lifted him and lit up his pipe for him to smoke. He was watching over all devotees no doubt, but especially over Tatya, and he gave him frequent advice based upon his own superior knowledge. When there was the danger of his valuable horse getting damaged by a journey, Baba warned him. Tatya did not mind the warning and went on the journey, and nearly lost his horse. Similarly on other occasions Baba gave him the use of his *Antarjnana* or super-sensual knowledge. But what people mostly judge by, is the extent to which one gives them worldly goods. Baba gave plenty of the world's goods to Tatya. During the last ten years when Baba was getting a Provincial Governor's income, Tatya was paid daily a fixed sum on which income tax was levied. With his funds, Tatya was able to build three storeyed houses for himself and also purchase lands. He grew rich and respectable, and was looked up to as a person who was the pet of Baba. It is even said that in 1918, when Baba said that Tatya would die, Tatya was saved. Some people believe that Baba gave up his own life in order to save Tatya's life. A dictum in Srimad Bhagavata is,

Grunasasyat Svajano na sa syat

Namochayet yah Samupeta Mrityum

this means, If one does not save the life of a person in peril of death, he is unfit to be called a *Guru* or Kinsman, Baba has said that he would sacrifice his own life for his *bhaktas* who concentrate their affection on him. This certainly applied to Tatya. Baba's concern for Tatya Patil's family did not stop with mere provision of

funds. Unfortunately amongst the Patil families, all of whom were devoted to Baba, there were divisions and factions. Baba was watching over them. On one occasion in the Mosque, he suddenly said, 'Don't beat, don't beat'. When G.S. Khaparde's son asked Baba why he said so, Baba explained that in the quarrels between the Patils, there was imminent danger of clash, and to prevent it he said 'don't beat, don't beat'. That is how Baba has been safeguarding and helping Tatya and his people. He helped Tatya, by a *chamatkar* in his criminal appeal against the conviction and sentence of Raghu, and others. Baba has helped Tatya in so many other ways also. So, it is clear that Baba recognised the bonds of kinship with Tatya as binding on him and exercised all his powers for his benefit. He has rendered similar help to a number of others. These ties of kinship are called *Rinanubandha*. Baba has stated that *Rinanubandha* has to be respected. That *rina* may be due to kinship in past births or in the present. Baba stated his kinship to Kondaji, G.S. Khaparde and others. He recognises *Guru bandhutva*, that is, being under the same master, as a powerful bond or tie or *rina*. Once, he said that Dada Kelkar, G.S. Khaparde, Bapu Saheb Jog, H.S. Dixit, Shama, and he Baba were all under one common *Guru* in a previous birth, that is, as *Gurubandhus*, and therefore, he had brought them together in this life so that they might renew their contact. He helped each of the above in very remarkable degrees, as set out fully in other chapters of this book. To Upasani also he revealed the fact that the ancestors of Baba and Upasani were for centuries closely connected, and in consequence Baba was under a very heavy obligation to help Upasani to lever him up, so to speak. Baba said to Balakrishna Sastri, Upasani Baba's brother, There was a tree or a log of wood. There were two on it, evidently one at each end, and by pressing oneself down, the other would be levered up.' Baba said one of these went down and the other went up. Sri Upasani Baba explained this to mean that it was something like see-saw and that Baba had levered up Sri Upasani in this way. That is, by his powers he had raised the spiritual level and the happiness of Upasani Baba, vesting him also with considerable psychic power or *siddhi*. Baba recognised even a playmate of his who was dead and buried in a tomb, and found her haunting that tomb. So,

he went and remained there a little while, and afterwards brought her to a *Babul* tree at Shirdi and kept her there, evidently for further spiritual elevation of her soul. Baba recognised his *rinanubandha* even to animals in the present or past. Mrs. G.S. Khaparde was once a cow that gave him plenty of milk, and on account of that *rinanubandha*, after becoming human and the daughter of a gardener, she was levered up into a *Kshatriya* family, a rich *Vaisya* family, and finally a *Brahmin* family. In all her *janmas* she renewed her contact with Baba and gave him food. Baba in his turn helped her, and in *this janma* Baba gave her *Rama Mantra*. He not only massaged her, but asked her to repeat *Rajaram, Rajaram*, as that would ensure her *Sadgati*. Baba recognized two goats as having been his former human companions, who, by their misfortune, had been degraded to the level of animals. He bought those goats and fed them. He recognised a snake and a frog as his former human companions who had the benefit of his company in a previous birth. He had made promises to Channa Basappa that he would save him from his enemy Veerabhadrapa. When actually Veerabhadrapa was born to continue his hatred and revenge as a snake and had gripped the frog that Basappa had turned into, Baba was there in time to keep his word, and saved Basappa the frog from being swallowed up by Veerabhadrapa the snake. This is *Rinanubandha*. Baba also recognised a certain kinship among saints. Some people say that there is a group or *Panchayatana*, that is a group of five of which Baba is one. In the Ahmedabad *Vakil*, C.C. Manikvala's statement, we find reference to the fact that Baba appeared to him and said that he was one of the nine gems into which Datta had turned himself in modern days. The nine included Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, Akkalkote Maharaj, Dondi Bua, Palus, Madhavanath Maharaj. These saints sent up several of their *sishtyas* on to Baba, and they were recognised by Baba as coming from a saintly brother. References to these are to be found in Baba's Charter's and Sayings. Many other saints like Bidkar Maharaj, master of the Sub J Garde and Kusa Bhav's Master and Poona Bhima Sankar Sadhu, master of Chidambar K. Gadgil and others recognised Baba as their spiritual companion or helper and were sending their men on to Baba. These are his contacts in the

present *janma* of Sai Baba. But these do not exhaust the question of *rinanubandha*. Baba has made several promises. For instance to M.B. Rege, he promised that *janma* after *janma* when Rege takes birth he also would be born to keep company with him. To the young gentleman of Bandra, Master T, Baba said that he would have three more births, and that he would be with him for these three births just as he had already been with him for many previous births. It is the duty of the *Guru* to follow the *sisya* birth after birth, and Baba says, I will account to God for every pie he has given to me. He said that it was his duty to take his disciple to God and not to leave him in the middle. When Baba makes a promise, he keeps it, just as Rama said,

Apyaham Jivitam Jahyam,
Tvam Va Site SaLakshmanam,
Natu Prascrutya Me vakyam,
Brahmanebhyo Visceshatah.

Rama said to Sita, Once I made a promise, I will keep up that promise. I would rather give up my life, yourself, and Lakshman than give up my plighted word, especially, when it has been plighted to *Brahmins*. That is why Baba's re-birth is looked for by several people. That would be *samsara* of Baba to fulfil his promises of re-birth. Baba is not one who is afraid of re-birth. It is only one that has attachment to earthly objects that is to be afraid of re-births. If one wishes to carry out his promise and takes birth merely for carrying out promises with detachment, keeping himself in the *Aham Brahmasmi* state, that is, without detriment to his soul realization, there is nothing to regret. That is not *samsara* to regret²⁶⁰.

Twenty-one

Baba and Maya Theory

Sai Baba of Shirdi has, if we may rely upon Das Ganu's earliest chapters about him, referred to *Maya* expressly and taught his devotee Nana Chandorkar and others important truths about the place of *Maya* in God's work. Nana Chandorkar finding it difficult to understand the place of *Maya* in a universe

created by god or *Suddha Chaitanya* questioned Baba, Who is the *Maya!* and elicited interesting answers. Baba had first talked about *Suddha Chaitanya* referring to *Poorna Parabrahman* by that phrase, and incidentally referred to *Maya*. Baba said, Just as there are degrees in regality when we consider the extent of respect or reverence paid to the king, his deputy, and his peon, we find similarly that there are degrees of *Chaitanya* in the world. There are three grades of persons, the *Paramartika* stage person sees truth as truth and acts according to sastras that is without observing differentiation. The next is the person in the *Vyavaharika* stage, called the good who follows the *Sastras* but goes on differentiating between good and evil, rejecting the latter and preferring the former. Thirdly, there is the person in the *Pratibhasica* stage, called the ignorant who does not see the truth either entirely as it is or with the addition of differentiation merely, but sees it quite inverted that is seeing the good as evil and evil as good. *Atman* or *Brahman* is common to all the three. It is to illustrate this position that Baba referred to the king, his deputy, and his messenger. He gave another illustration also, namely, the infinite *Akasa* or Space, then the *akasa* which is in a big pot, called *Kumbhakasa*, and thirdly, in a small pot, called *Ghatakasa*. In all the three *Akasa* is common but it is in different degrees. Baba therefore said, Just like that, *Brahman* appears in different forms in this world which is the play of *Maya*. It, is the union of *Brahman* with *Maya* that causes *Brahmanda* the universe. Then Chandorkar put the question, 'who is this *Maya!* Who created her, and what is she like?' You just now said that the root of the whole world is *Chaitanya*. Then where does *Maya* come in?' Baba's answer was, 'I will describe to you where and how she comes. *Maya* is the name given to the *Shakti* or Power of *Chaitanya*, which makes *Chaitanya* appear in the different forms. Can you separate *Chaitanya* from its *Shakti!* You cannot, just as you cannot separate jaggery from its sweetness and the Sun from its brilliance. The separation from *Chaitanya* comes only at the end of all existence, that is, when there is a final merger of the Universe in *Brahman*. *Maya* ends when *Chaitanya* is realised. *Chaitanya* is endless. Both *Chaitanya* and *Maya* are beginningless. Then Baba added, *Maya* and *Chaitanya* are also named *Prakriti* and *Purusha*.

And these are fully described in *Jnaneswari*. He referred Chandorkar to *Jnaneswari* to get full *Atma Jnana* that is, knowledge about this *Maya* theory. He added *Maya* is *Karya* and has wonderful qualities. I am such and such a person. You are such and such are all the result of *Maya*. All these are unreal differences. You see if you are under *Maya*, undifferentiated Reality does not appear. *Maya* has two aspects, namely, the *Avarana* covering up the consciousness of the soul I or *atman* and *Vikshepa* producing illusory appearances over the covering. A cooly dreamt that he became a king. Thereby he forgot his coolyship. That coolyship was covered up, that is, by *Avarana* and kingship was produced by *Maya* over that cover, that is *Vikshepa*. *Maya* covers up *Brahman* and produces all worldly appearances! Baba then added the words, In reality, the world does not exist. Only one Real *Sat* exists, but these appearances are taken to be real. That causes the mischief *akalyan*. So kick out *Maya* and regain *Brahman*. How is it to be done? Regard yourself as Pure *Chaitanya*. Water when relieved of impurity is pure water. Similarly remove impurity of *Maya* from this world of appearances. Then that appearance becomes reality. This is the *upasana* of the Real *Sadvastu*. Think of this always. This is my advice to all. This constant thought of the *Sadvastu* or *Atman* is the *Adhyatma*. You should realise this *Atman* as yourself and become *Mukta* in this life. This is the summing up given by Das Ganu on this very important matter of what Baba said about *Maya*. We may very well sum it up by saying that Baba referred to all manifestations through the power of God or *Brahman* as the work of *Maya*, and the highest goal of spiritual endeavour is to go back to God crossing this world of appearances which keeps us away from God. This is another way of putting the grand verse in Bhagavad Gita²⁶¹,

Daivihyesha Gunamayi
Mama maya Duratyaya
Mameva yee prapadyaru
May am Etam taranti te,

this means, This *Devi* who is composed of the three *gunas* is my *Maya* and impossible to get over. Those get over it who surrender themselves completely to

me, they can cross *Maya*. is the effect of this stanza and Baba's sayings? One thing is patent. If a person wishes to be completely identified with *Parabrahman* and lose his personality or individuality in the Universal Self then the course for him is to think of *Poorna Parabrahman* only. That is to think of nothing else, not even to think to himself as an ego, or if the thought of ego comes, he must at once crush it by regarding it as only one of the appearances of the same Supreme *Brahman* and therefore, in no way different from the Supreme *Brahman*. Now, the thought of one's own personality is accompanied by a sense of difference between the self and the nonself; I am here, you are there and these things are elsewhere. In that way there is the idea of a self or personality distinguished from the surroundings. There is no personality without contrast to the surroundings. By reason of this differentiation, the world of manifestation gets on. Various individuals strive for their individual benefits. Hence comes mutual conflict between individuals and groups and nations. Therefore, if one wishes that there should be no conflict at all, the basis of all difference must be removed, and that basis is 'You are in that body; I am here in this body; The two bodies are different bodies by difference in space, time and characteristics. As long as we regard these differences of time, space and causation as real and essential, we think of ourselves and proceed to work out what we think is for our benefit and happiness. But if our work turns useless, and instead of happiness, unhappiness is derived, we have to reverse the process. Reversing the process is done by removal of the distinctions in our minds that we are different from each other and from our surroundings.

The difference between persons is based upon the identification by each individual or himself with the body. If that identification goes, it will be easy for each to regard himself as the *Paramatma*. All differences will then perish, because all parts of *Paramatma* are equally *Paramatma*. In that case, there is no one troubling the other and no cause of unhappiness. The state of the *Paramatma* is *Satchitananda*, that is, Supreme Bliss, not positive joy like the tasting of sugar as contrasted with the tasting of chillies, but an ineffable state of peace, which is said to be the very nature of *Paramatma*. Therefore Baba's

advice and the advice of Sri Krishna may be taken to be a practical prescription. Regard everything in the world as part and parcel of or as really *Paramatma*, including yourself, and thus achieve your supreme goal or supreme peace and bliss. About this conclusion, it is not likely to be a serious dispute or discussion, at least by those who believe in monism. Even those who believe in Dualism or pluralism may agree in treating all egos as part of God at the final stage, and thus practically agree with the above conclusion.

So far there is little reason for quarrel or dispute, but the serious difficulty in this matter arises when persons try to put forward the theory of *Maya* as a proposition for intellectuals to agree to as the result of enquiry and reasoning. Persons are asked to regard everything about them as mere unreality and proceed to deal with the world's affairs on that footing. Now here comes the difficulty. It is patent that if I really regard others and the difference between myself and others as fiction of *Maya*, I cannot be talking with another about this fiction. The very contact itself is fiction and the talk is fiction and the person addressed in order to be convinced is also fictitious. So, there appears to be an apparent absurdity in that position. This is the frequent subject matter of attacks against *Advaitism* and the question is whether Baba ever intended to convey the idea that for purposes of philosophy or for wordly conduct, one can proceed to deal with others in actual life on the footing of the *Maya* theory? Baba was never concerned with maintaining philosophical conclusions never debating various conflicting philosophical theories. He was a *Guru* intent on practical guidance of those who sought him for guidance. So, when he talked about *Maya* to Chandorkar, he made it clear that what he said related to the *sadhana* to be adopted by Chandorkar for purposes of God realisation and self realisation. It was not an attempt to make Chandorkar accept one intellectual conclusion about the *Maya* theory to be kept along with a number of theories and hypotheses and rules for guidance in worldly affairs. The whole mischief arises only if the latter course is adopted. Baba can never be considered to have given any decision of his regarding the correctness or incorrectness of *Monism* and *Dualism*. *Maya* has thus been referred to as the power of God to manifest himself, and when so

viewed, no serious objection can be raised to references to *Maya* for the limited purpose of undertaking God's work and manifestation, the way in which the *sadhakas* should work in order to get *moksha* or liberation, that is, God realisation. To this extent, we may say that Baba's positions stated in the beginning of this chapter as to *Maya* are fairly good and clear, and most readers can accept it and proceed upon it. With Baba's view of *Karma* we shall next proceed to deal, and see what position was put forward by Baba. Baba was explaining Hinduism to Hindus and *Dvaitism* to the *Dvaitins*. So, Baba had no separate position of his own. In the matter of *Karma*, almost all Hindus are agreed that the doctrine of *Karma* does apply to human dealings and even dealings amongst creatures. Baba has applied the law of *Karma* even to dogs and other creatures and which may be said to be nothing but this, namely, a cause produces an effect. Every action done with a certain mentality tends to strengthen that mentality and produce not merely the results worked for but also a tendency to continue that mentality further and further with greater and greater strength. If a man begins with grabbing, against all scriptural injunctions that we should not have greed, the result is greed grows upon one. The more we think of the objects coveted, the stronger is our affection for the objects, and if there are other persons who obstruct or stand in the way, greed turns into anger.

Says the Gita²⁶²

Sangath sanjayate Kamah

Kamath Krodhobijayate

that is, From attachment to objects anger springs up.

Krodhat Bhavati Sammohah.

that is, From anger arises confusion or delusion. A person in a state of anger fancies all sorts of things as being true or essential to his happiness and acts under those delusions.

Sammohat Smritivibhramah.

that is, The power to perceive moral truths and the way in which events progress and affect one's own welfare and that of others, is lost. No clear perception remains.

Smriti Bhramsat Buddhi Nascāh

Buddhi Nascat Pranasyati

That is, By reason of losing one's memory, stored wisdom is lost, with the loss of wisdom, the soul is lost. Thus, the Gita describes the chain of consequences resulting from attachment or desire. The law of *karma* points out how causes and effects follow each other and affect the future of every *Jiva* that is conscious of its separate individuality. Therefore, the law of *karma* is a mere statement of moral law and no person can seriously complain of the operation of the law. But often we find an expression of confused opinions about *karma* by persons who misunderstand the law of *karma*. None should complain that causes produce effects. But the complaint is often heard, that by *karma* a person is greatly hampered, and the tendency of everything to aggravate itself and carry one on to a bitter end cannot be a good law. This, however, is to confuse tendencies with actual facts. In actual life persons have various tendencies and have also the principle of variation. When a person goes on in a downward current from sin to worse sin, from crime to worse crime, some former touch with holy persons or places comes suddenly as an element of variation to interrupt the chain of worsening consequences - the chain of evil to greater evil and thus stops him. Ajamila is one instance. For another instance, the Veerabhadrappa and Basappa case may be cited. They were two persons who bowed to Baba in one *janma* and had bitter differences. Veerabhadrappa by reason of his greed for money with considerable power and personality was wrath with Basappa for claiming the property which came to Gowri, the wife of Veerabhadrappa. Basappa, greedy enough to get at that property, had that loathsome quality called cowardice, and lack of strength, and Veerabhadrappa vowed to drink the blood of Basappa. Basappa sought refuge with Baba, and Baba agreed to protect him. Before the revenge was carried out both died, and Veerabhadrappa to carry out his hatred and to kill his opponent was born as a cobra and Basappa was born as a frog. The cobra was in the next *janma* proceeding to catch that frog, when Baba in that *janma* intervened and told Veerabhadrappa, 'Cease from your hatred. Give up your attempt to harass your enemy Basappa. Then Veerabhadrappa the

snake gave up the frog. Baba said, 'One's evil *karma* will continue till one's contact with *Satpurushas* saves one from further consequences'. From hatred to murder was Veerabhadrappa's natural downfall. But Baba came in and gave him a warning. So, the working of the previous evil *vasanas* was suddenly stopped and a new element got into Veerabhadrappa's life, namely, self-control, giving up of hatred and these would lead to good results. So, the law of *karma* for good persons promotes good, and for evil persons promotes evil. So, in itself the law of *karma* is not a matter for regret. One must always remember that there are laws of one's own being and God's plan for all creatures. Any one who wishes sincerely to achieve his own soul's welfare would pause to study what his duties are and seek the help of great ones and *Gurus* to guide him in his path, then by surrendering himself to great ones, allow his evil *vasanas* to be crushed out and good *vasanas* to be developed, and ultimately to get both sets of *vasanas* which are part of one's personality to be drowned in the contemplation of the Guru-God. This is the teaching about *Karma* by *Sadhakas* to Baba. The law of *Karma* is decried by people who do not understand it. Some say that *Karma* can never be got rid off. There is an element of truth in that statement. But the way in which it is put as above is misleading and wrong. The law of *Karma* is merely the law of cause and effect. To say that an effect cannot be rectified or modified is absurd. If cause A produces the effect B, it is absurd to say that B must always continue to be B and nothing can change it. Just as cause A produces effect B, cause C impinging upon B may make changes in the effect. The fact is that most acts done with a purpose are producing certain tendencies and certain other results. One should not confuse the actual result or reward earned by an act with the tendency. The tendency can and should always be met if it is an evil tendency. To say that *karma* is inexorable, and nothing can change it, is positively absurd. Generally people think of tendencies when putting forward that proposition, and one can be positive that all tendencies may change by stimuli producing opposite tendencies. Sinfulness is a tendency and it can always and should always be met by virtuous actions, virtuous contacts, holy readings and *Satsang*. As for the rewards, it is often said,

Avascyam Anubhoktavyam

Kritam karma scubha Ascubham.

that is, What one has earned as a reward or punishment for one's act, good or evil must of necessity be endured. This is generally speaking true. But it is not true in the way in which it is baldly put. A person who commits murder is liable to be hanged. But he may also have other forms of punishment either immediately or later on. The sentences may be altered, reduced, and even completely condoned on such occasions as the King's Birthday pardons. Therefore, it is not correct to say that the reward or punishment earned by conduct is unalterable. Everything on earth is liable to change or mitigate and if we remember this, we shall be able to meet the objections sometimes raised to Sai Baba's statement about *karma*. In the very opening Charters of Baba's Charters and Sayings, we find Baba's statement. 'If one puts his foot on Shirdi soil his *karma* is abolished'. Many a man wonders whether that is possible especially in view of the dictum quoted above, *Avascyam Anubhoktavyam*. Baba also told Chandorkar that certain broad decisions arrived at as to the birth and death of people are treated as facts resulting from previous acts of individuals. Regarding birth of a child, death of a son-in-law, about which Chandorkar was anxious to make Baba work on his behalf, Baba declared that they were the result of previous *karma* and could not be altered. In a sense that is true. Certain births and certain deaths are all fixed by series of antecedent events, but yet Baba is able to mould these and shape these, at certain stages and modify these for the benefit of the concerned devotees. When talking to Dr. Chidambaram Pillai, Baba explained the correct doctrine. Dr. Pillai had been suffering intensely from guinea worm. He told a friend to go and report to Baba that his sufferings were intolerable and to request Baba to transfer these sufferings to some ten later births of his and leave him free from the sufferings in this *janma*. When this was reported to Baba, the latter sent for Pillai and told him, 'What, you want ten *janmas*! What has to be endured in ten *janmas* can be crushed into ten days by the power of *Satpurushas*'. So, Baba ordered him to remain with his legs outstretched at *Dwarakamayee* and he told him that a crow would come and peck at his wound

and cure him. In a few days, Abdul, Baba's permanent attendant, carelessly put his foot down upon Pillai's wound and crushed all the guinea worms out of it, merely by accident as, he Pillai, would have thought. But nothing done at the Mosque to Pillai could be considered as an accident, and Baba said that Abdul was the crow, and that no further crow was wanted to peck at Pillai's wound. Pillai was then asked to go home, and in ten days, the entire suffering from guinea worm was cured.

In another case, that of Bhimaji, who had serious chest diseases such as asthma and tuberculosis, Baba first told Shama, 'In bringing this thief to me what a load of responsibility you are placing on me. Baba meant that the tuberculosis and asthma from which Bhimaji suffered were the result of Bhimaji's *karma* in a previous *janma* consisting of theft. Bhimaji felt Baba's declaration a blow. At once he surrendered himself to Baba and said, Helper of the helpless! I am helpless. Pray show pity and grace to me. Then Baba's tone changed, Baba told him, The *Fakir* is merciful, and your disease will be cured. He was suffering from the results of a *karma*, but that could be mitigated, and so the man was sent to live and sleep in a wet verandah. Bhimaji did so. There, he had two very dreadful dreams: In one dream, he was mercilessly birched by a school master. For, in the dream he fancied he was a boy and the master was birching him. So, he felt the pain in the dream and roared out. In the second dream, it was even worse. He felt that some one was placing a stone roller and rolling it over his breast. He suffered all the horror of instant death approaching him. All the pain of a hanging sentence and whipping sentence were endured by this man in the course of one night. Baba thus changed the punishment which he had earned by his previous *karma*, and told him that he was thus free from *karmic* effects. He then recovered his health. The above instances go to show that most of our conceptions about *karma* are nebulous and ungrounded, and that the safest course for us to follow would be to be guided by the dicta of *Satpurushas* like Sai Baba.

Twenty-two

Shirdi Village Life

Shirdi was in the last century such an obscure hamlet of the Ahmednagar district in the Bombay Presidency that even in the district the village name was not well known. It was in those days a mere group of about 80 or 100 mud houses interspersed with narrow lanes between them and surrounded on all sides by an abundance of *babul*, prickly pear, and other wild growth. There was hardly a single respectable building fit for occupation by any gentleman visiting it from the town. There were no shops except the tiny village shops where grains or oil were sold, and there was no respectable temple barring perhaps the Maruti temple which also was a tiny dilapidated structure next to the Mosque dilapidated. Its rafters were coming off one after another and falling down. That was the condition in the middle of the last century. The villagers led a quiet life absorbed in their usual agricultural operations, and as for shows and conveyances, these were seldom had there, and a weekly village fair was the grandest sight and comfort for the villagers. If once a *tonga* came into the village, the village children and elders would stare at it as a rarity. This was because it was but a hamlet of the main village Rahata, which is three miles away. Even Rahata is a place of very little importance known only to those who are accustomed to the road map or to constant travel on roads. But the distance of three miles from Rahata was sufficient to keep the Shirdi people humble and contented with their lot, and the place was so wretchedly poor that with very little income or none, one could pull on with his life there. Some hermits *or fakirs* would occasionally visit the village and kept the people in touch with the lofty thoughts or modes or life dimly perceived by them.

We are referring, of course, to the main mass of the villagers who were Hindus. There were just a few Mohammadan houses and the Mohammadan population was very poor, wretched, and not prospering. They were artisans or labourers and were hardly possessed of anything like property. Some of them chiselled images. Others built houses. At the head of the village society were the Hindu village headmen. Immediately after the middle of the last century, the village headmen or Patils were Ganapat Rao Patil Kothe and his brothers or cousins. All were styled Patils and the head of them was actually performing the

function of the village Patil. There were no roads, no street lighting and no public comforts such as privies. Even for the supply of drinking water there was only a village well and the water had to be drawn up, each one bringing his or her own vessel. There were one or two mud built *chavadis* used as schools for the few children, with furnished accommodation for visiting strangers. Corporate life was at a low ebb, and as for religious life, there were three petty, fragile structures one for *Sani*, one for *Ganapati*, and one for *Sankar*. So petty indeed that they had hardly any doors to preserve and safeguard the images. For instance during the early years of this century, a half crazy man entered into each of these temples and broke the images; whether by iconoclastic zeal or simply by a freak of madness; people could not make out. He also broke the marble *padam* of Baba placed under the *gode neem* tree into two by hitting it with some heavy stone or other object. Thus there were hardly any religious buildings. The Maruti temple next to the Mosque was about a dozen feet square. The Khandoba temple just outside the village was about 8 or 10 square feet, a structure of brick and clay; and a mud and brick temple of Vittal in the heart of the village were practically all the religious buildings. Thus Shirdi in the middle of the 19th century would hardly be considered a place of religious merit and certainly not a place having any person, object or shrine of religious importance enough to attract people to visit the village. Incidentally the reader would note that today it is exactly the opposite of what has been described above. Along the cool sequestered vale of life They kept the noiseless tenor of their way may be taken from Gray's elegy and applied to old Shirdi with great appropriateness. This obscure and negligible village has now suddenly become perhaps the most important place for Sai worship, which has spread all over the country and which promises to overflow its present limits and work wonders and benefits for thousands, if not millions. Today Shirdi looks exactly like a township with numerous buildings of brick and stone and concrete with a number of storeyed structures, and it has become a place of pilgrimage for people all over India-not merely for Hindus but for all communities, taking rank with Kasi, Kanchi, Mathra and Rameswar.

Now in 1955, it presents the daily appearance of Tirupati Venkatesa temple and its approaches. There are streams of devotees coming by every train and every road and gathering at Shirdi. In spite of the very large number of rooms and halls and *Dharmasalas* provided by the Samasthan, most of the visitors find it difficult to get accomodation. Though boarding houses have also sprung up, the question of boarding is a difficulty for many. It is not merely in the assemblage of crowds but also in the atmosphere of the village and of the shrine that there is a close resemblance to Tirupati. People fired by *bhakti* and belonging to every class including the beggar class are swarming everyday and at everytime to the feet of Baba. And any one who visits the place cannot fail to catch the contagion of devotion and enthusiasm. Referring, however, to the crowds, we may incidentally notice how it has pleased Baba to arrange the arrival of the crowds to his feet. Toward the close of the last century, Baba's popularity began to swell by the work of Chandorkar and Das Ganu, especially by the latter's *Hari Kathas*. In the first decade of this century there was a regular and perceptible increase in the number of people especially respectable people, running up to see Sai Baba and in the next decade, the crowd of visitors was swelling not only in number but also in the nature of its components. People like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, George Seymour Curds, Revenue Commissioner of Bombay, Collectors, Deputy Collectors, *Mamlatdars*, and other employees of the Government, rich *Parsis* and well-to-do *Mohammadans* especially from Hyderabad side were in the swarm that came to Baba. It was noticed that poor and weak people, especially old and crippled people, could not easily get to see Baba on account of the approaches being filled with crowds difficult to cross. The crowds at the *Dwarakamayee*, where Baba was generally seated, were also very thick and included not merely human beings but a large number of dogs and other creatures. Abdulla Jan in his statement in 1936 says, All that glory of Sai Maharaj was then grand, but in 1936 there was no relic of the crowd. The halls of *Dwarakamayee* and the *puja* room were visited only by a few people on ordinary days. And Abdulla Jan thought that Baba's, like all human glory, rose to the zenith at one time and afterwards went down to the

nadir. But Abdullah Jan did not know Baba's ways. Even as Jan was giving his statement, the movement was progressing and within a very few years, the number of visitors to Shirdi increased and went on increasing in arithmetical or geometrical progression. At present it is difficult to say whether we are anywhere near the zenith of Baba's popularity. Perhaps it is only just now that Baba is getting to be recognised in various parts of India. The more He is known, the more assuredly will He draw groups to his feet. One index of his growing popularity is the large number of children we name after Him in so many families, Hindu and *Mohammadan*, and the large number of temples and *bhajan salas* named after Him. So he is sure to equal Tirupati Venkatesa in the matter of attraction of people. Incidentally it may be noted that Tirupati Venkatesa and Sai are not different. Sainatha Manana says,

Venkatesastu Sayeescah
Tayor bhedatn Na Vidyate
Tayor aikyam Smaran Nityam
Tat Sthanam Labhate Narah

this means, Venkatesa is indeed Sayeesa or vice versa, Sayeesa is the same as Venkatesa. There is no difference between the two. Perpetually remembering this identity, one reaches that position of Venkatesa or Sayeesa. As may be seen from the historical sketch of Sai Baba's growth and development in his last birth, He attained his present position, as stated by himself several times, by the grace of Venkatesa, his *Guru*. His *Guru* was originally named Gopal Rao, but had become identified with Venkatesa. And to Baba, Venkatesa is only one of the names of God, Allah, Hari and Khandoba all denoting the same God. Therefore, his *Guru* having become identified with God Venkatesa, divine powers permeated and saturated his nature and these flowed on to Baba especially at the time of initiation of *diksha* and throughout his further life when he was constantly dwelling in his mind upon his *Guru*. So, no wonder that Shirdi begins to resemble Tirupati.

We are not, however, concerned with the mere question of crowds. We are concerned with the way life is led at Shirdi or has been led all these years.

The followers and worshippers of Baba have derived the same benefits by worshipping him as the most intense worshippers of Tirupati Venkatesa or Brindavana Krishna or Bhadrachala Rama have. For all these are but God. For purposes of spiritual benefits, the accumulation of crowds is not a necessary or beneficial factor though the enthusiasm of large crowds might be infectious and sufficient to start many people on their *bhakti marga* and may confirm waverers in the strength of their *bhakti*. So far as ideas of Baba prevalent in the village are concerned, there is bound to be some fluctuation in the villagers' mentality. Before the closing decades of the last century, Baba was considered first as a negligible or pitiable *pagal fakir*, then he grew to be the wizard of the village, and then into the god or godman of a good number and the Lord or benefactor or food-giver. The Sai Maharaj that fed several hundreds everyday, shed his mortal coil in 1918, and when he passed away, many a villager formed and retained the impression that Baba was dead and was no more a factor to be dealt with. The poor beggars who were fed by Baba, did no doubt suffer from his absence but those, whose hunger was spiritual, did not suffer so badly, though they also found the physical absence of Baba at first to be a handicap in the way of Sai *bhakti*. Sai was so little understood and there was hardly anything worth calling a real account of Baba at the time of his *Mahasamadhi* in 1918. Luckily by the exertions of H.S. Dixit, Dabolkar, and other *bhaktas*, literature sprang up.

A monthly journal, Sai Lila was started and Baba was pleased to keep up some degree of Sai *bhakti* amongst those who had contacted him and the small number that came into contact through them. As decades after decade went on, this way of keeping up Sai *bhakti* appeared to fail, and that is why Abdulla Jan noted in 1936 that the number of persons approaching Sai Baba at Shirdi was so pitifully small on ordinary occasions. But it was not Sai's will that his movement should flag. He roused up agencies from unexpected quarters and the Sai movement flared up in the thirties and forties of this century so that it attained an all India character and drew thousands instead of drawing hundreds to Baba's feet. So Shirdi village life has been changed into Shirdi town life so far as externals are concerned and even so far as the spiritual side is concerned. Sai

Bhaktas are carrying on Sai Worship and flocking to his feet in his present astral form keeping up a high degree of enthusiasm. Through Sai literature like the present available and the growth of Sai temples and *bhajans*, the Sai spirit amongst the visitors to Shirdi is bound to grow more and more. Shirdi is now important mainly on account of the growing Sai movement though incidentally the sugar factories and other industrial conditions have added to the material improvement and importance of Shirdi. The main fact to notice about Baba worship at Shirdi is that the dilapidated Mosque that represented his residence in about 1880 or 1890, when N.G. Chandorkar first came to him, has been built up and modernised to the extent permissible. The main place of worship of Baba is now at the Sai Mandir which was formerly termed Buty Wada. The Samasthan has now acquired and become owner of these holy places connected with Baba. To the credit of the Samasthan it must be said that all places connected with Sai Baba and his daily movements are so well maintained that the *bhakti* of any serious Sai devotee has ample facilities to develop while at Shirdi. Every part of Shirdi is important to the *bhakta* by reason of Sai having visited it or performed certain *chamatkars* or other benefits at those places or by the burial or erection of memorials of his devotees or followers or creatures connected with him. Even the horse that formed Baba's procession *Shamakarna* has his burial tomb just as the tiger that visited him shortly before his *Mahasamadhi* has its tomb in front of *Dwarakamayee*. The best *bhaktas* of Sai Baba are not buried or given memorials there except in the shape of pictures. There are a good number of pictures in front of Baba's shrine including Ganpat Rao Patil's, Bayyaji Bai's, Tatyapa Patil's, Dabolkar's, Dixit's, Chandorkar's and others. These will give many a holy thought for the *bhaktas* viewing them to develop their *bhakti* and increase their stock of information about Sai. After all Shirdi is historically important because of the growth and spread of the Sai Baba movement from it. Out of love for Baba's dwelling place and out of regard for his statements about Shirdi, many a devotee vows to go to Shirdi if some wish of his is accomplished. But in most cases, Sai Baba has outgrown Shirdi and his presence is felt in the various temples that have been built for him and in the

bhajan halls; and even in the homes, Baba's presence is actually felt and his *sakshatkaras* also take place sometimes to confirm the feeling that He is divine and everywhere. Still Shirdi retains and must retain its importance and attractions to Sai *bhaktas* and is bound to increase in its material appearance and in the material provision made for the satisfaction of the devotees needs.

Twenty-three

God Realisation - Brahma Nishta

The words God, God-realisation, *Brahman*, and *Brahma Nishta* are constantly heard in discourses and seen in books. But how often do they convey any real idea to persons? In connection with the biography of saints, this question naturally arises, because a saint is ordinarily taken to be a person who has God realisation or, as some persons put it, one who has seen God and is familiar with God. *Madhabhijna* or familiar with Me is the description given of the *Guru*, to whom Lord Krishna directs Uddhava to go²⁶³. Now before one can deal with the subject with confidence, one encounters various preliminary difficulties. Is God a definite object in order that one can get familiar with it just as one gets familiar with one's parents and friends? Or is it like a parabola only partly seen or a peripheral idea? All the objects that we know are objects in space and time. Is God an object in space and time? We see only things in space. Therefore, if one says he has seen God, the inference is that God has been seen in space. There is no doubt a feeling in one's mind sometimes that one has seen a particular object, say, for instance, in visions or dreams though one is unable to say definitely that all such objects are seen in space. The seeing of God is a very common phrase. The term used in literature for it is *Sakshatkara*. That term does not always mean seeing God. *Sakshatkari* is often employed to denote a person in a high religious state of mind or one with extraordinary experience especially in spiritual matters at least possessed of such extraordinary powers as to make people believe that he sees things which others do not. But the usual meaning of *Sakshatkari* is one who has actually seen God. That God is seen or was seen is a statement encountered very frequently in religious books of all the religions. In the Bible, for instance, God is said to have appeared before Moses and Jesus.

That is, they all actually saw God. As seeing and hearing are generally put together, the term hearing God is used often along with seeing. In the Old Testament, hearing some voice from thunder and declaring that that was the voice of God is a common feature. In the New Testament²⁶⁴ when Jesus cried 'Father glorify thy name', then there came a voice from Heaven, saying I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. Jesus said, 'This voice came for your sakes'. In Hindu scriptures and other literature, 'Seeing God' is a very common phenomena and not merely seeing but playing with God and having considerable familiarity with God is frequently found in the biography of medieval saints. Jana Bai is said to have been helped in her work of grinding grain for domestic purposes by God, and she is stated to have shared and eaten the remnants of the Brahmins food with God. At Namdev's cry God ate up the food he offered. In this case, God denotes a particular form and a particular incarnation, namely, Krishna or Vittal, and in several similar cases when a person is said to have seen God, it is a particular incarnation of a particular form that is seen. That is God and that alone is God to a person like Janabai or Namdev, at least at first. There may not be much difficulty for one to agree that a particular incarnation with a particular form might have first led a life on earth with the *sthula sarira*, that is, with the gross body, and later on passed into the *linga sarira* that is astral or subtle body, and from there from time to time, appeared with that particular form or any form it liked, exercising its *yata sankalpa samsiddhi* or creative power. Students of Sai literature will be quite familiar with these facts. Sri Sai is now said to appear, time and again before particular devotees, generally with the form which he wore when he was at Shirdi. People often say that whom they identify with God has appeared before them and talked with them or given them directions or help. That Sai has appeared and is appearing and rendering such help appears to be beyond question, especially to those who have been frequently reading of such experiences. The very latest pamphlet issued by the All India Sai Samaj, 'Is Sai Baba living and helping', now contains unquestionable evidence of Baba's appearing and acting at various places including the Ahmedabad lawyer C.C. Manikvala's house. If seeing God is only of this sort,

then we may take it, that there is very strong evidence of God being seen and moved with. There are many persons who would agree with the truth of the phenomena mentioned, but at the same time would prefer to use the term God in a different sense so as to denote Formless God. We are all, according to Taittiriya Upanishad bound to worship the father, the mother the husband and the *Acharya*, or the *Gurudeva*, as God; and to the worshipper they are God. But to those who are not worshipping them, such fathers, mothers, teachers, and husbands are not God at all but only ephemeral forms.

We shall now in this chapter take up the general stand-Point and find out whether there is God-vision or God-seeing in the generally accepted sense of the vision of a person or personality accepted by every one or, at least, by vast masses, as God. The difficulty here is that there is hardly any unanimity of opinion as to what God is amongst all persons. There are some persons who do not wish to say that there is any God at all. Even omitting them as a negligible minority, others differ in their ideas of God. The vast mass of persons who talk about and discuss God are persons without any actual experience of God, without any actual realisation or any state of mind which can be even by a remote analogy called seeing the divine. The vast majority are without realisation either of a Personal or Impersonal God. They have no *Brahmanishta* and they are not *Harinishta* or *Mada bhijnam* that is, familiar with a Personal God and those who contact an Impersonal God may be trifling in the view of those highly respectable authorities who say that the Impersonal is the Personal and the Personal is the Impersonal and that differences are without any real justification. Yet there are persons who refuse to accept this view, who contend that up to the last moment of time, the Personal is the Personal even when unseen for a time and can never be called Impersonal; and that the Impersonal is the Impersonal and can never be styled the Personal. We are now entering into the field of religious controversy. But in this book it is safer for us to avoid such controversies especially because there is no need for such controversies, also because Sai Baba deprecated the intrusion of controversy into his biography. The safest course for us to adopt here is to see whether, on the basis of any

particular scripture we can state what God vision or God realisation or *Brahman* realisation is, and how far it is declared possible or impossible. Let us take the Hindu scripture first, for the great majority of our readers are Hindus. Now so far as Hindus are concerned, the *Vedas* and the *sastras* are the determining factors and the *Vedanta* consisting of the *Upanishads* is considered as an essential part of the *Vedas*. In the *Upanishads*, there is a vast preponderating mass of texts and passages in favour of treating *Brahman*, which is the word used mostly in the *Upanishads* for God, as denoting the Impersonal Absolute. And we shall see what God realisation or *Brahma Nishta* would be, after determining what the *Upanishads* say about *Brahman*. The Kenopanishad says,

Yat chakshusha na pascyati Yena chakshumshi pascyati.

Tad eva Brahma tvam viddhi Na idam yad idam upasate.

this means, *Brahman* is that which one does not see with the eye, but that, by means of which the eye sees. That alone is *Brahman* not objects which people in the world are worshipping as god or gods. Similarly about hearing and thinking it is repeatedly stressed in the same *Upanishad* that *Brahman* is not heard, that *Brahman* is not the subject of thought, that is, conceptual thought. Taking this as a fairly clear assertion that *Brahman* is not the subject matter of sensual perceptions, God-vision in the usual sense of seeing a God, is an impossibility. But the *Upanishad* refers to *Yad idam upasate* that is, that which people worship. Those are primarily symbols of *Brahman* and they may be acting as substitutes for *Brahman* with the vast masses. The mass ideas are based on the *puranas* which deal with Polytheism that is many Gods. Let it be noted that they are all with form, indeed the minor gods that is those below Narayana's *Avatar* are like men mistaking their bodies for themselves and treating phenomenal objects as real²⁶⁵

“sarve vimohitadhiyah tava maayayeme Brahmadayah tanuabhrutah bahirarthabhaavah”

that is, *Brahman* and other gods have bodies or forms and deluded by your Krishna's *Maya* treat phenomenal worlds as real. That is how we get the idea of a God talking with and walking with *bhaktas*. In the Old Testament, we read,

Abraham walked and talked with God. So, what Abraham walked and talked with was what people worshipped as God, a Personality, in general, yet at times the abstract *Brahman*. If this is conceded, then the very interesting question arises whether for each of us a distinction should be maintained in practice between the two. Water is the same, though, as the upper part of an iceberg, it may be hard and easily seen. As the lower part, it may be hard and not seen, or as liquid water it may be soft and seen or unseen and as vapour, it is neither seen nor felt as hard or soft. The distinctions are useful for practice though chemically all these forms are the same substance H₂O. If we dive into the definition of God, we may get some further light on the matter, that is, if we dive into the definition of both *Brahman* and God. In the *Tattiriya Upanishad*, *Bhrighu*, son of *Varuna*, asked the latter What is *Brahman*? The reply was,

Yato Va Imani Bhutani jayante Yena Jatani Jivanti.

Yat Prayanti abhi samviscanti Tad Brahma.

this means, That from which all these creatures or things of the Universe are born, that by which all these are sustained, that which they go to and get merged in finally, that is *Brahman*. In one word, the origin and the end of the Universe is *Brahman*. In this definition, the suggestion, rather than the express statement is that *Brahman* is the original cause and perhaps the Impersonal cause. Anyhow, God is usually thought of as the creator or cause. The popular way of viewing God is as the universal cause and protector, that is, treating God as a Person, omnipotent, beyond time, and all-prevading and all-protecting. The Hindu philosopher tries to work out the implications of omnipotence, omnipresence and ends by taking God as Impersonal mainly and uses the term *Brahman* for it. The Universe is manifest but the source of the Universe is not manifest and the source of the stream is the stream. Therefore *Brahman* is unmanifested, at least before creation but after the Universe has appeared, is *Brahman* to be treated as manifest or unmanifest? Here there is a difference of views or of treatment. The view preferred in the *Upanishads* is that everything that is manifested is really the unmanifested and is therefore, *Brahman*.

Sarvam kalavidam Brahma.

this is, the Truth perceived by the Seers only. Yet when objects manifested are seen or dealt with, they are not, as a rule, treated as *Brahman* by the mass. But the *sadhaka* aiming at *Brahma Jnana* must forget or ignore the seen and retain in his mind only the unmanifest cause as the real basis of the seen. A *sadhaka* who begins to think of or deal with *Brahman* takes himself away from each seen or perceived object of the manifest world, mentally at least, and treats it as *Brahman* that is as purely unmanifest. How the unmanifested appears as manifested is a great problem defying the skill of those who tried to reason it out, and for that purpose the *Upanishads* suggest various analogies. Analogy or *upamana* also is a *Pramana* or method of reaching the Truth with the help of which this question can be solved. What is not manifest to the senses or to some of the senses can get later manifested and again disappear from the manifestation. The *Chandogya Upanishad* in explaining *Brahman* through the mouth of a *Rishi* to his pupil *Svetaketu* gives sixteen analogies or arguments. A lump of salt, which is manifest to the eye, if dropped into water, completely disappears, and then to the bare sight there will be no salt. But if the water in which the salt was put is tasted and the taste is compared to the taste of the water before the salt was put in, one notices the difference. The water at the later stage is saltish while in the other stage it was not saltish. Hence the salt which now is not manifest to the sense of sight is still continuing in existence, manifest to the sense of taste. This is the analogy by which the *Guru* tries to inform the *sishya* that *Brahman*, the unmanifest, is still real and can be manifest to another sense or the self beyond the senses. The above refers to the procedure from the manifest to the unmanifest. Now another analogy takes this pupil from the unmanifest to the manifest. The student was asked to fetch a banyan fruit and open it. That was full of seeds. The student was asked to cut open one of the seeds, and he cut it open. Then the question put to the student was, What is there inside the seed? The answer was Nothing, then the teacher taught him This seed when planted rises to be a huge tree which covers the earth and that entire huge mass covering the earth comes from what you call the Nothing inside the seed. That which is not manifest to you when you opened the seed has become this vast

manifestation the tree or forest which your sight cannot ignore. *Svetaketu* the pupil, was given more than a dozen other arguments or analogies from which he could draw the conclusion that the unmanifest becomes the manifest and again merges back in the unmanifest. Therefore, the definition given above by *Varuna* has been condensed in the first *Brahman Sutra Janmadi Asya yatah*, which means, *Brahman* is that from which *Janma* birth, development, and the dissolution of the universe proceed and manifested. Therefore, the vast mass of thinkers and readers amongst Hindus accept the position that the unmanifest has become the manifest and the manifest again becomes the unmanifest. Lord Krishna, in asking Arjuna not to grieve over the coming disappearance or death of all his kinsmen in the battles of *Mahabharata*, says about their souls and other souls,

Avyaktadini Bhutani Vyakta Madhyani Bharata

Avyakta nidhanani Eva Tatra ka Paridevana.

this means, These creatures rise out of the unmanifest. But in the interim period of life are manifest, and at the end they again relapse into the unmanifest. What reason is there for bemoaning this? So, the Hindu mind is accustomed to treat the unmanifest and the manifest as being different modes of existence of the same, and what applies to creatures applies to God also. God also is unmanifest at times and manifest at other times. At most itimes, to most people, or in fact to almost all people, God is 'unmanifest. Nobody sees, hears, or has contact with God at all at ordinary times. But God is declared to manifest himself to some people in certain ways. When something suddenly manifests itself, is it the Universal and Original cause? This is a question which a doubter may raise; but those who have faith in God and expect or believe its manifestation for their benefit have no such doubts. It is the latter class we now deal with and hence doubts of identity have no place here in this book. When H.S. Dixit had a vision and did not know whose form he saw, Baba told him it was Vittal's. In such cases, God-vision leading to God-realisation or *Brahma Nishta* is said to occur. So, let us take up the question as to the circumstances in which God is said to become manifest. A manifestation is possible under limitations. What is manifest

to one may be unmanifest to everybody else, and yet it would be called a manifestation. What is manifest at a particular moment of time may at the next moment become unmanifest. The manifestation to the senses is the usual manifestation referred to. But, to certain minds, the manifestation to the senses is considered a very inferior order of experience. Knowledge obtained by sense experience is discounted by a good number of thinkers, but that which is obtained by the soul itself by its contemplation, without using the physical senses, is considered to afford a more reliable basis for one's conclusion or experience. Knowledge through the sense is called *Jnana* some times. But that which is obtained by the thought power is called *Vijnana*. No doubt the terms *jnana* and *vijnana* are not used in the above sense always and very often *vijnana* and *jnana* denote quite different things from those stated above and they may be used to denote the exact opposite of the above senses. *Vijnana* would be *Vividha Jnana* that is knowledge involving differences and multiplicity, while *Jnana* would denote pure consciousness in which no difference or multiplicity is involved. The way in which God is to be realised is imparted to a pupil by a teacher who himself has realised God and the method or course almost invariably suggested is some form of *Upasana* by the pupil. Das Ganu wanted²⁶⁶ *sakshatkara* of God, and told Baba, Baba, you ask me to make *Saptaha* of *Bhagavata*, that is, to read the whole of *Bhagavata* in seven days. I shall do so, but I must have *sakshatkara* or appearance of God at the end of it. Baba said, Yes. Vittal will appear. But there must be sufficient *bhav*, that is, intensity of concentration on God. Usually, the accepted method for getting *sakshatkara* of God realisation is intense concentration, and, as we have been referring to the *Bhagavata* just now, we may note that the concentration mentioned therein is further described in the *Bhagavata* itself. In the *Ekadasa Skanda*, Uddhava asks how God is to be thought of in words which are remarkably similar to the words used by Baba. Baba said, If you are unable to think of *Nirakara*, concentrate upon my form that is think of Me as God. In the *Ekadasa Skanda* of *Bhagavata*²⁶⁷ the same is advised. Sri Krishna says to Uddhava, Portray in your mind the entire body of Sri Krishna, get all the limbs, the ornaments, the colour, the sheen and other

attributes into your mind. After doing that preliminary work, narrow the field of concentration. Proceed from the whole body with dress and weapons to concentrate on the face alone. After concentrating on that, proceed further to finer concentration remembering that the essential nature of God is not material but ethereal. Uddhava is advised to think of or see within his mind Sri Krishna's face as nothing but ether. Ether is all embracing, subtle, and unmanifest. So, from the manifest, Uddhava is advised to pass on to the unmanifest, with the feeling that it is the same, that is, with the conviction that the Krishna's face that he has concentrated upon is the same as the Universal ether. That gives him naturally help to reach absorption or *laya* in the unmanifest *Brahman*. The net result of the concentration, in fact of all concentration on a Divine Form would be that the soul of the *sadhaka* will be filled with the bliss of the ethereal unmanifest *Brahman* which as Krishna says is the same as *Satchitananda*, that is, that which is perceived as bare Bliss within the soul of the *sadhaka* himself in *Sushupti-or-Turiya* trance proving *Tat Tvam Asi*. This process is one of *sakshatkara* and may also be called God-vision, though at the final stage there is nothing for Uddhava to see outside his body. Uddhava becomes like a piece of salt dropped into the ocean of God and simply perceives or has experience of unlimited *Satchitananda*. This is undoubtedly *sakshatkara*. Seeing God, it cannot be literally. But it may be in a metaphorical sense. Seeing, *Darsan*, is often used in the scriptures to denote knowing with certainty as usually certainty is derived by seeing, *paripascyanti dheerah*²⁶⁸.

Let us however pass on to the other forms of *sakshatkara* which are far more common than the above. Hinduism is preeminently a polytheistic religion for the many. It is only very few who reach unity of God through the Upanishad, and the Hindus revel in the infinite number of gods and saints whom they worship and get *sakshatkara* of and to the vast mass, there is no other, that is, no unmanifested God to experience. If a person goes on intently thinking of his *Ishta Devata*, the latter appears to him and renders help to him in innumerable matters. This is familiar to readers of medieval literature-the history of the saint-and this is what is mostly referred to as *sakshatkara*. There is the vision and the

contact with the *Ishta Devata* and the attainment of innumerable benefits thereby. This is the sort of *sakshatkara* that evidently Das Ganu wanted but did not obtain. But some of these *sakshatkaras*, or rather the vast majority of *sakshatkaras* as a rule, are transient and the benefits are worldly-hence often a bar to Realisation. They appear just for a fraction of a second and then disappear. But still within that very small portion of time they sometimes produce an impression of great importance which may affect the future life of the experiencer. Coventry Patmore who had mystic experiences and expressed the same in some of his verses has given a description of this fleeting *sakshatkara* that he enjoyed. His verses run thus :

What's that, which, ere I spake, was gone
So joyful and intense a spark
That, whilst o'erhead the wonder shone
The day, before but dull, grew dark?
I do not know; but this I know,
That, had the splendour lived a year,
The truth that I some heavenly show
Did see, could not be now more clear.
This know I too: might mortal breath
Express the passion then inspired,
Evil would die a natural death,
And nothing transient be desired;
And error from the soul would pass,
And leave the senses pure and strong
As sunbeams. But the best, alas,
Has neither memory nor tongue!

This may be compared with the experience of universal Bliss at Sunrise in W.W. Wordsworth's youth at Sunrise from the Excursion. H.S. Dixit had a *sakshatkar* of Vittal-very elusive and very momentary and in order to confirm his idea that it was real and that it related to Vittal, he went to Baba. Baba gave him assurance that it related to Vittal and that his experience was real, for Baba knew the

internal state of every one's mind and what occurred to each. Baba however added, Vittal Patil is a very elusive person; tie him fast; else he will elude. This gives us the clue to the exact nature of most of these *sakshatkaras*. They are very brief impressions produced either on the mind or on the senses and create the impression that one has seen his *Ishta Devata* and derived benefits thereby. But like all other sense impressions, these also must fade and be finally lost. If they are to benefit one, Baba's advice has to be followed, that is, there must be such a constant repetition of a *sakshatkara* as to make it a permanent possession. Instead of relying on a momentary glimpse of the view of something divine, one has to work one's own self till the self of the individual disappears in the self of the Universe. This is called *Brahma Jnana* or *Brahman* realisation. Even this may be momentary. In order to become permanent, the *sadhaka* is advised to repeat it so that the impression in the heart is far stronger and more serviceable. If one has really become identified with *Brahman*, death has disappeared. He can say with the Pope,

Oh! Grave, Where is the victory?

Oh! Death, Where is thy sting?

Death has no meaning to a person whose self has become the self of all, that is, who has lost his sense of separateness at once and forever²⁶⁹. Our sense of separateness is due to the fact of our identifying ourselves with our body. That identification is gradually corroded by *sakshatkar* such as those mentioned above. By constantly dwelling on God, that is by *Bhramara Kita* doctrine, As a man thinketh so he becometh, we get only God as our nature and the former identification of self with the body disappears. Baba said: This body is my home. My *Guru Mourshad* has taken me away from this body. That is, his *sakshatkara* of his own nature as that of *Brahman* became so permanent and enduring that the occasional identification with the body, if it should occur again, leaves no effect on the soul. There are stages in a *Jnani's* life, after he has gone through a course of realisation, when former delusions like the delusion that one is the body tend to recur but are overcome, especially with the powerful help of a *Guru*. The *sakshatkaras*, if they are utilised to overcome these delusions of difference,

are the greatest achievements for any soul. Baba evidently with the help of his *Guru* had arrived at that highest pinnacle and if persons have deep and concentrated faith in Baba and adopt the lines he has mentioned and set an example of, then they also can reach a similar state of *sakshatkara* which goes far beyond occasional sights of some divine forms but consists in retaining permanently a feeling of realisation that the self is not the body but the Universal Self. That is the true *sakshatkara* of the Real.

Glossary

abhisheka Offering a holy bath to the diety

abhyasa Practice

acharya deva The teacher treated as Lord/God

"acharya devo bhava" Worship the teacher

adhyatma Thought of atman, reality and eternity

adhyatma jnani Knower of self God - realised

advaitism The Hindu philosophy of non-dualisim

agni Fire

"aham brahmasmi" I am Brahman, the indweller of all souls

ahamkar Ego

akalyana Mischief

akarshana Act of attraction

akasa Space without limit

akkalkote wakil Akkalkote is a place. Wakil is an advocate

amor prope One who has no vanity or selfish love

amsas sparks

anal haq One with Allah supreme God

aniketana Homeless

animadi siddhis Various super natural powers

anityam asukham Life is impermanent & full of sorrow

anjali Salutation pose with folded hands

ankita A person deeply attached and dedicated fully to a master such as Shri Sai Baba

ankolam A tree

antaryamitva Acting as the soul of all creatures (the indweller)

"apanasarika karitat tatka" The Guru brings the student without any difficulty and without requiring any period of time to his absolute likeness

arthalubdha The conveteous *arti* Waving of lights, incense, camphor before an idol as an act of worship

asanga Non attachments keeping aloof
ashta mahasiddhis Eight super natural powers
ashtaishwaraya Eight types of wealth or riches
ashtapasas Eight knots of the Sishya, pupil's attachments
asirvada Hand raised in blessing
asthairya Weakness in thought and action
asthira Fickle minded
asuric bhava Emotions of people having narrow and cruel tendencies
asuya Envy
"atithi devo bhava" Worship the guest
atma sakshatkar Self-realisation
atmajnana Knowledge of atma, soul
atmana By self study
avadhuta A sage, unclad seer
avadhuta jnani Unclad seer of highest order
avahana Invocation
avarana Darkness or maya that covers up consciousness and knowledge
avatar Divine incarnation and God's agent or form
ayaskanta Magnetic stone
ayi Ramakrishna ayi-a great lady devotee of Shri Sai Baba
babqcha lekhru Children of Shri Sai Baba, Marathi
babul A kind of plant by name babul
baddha Conditional tie-up (bound by samsara or ajnanis)
bandha Bondage, relativity
bandhutva Relationship, kinsmanship
bhagat Baba's way of addressing Mahalsapathy his close disciple Marathi.
bhajan Singing of the Lord's attributes
bhakti Deep devotion to God
bhakti sraddhavihina The person without devotion or faith
bharatavarsha Bharat, India

bhava Emotional relationship

bhayam Fear

bhiksha alms

Bhishma The great warrior king of Mahabharata fame, the grand uncle of both the Kauravas and Pandavas

bhootadaya Compassion for all beings and creatures

bhramara kitanyaya The logic of the bee-as it evolves so it becomes. As a man thinks, so he becomes.

bilba A seed known as bilba *bilva* Bell tree leaves

brahma atma aikyam Oneness between God & soul united with supreme soul

brahma jnana Knowledge of Brahman

- brahma nishtha* A state of God-realisation
- brahma rakshas* A weird spirit of killer, evilly possessed
- brahmanda* The universe caused by Brahman uniting with maya
- brahmins* Knowers of Brahman, but known to denote people belonging to the highest caste
- buddhi* Intellect
- chaitanya* The supreme bliss of God Sri Sai Baba
- chaitanya marga* Way of nama sankeertan 'started by Chaitanya, an incarnation of Vishnu in Bengal
- chamara* Whisks, feathers tied up as a fan, an insignia of respect
- chamatkar* Miracles
- chatra* Umbrella, insignia of respect
- chaturmasya* Four months vow to be followed by a sannyasi
- chavadi* Common resting place in a village for pilgrims at Shirdi
- chintamani* The wish yielding mythical gem or stone
- chitta* Will
- dana* Charity
- daivam* Fate
- daivi sampath* Divine qualities
- dakshina* Money offered with respect to teachers, Gurus
- Dakshinamurthi* The supreme teacher who teaches through silence
- Dakshinamurthy pooja and upasana* Worship of Lord Shiva in the pose of Dakshinamurthy, the teacher who teaches in silence, with no word spoken. . The method of sitting before him and learning through silence.
- dama* Control of feelings
- dasis* Devoted maid servant
- Datta* The trinity; Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva is combined in one and is known as Datta or Dattatreya, Sai Baba is an incarnation of Datta
- Datta charithra pothi* Reading of book on Datta, the three headed God. Trinity in one.
- daya* Compassion, concern

deha Form, body

dehatamabuddhi One's body being treated as one's soul

deva Attribute or form of God

dhairya Courage

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dhanam Pride of wealth

dharana Flow like a river

dharma Acceptable norms from time immemorial, of right conduct and character at home, in society and in one's country

dhriti Self control/courage

dhuni Sacred fire lit by Sri Sai Baba at Shirdi

dhyana Meditation

dridha samhrida Strong devotion and attachment to the Guru

droha Unfaithfulness to Guru

dualism The system that differentiates soul and God

durvasanas Bad traits

dussanga Bad company

dvaitism Concept of personal God to a seeker, aspirant

dvesha Hatred '

dwaparagyuga A yuga is millions and billions of years, of one such yuga is dwapara yuga-Lord Krishna lived in dwapara yuga

dwapara yuga Uddava Uddava was a devotee of Lord Krishna in the age of dwapara yuga, when Krishna lived

dwaraka mayee Place of residence masjid of Sri Sai Baba called dwaraka mayee. Mother's place, residence of Lord Krishna.

dhyanaastha In trance

ekamsat One with supreme

fakir Muslim sanyasi

gadi Seat, position

ganamdar or chakkiwala One who grinds seeds into oil

Ganapathi Vigneswar, eldest son of Lord Shiva. The elephant

headed God much loved in Maharashtra
ghatakasa Space occupied in a small pot
gitanhamu The meaning of the Bhagavad Gita, a song of Saint Thyagaraja
gode neem Margosa tree, neem tree of sweet and bitter leaves at the gurusthan *in* Shirdi
grihasta A house-holder
guna Darkness, attribute of ignorance
Guru bhakthi Devotion to teacher, Guru
Guru bandhu A teacher, Guru of the same kind-colleague
Guru Gita The book which explains and teaches the various aspects of the Guru, the teacher
Guru namasmarana Repetition in full faith of the name of the Guru
Guru parampara Teachers of a supreme order ensuring continuity from time to time of spiritual teachings
Guru seva Service of the Guru, teacher of divinity
Gurudeva Teacher who is considered to be God
Gurukulavasa Stay under a Guru for study with the Guru carrying out all orders of the Guru and the Guru's family and doing all the household work
Gurum vina Without the Guru
haj Pilgrimage sacred to muslims
haram Opposite to Muslim way of worship
Harinishta Familiar with personal God, Hari-Vishnu
henotheism Worship of one form at one time and another form at another
Indra The God of the devas, known as Indra, presiding over svargaloka
indriyajit Controler of all senses
ishta Fulfillments of one's vow's
ishtadevata One's own preferred deity like Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Maruthi
Iswara Lord of destruction one of trinity the others being Brahma and Vishnu (Narayan)

Janaka Maharaja Sri Janaka. The emperor of Mithila *janma* Birth
jihvopasthajaya Perfect control over palate, tastes and the sex urge
jitendriya Controller of all senses especially anger, self control
of the highest order
jiva Soul in a living body
jivanmuktha Highly realised soul, here in this world. Liberated
from all bondage while still living
jnana Deep knowledge of God
jnani Realiser of atma, soul
kaka Uncle, refer to Sri H.S.Dixit, a close devotee of Sri Sai Baba
kaliyuga Uddhavesabua A devotee of Sri Sai Baba by name Uddhavesa bua in
the present age of Kali
kaliyuga A yuga is millions and billions of years one such is kali-yuga the
present age
kalpura camphor
kamadhenu wish yeilding mythical cow
kamakrodhajit Controller of desires and anger
kamini Attractive women
Kamsa King of Dwaraka. Uncle of Lord Krishna, who wanted to kill Krishna
kanchana Gold. Attraction of wealth
kanjira A small drum instrument played by hand
karma Result of past actions. As you sow so you reap.
karnams Village officers
karya Refers to maya, the power of the shakti of Chaitanya, which causes forms
and appearances
khuda Muslim term for God, refers also to prophet Mohammed
kirtankar One who sings the Lord's names
Kula Pride of family
Kumbhabhisheka Religious ceremonies of pouring sacred water after
invocations, to the Lord
kumbhakasa Space occupied by a big pot

- kupni* Robe of an ascetic. Marathi.
- lajja* False sense of shame and shyness
- lambadi* A tribal
- laya* Merger or engrossed
- linga sarira* Astral or subtle body
- lokahita* Good of the world
- lokakalyana* Good of the entire universe
- lokasanghaha* To take full care and responsibility extending protection to all beings of the world
- lotus feet* Sacred feet of Sri Sai Baba compared to the lotus flower, in divinity this flower represents God's tender and utmost kindness. Lotus also represents supreme truth
- mad abhijnam* Familiar with personal God, Hari- Vishnu
- Mahapurusha* Illustrious person
- mahasamadhi* Giving up of the mortal frame
- mahavakyas* Supreme truths embodied in religious text, such as Upanishads
- mahima* Greatness
- "Main Allahum"* "I am Allah"
- mamata* pride
- mana tyaga* Supreme sacrifice
- manan* Repeated and serious reflection of God's stories
- manas* Mind
- mantras* Sacred words or syllables of God's attributes
- manusmriti* Laws of Hindu sage known as 'Manu'
- marana* Causing death, killing
- marwadi* A money lender
- masik sraadhha* Monthly religious rites
- masjid* A mosque. The place Baba lived in was a masjid which later came to be called Dwarkamayee
- "mat parayanas"* Those persons entirely devoted to the Guru
- "natru deva bhava"* Worship the mother

"matruvat paradarmscha" Viewing women other than one's wife as one's mother

matsara Jealousy

Maulana Learned in Muslim scripture

maya or prakriti Illusion

mitabhashana Man of few words

Mohammadan A Muslim

mohana Creating delusious

moksha Supreme self-realisation or liberation from births and deaths

moksha Liberated soul. Liberated from conditional bondage

mokshamu galada Is there a way for realisation of God head, a song of Saint Thyagaraja

monism Advaita, God is one reality, without a second

mouni A Guru who enjoys the firm bliss of perfection but does not teach the same

mukta Realised, liberated soul

mukti Realisation of the real nature of oneself and of the Atma

mumukshta Desire to be free

murthy Sculpted image of God, a personal God

mussalman A muslim

"Nahi Ninda Nyaya" No reason to condemn other forms of worship

naivedya Food offering to God

najananti mudhastal No grace decends to one

namams Vertical lines on forehead of Vaishnavite Hindus, followers of Lord Vishnu and horizontal lines for Saivites-followers of Siva

namasmaran Thinking of God's names

namazes Muslim way of offering worship five namazes *are* made in a day

Narayanu Lord of preservation, one of trinity the others being Brahma and Mahadeva (Iswara)

natidure nichavat Ready to obey Guru's orders, standing like

a peon or a servant and at all times serving the Guru
nautch Village dancer
navavidha bhakti Nine forms of devotion
nididhyasan Deep contemplation
ninda Tendency to scoff or find fault
nirakara Impersonal God without form
niranjan One who has conquered maya or illusions of world, God realiser
nirguna God, beyond all attributes-gunas: Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic
nirmalamanas Calm and pure mind
niscreyas and screyas The good and the excellent
nitisloka Verses of good and right conduct handed down through the ages
nityapurna Pure and eternal fullness of God
pada The serpent power reaching hamsa padam through the nadis the other being pinda
padathirtham Waters that have washed the feet of the Guru
pagal Mad
pagal fakir A mad Muslim ascetic
panams A paltry sum of Rs. 1-4 annas
panchayatana A group of five saints
para prakriti Entire nature and the universal world
para vairagya Detachment leading to God
paramam padam The highest state of realisation
paramartha Supreme goal, ultimate reality
paramartika There are 3 stages of reality. This refers to the ultimate reality
paramasreya Self-realisation
paramatma Indweller, God
naramatma swarupam Form of supreme God
Parikshit Son of Arjuna. Hero of the Mahabaratha war
Pati Husband
pinda The kundalini sakthi, the serpaat power in a human being

flowes in 2 nadis pinda and pada

pingala Name of a dancer, in the context of this book.

Pingala and Ida are also the other names of Pada and Pinda, the nadi's through which the kundalini shakti flows to reach the susumna nadi

"pitru devo bhava" Worship the father

poornalaya Completely and fully immersed

poornaparabrahman Total and full supreme consciousness of divine bliss

poorva abhyasa Exercise or training in a previous life

poorvakarma Result of past actions; of actions done in previous birth

pothi Study of scriptures and religious books

prakriti Universe, nature

pramana Method of reaching truth

prapatti Complete surrender to God, Sri Sai Baba

prarabdha Result of past karma attached to the body, which the body must fulfill

pratibhasika There are 3 stages in sages in their pursuit of the supreme knowledge in the first stage called pratibhasika, the ignorant does not see truth at all but sees good as evil and evil as good

Prem rupi Form of God. Full of love

Prema Supreme love

Prema Deep love and concern

Preya vastu Momentary articles or passing things

Priyah Most dear

puja Worship

purusha Male being, jiva

putra Son

raja upacharas A royal worship rendered such as to a king or emperor

rajas Ego-centred, self assertive

rajasic qualities of over-lordship, self assertion
ramavara Represents Hindu God Sri Rama. Marathi.
rasakrida Divine play of Lord Krishna with the gopis
rinanubhandha Tie-up obligation coming from previous birth
rupa Attaining the bindu
rupatita Beyond form merged with God-head
sadachara Right conduct
sadgati Merging with the supreme God-head
sadguru Teacher of the highest order, knowledge of God-realisation
sadhaka A seeker of the knowledge of God-head
sadhu Pious seeker
sadvastu Real
sant lilas Saintly miracles
Sai Sudha Magazine of All India Sai Samaj
saiva acharya Teacher who worships Lord Shiva
saiva matakhndanam Criticism of Saivism
Saivaite Follower of Shiva
sakara God with form
sakshatkara Personal presence or vision of God
saktinipata The Guru awakens the latent unawakened energy in the sishya through his Divine Grace and power
salangai Tamil word for tinklets generally tied to feet of dancers
sama Being humble, forgiving
samadhana peaceful negotiation
samadhi Fully merged with God-head
samadhi mandhir The place where Sri Sai Baba's mortal remains are enshrined at Shirdi
Samartha Competent and qualified Guru who uses all his siddhi and superior powers for his sishya
samatva Equality
sameepyam Being in the proximity of God

samsara Worldly life
samsarati Perfect cycles in the round of birth and death
samscayatma vinascyati The perpetual doubter perishes and can make no progress
sangamnare kazi Sangamnare is a place near Shirdi, kazi is a Muslim chief priest
sani Saturn. One of the navagrahas
sankalpa Resolve. Initial portion of pooja
sannyasi One who has renounced worldly attachments
sanatana dharma Dharma coming down from the ages of the rishis and sages
santosha Joy
saptaha Seven days study of scripture
saram Keen listening-devotional
sarangati Clutching the feet of the Lord, total surrender
sarupyam Attaining the same from as God
"sarva bhuta hite ratah" Interested in the welfare of all creatures
"sarva bhutatma bhutatma" Becoming and realising that one is the self of all creatures
sarvantryami The sole indweller in all creatures
sastras Religious duties and rituals, as laid out in the scriptures
sastric pertaining to holy texts
sat-chit-ananda Truth-consciousness-bliss
sat purusha Perfect, self-realised being
satchitananda bhavatita Awareness of supreme truth consciousness and bliss
sat hi akaraka At the moment of death, a friend to remind one of God
satsang Holy company. Company of the good
satsankalpa Good and divine thought or decision
satva Pure and selfless conduct
sawalokha malapahe Getting rid of gross problems of the entire world
sayujyam Being merged in God

scama Being humble and forgiving
scamadishatka Possessing the 6 qualities, control of inner and external sense organs, quietitude, renunciation, forbearance and faith
scankha Doubts
scuchi Right thoughts and actions/purity
scuscrusha vimukha One who does no care to render service to the Guru
seelam Good character *sevaya* Self-denial, service to the Guru
Shamakarna Name of the horse, presented to Sri Sai Baba *Shankar* Lord Shiva
shanta peaceful
shanti peace
shodasca upacharas Sixteen types of worship offered to God
shraddha Faith, doing work correctly
siddhi Super natural power
sishya Disciple
sthambana prevention of movement
Siva Lord Shiva, one of trinity
Siva panchakshari Five words leading to Shiva. Trance
Om namah sivayah or sivaya namahom
skandapurana The traditional story from the puranas relating to Lord Subramanya, son of Lord Shiva
sloka Verses
soham "I am God"
sowbagya Bountiful blessings
srotria High class caste brahmins
sthairya Firmness in thought and actions
sthula Gross body
stotras Verses in praise of God
subra marga The path of virtue
suddhachaitanya Pure consciousness

sufi A Hindu/Muslim religious sect
sukham Bliss, indenty with God
sukshma or lingasarira Subtle/astral body
sumangali Married woman
sushupti Deep sleep
swadhyaya One's conduct of chanting and reciting Vedic texts
that nourish the inner being, imparts, spiritual strength and purifies the mind and
heart
swaroopa Form
swechcha marana To die at will
tamas Dull, lazy
tamasic Ego, hatred, cruelty, dull, lazy, lethargic
tan,man, dhan Body, mind, possessions
tashildar District Revenue Officer, Marathi
tatvanishta Firm master of tatvas
tinha yatra Pilgrimage of holy rivers
titiksha Endurance
Todas Hill tribals
tongawallah A cart man
turiya One with supreme spirit. The fourth state
uddharet To raise oneself
udhi Sacred ash from the fire lit by Sri Sai Baba
upadesh Teachings
upadhis Worldly attachments of power and status
upadishta Directions given by the Guru
upamana Example
uparati Ceasing, stopping
upasana Worship or japa of a mantra
vagardtha viva sampriktau Like words and meanings embedded in each other
vagmi A Guru who expresses his thoughts and realisation and teaches the
same

vaideek brahmin A brahmin learned in vedas and prescribed rituals
vairagi One detached
vairagya Detachment
vaishnavite Followers of Vishnu
vanajari The teacher in the forest who can show the proper course to travel in the forest and come out safely
vanis Oil mongers
vasanas Tendencies
vasikarna Act of fascination
vatsalya Deep affectionate concern of a mother to her children
vedas Sacred holy texts
vibhuti Attributes of God
vichara Distinguishing between unchanging and changing reality, enquiry about matter
vidhivat Practices of a pupil going to the gurukula as per injunctions
vidhya Learning
vijana Vividha-jnana, means knowledge gained through understanding and contemplation
vimana Flying vehicle. Here refers to liberation from bondage of birth and death, in contemplation of God.
viraha Suffering through separation
virakti detachment
vishnu mata kandanam Criticism of vaishnavism
viveka Discrimination
vivekachudamani A holy book written by Sankara, incarnation of Lord Shiva
viveki Capable of discrimination
vyabhichara Going astray, wrong paths
vyavaharika There are three stages in sages in their pursuit of the supreme knowledge, the 2nd stage in the sage sees truth and differentiates between good and evil

"yogakshemam vahami aham" Undertaking to safe guard and advance temporal and spiritual interests

REFERENCE

- Ref. Refer To No.
- 1 Mundaka Upanishad II (10)
 - 2 Baba's Charters And Sayings 58
 - 3 Srimad Bhagvata XI Ch. VI
 - 4 Devotees Experience I 85
 - 5 1913 - 1914
 - 6 Bhagavad Gita VI 41 - 45
 - 7 Srimad Bhagavata XI Skanda, 18th Chapter verse 44
 - 8 Baba's Charters and Sayings 80
 - 9 Baba's Charters and Sayings 81
 - 10 Baba's Charters and Sayings 72
 - 11 Baba's Charters and Sayings 58
 - 12 M.A. M.Sc. Baba's Charters and Sayings 417
 - 13 Baba's Charters and Sayings 412
 - 14 Baba's Charters and Sayings 425
 - 15 Baba's Charters and Sayings 424
 - 16 Baba's Charters and Sayings 420
 - 17 Baba's Charters and Sayings 449
 - 18 Baba's Charters and Sayings 416
 - 19 Baba's Charters and Sayings 404
 - 20 Baba's Charters and Sayings 61-71
 - 21 Baba's Charters and Sayings 542
 - 22 See Appendix I
 - 23 Mani Sahukar's the Saint of Shirdi
Rao Sahib Harshad P. Mehta's 'The Spiritual Symphony of Shree
Sainath of Shirdi' are small books not trying to set out Baba's Life in full.
They are first introductions to Baba to rouse the public and make them
approach Sai Baba.

- The Greatest Saint Sainath "How to overcome calamities and to get what you want from Shree Sai Baba" by Ramnath Modak
- 24 Baba's Charters and Sayings 61-119
- 25 Baba's Charters and Sayings 481
- 26 Baba's Charters and Sayings 472A
- 27 Probably that Fakir was a Sufi and Baba's First Guru. Baba often referred to his guiding or guardian Saint-Guru as 'that Fakir' Baba's Charters and Sayings :102, 233, 419, 102, 398.
- 28 All this is narrated in the legends about Gopal Rao Deshmukh, now kept at his place in Selu
- 29 Srimad Bhagavata XI (15) 7
- 30 Baba admitted he had power to revive the dead, Baba's Charter & Sayings 93, 321.
- 31 Baba when asked by a court commission as to what his name was, said, 'They call me Sai Baba'.
- 32 Baba's Charters and Sayings 152
- 33 B.S. Khaparde's diary notes in 1911 and 1912 several times that Baba skipped and danced. G.G. Narke also adds that Baba would do so in G.G. Narke's Mothers presence
- 34 Baba's Charters and Sayings 119
- 35 Baba's Charters and Sayings 293
- 36 (Tamil Word) Serangkottai
- 37 Water Jars are always kept in the mosques for people to wash their feet before entering the sacred precincts
- 38 Compare the story of Nayanmargal in Tamil Periapuranam
- 39 See Appendix II
- 40 Srimad Bhagavata XI (23) 51, 52
- 41 Baba was being taken for a Muslim by almost everyone
- 42 Baba's Charters and Sayings 304
- 43 Manu Smriti (2) 162
- 44 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 12

- 45 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 38, 39
- 46 Sai Mahima Stotra 1912
- 47 St. John (3) 2. No Man can do these signs which thou doest unless God be with him
- 48 Probably because his first veneration and ideas of God came from a Fakir, his foster father
- 49 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 39
- 50 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 46
- 51 Srimad Bhagavata XI (8) 2, (18), (35)
- 52 Srimad Bhagavata XI (8) 6
- 53 Srimad Bhagavata XI (II) 17
- 54 Srimad Bhagavata XI (23) 33 to 41
- 55 See Appendix III
- 56 Baba's Charters and Sayings 601, 602
- 57 Baba's Charters and Sayings 103, 351
- 58 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 40, 41
- 59 Baba's Charters and Sayings 204
- 60 Srimad Bhagavata Skanda XI Chapter VIII Verse 2
- 61 Verse 11, Chapter VIII
- 62 Chapter VII Verse 21
- 63 Srimad Bhagavata XI Chapter (19) Verse 36
- 64 Baba said he went on with smaran of Hari's name till Hari appeared. After that Sakshatkara, he stopped giving medicines as giving Udhi and blessings gave cures and relief.
- 65 Srimad Bhagavata XI (6) 22
- 66 Which procession would have precedence and which mark 'U' or 'Y' should prevail in the buildings and images
- 67 Baba's Charters and Sayings 284
- 68 Baba objected to "Conversion" See the difference of worship now at Coimbatore Naga Sai Mandir, Mylapore Sai Mandir and Shirdi Sai Mandir

- 69 Bedil the Sufi of Sind says about the great... Daavisi at Matvane Uypaka
Hai Sai This Sai who pervades all as the soul of all, shows or
teachers".
- 70 Taittiriya Upanishad
- 71 See Appendix IV
- 72 Baba's Charters and Sayings 123, 155, 174.
- 73 Srimad Bhagavata Chapter XI 6 : 14
- 74 Srimad Bhagavata Chapter XI 6 : 8
- 75 Srimad Bhagavata Chapter XI (21) 43
- 76 As in Bhagawad Gita (13) 8-12
- 77 Srimad Bhagavata XI (8) 5 Durvigahyo and XI (9) 14
Alakshyamana Achariah and XI (7) 28 Jadonmatha Pisachavat
- 78 Guru Gita verse 44, 45, 47 to 91
- 79 See Appendix V
- 80 Baba's Charters and Sayings 72 A
- 81 Srimad Bhagavata XI Skanda Chapter X verses 8 to 9
- 82 Guru Gita 273 to 279
- 83 Baba's Charters and Sayings 347, 349
- 84 Chapter II Sai Satcharitra
- 85 Vivekachudamani
- 86 Taittiriya Upanishad
- 87 Baba's Charters and Sayings 56
- 88 Guru Gita verse 82
- 89 Baba's Charters and Sayings 176
- 90 Baba's Charters and Sayings 175
- 91 Chapter IV verse 5
- 92 Chapter IV 34 and 35
- 93 See Chapter II (7) of Bhagavad Gita
- 94 In Guru Gita verses 101, 126, 179 to 189
- 95 Guru Gita verse 82, 304 to 305
- 96 Verse 55, 125

- 97 Mundaka Upanishad I (2) 12
- 98 Chapter XI (10) 5
- 99 Supported by Verse 303 and 304 of Guru Gita
- 100 Srimad Bhagavata XI (17) 22, 30
- 101 Baba's Charters and Sayings 35 to 39, 96, 384, 509
- 102 Baba's Charters and Sayings 182
- 103 Guru Gita parts 1 to 3
- 104 Dasa Bodha Chapter V
- 105 See Bhagavata Gita Chapter XII
- 106 Guru Gita in verse 198, 199
- 107 Kapalam Vriksha Mulamcha Kuchelam Asahayata Sarvatara Samata
drishtih Etat Muktyasya Lakshananam that is, begging, staying at a free foot,
Rags, No companions, Viewing all with equal vision, these are all marks of
a Jivan Mukta.
- 108 Guru Gita verses 203 and 272
- 109 Guru Gita verses 198 to 203
- 110 See Appendix VI
- 111 Baba's Charters and Sayings 177
- 112 These are dealt with in Baba's Charters and Sayings 124 also
- 113 Srimad Bhagavata XI Chapter 13
- 114 Guru Gita in verses 270, 271
- 115 Guru Gita in verses 304 - 305
- 116 Khataupa
- 117 Verse 308 of Guru Gita
- 118 Chapter XI (23) 1-10
- 119 See G.S. Khaparde's diary showing How he misunderstood Baba's words
at first
- 120 Guru Gita verse 204
- 121 Chapter XI (10) 6
- 122 Guru Gita verse 175 says, Guru prasadat anyatara sukham nasti Mahitale
that is, No happiness is on earth except by Guru's grace and Guru Gita

- verse 191 says, Yadyapi adhita Nigama, Shadanga Agamah priye
 adhyatmadini Sastrani, Janam nasti gurum vina
- 123 See Guru Gita verses 74, 80, 175, 191, 202, 299, 318.
- 124 Srimad Bhagavata XI (9) 3
- 125 Baba's Charters and Sayings 203 to 319
- 126 Verse 89 of the Guru Gita
- 127 Referred to in verses 90 to 95 Guru Gita
- 128 Guru Gita verses 91, 92, 93
- 129 XI Skanda Chapter IX verse 31
- 130 Mentioned in Chapter VII verses 33 and 34
- 131 Chapter I verse 5 and Chapter XVII verse 28
- 132 Baba's Charters and Sayings 412
- 133 Baba's Charters and Sayings 411
- 134 Baba's Charters and Sayings 408
- 135 Guru Gita verse 276
- 136 Skanda XI Chapter 15 verse 33
- 137 Patanjali Yoga Sutras verse 54
- 138 Guru Gita verses 286 and 287
- 138 Baba's Charters and Sayings 91
- 140 Chapter VII Bhagavad Gita
- 141 Srimad Bhagavata (13) 34 and 10 (11)
- 142 Baba's Charters and Sayings 13
- 143 Baba's Charters and Sayings 523
- 144 Baba's Chapters and Sayings 107
- 145 Chapter IV verse 34.
- 146 Baba's Charters and Sayings 183
- 147 Baba's Charters and Sayings 301
- 148 Guru Gita verse 122 to 124
- 149 Guru Gita verse 125
- 150 Guru Gita verse 126
- 151 Guru Gita verse 128 .

- 152 Humkar 132
- 153 Verse 134 - Guru Gita
- 154 Verses 136 and 149 Guru G.ta
- 155 Verses 146 - Guru Gita
- 156 Vwses 148 - Guru Gita
- 157 Verses 149 - Guru Gita
- 158 Verses 151 - Guru Gita
- 159 Verses 153 - Garu Gita
- 160 Verses 165 - Guru Gita
- 161 Verses 156 - Guru Gita
- 162 Verses 157 - Guru Gita
- 163 Verses 159 - Guru Gita
- 164 Katho Upanishad II (3) 17
- 165 Verses 160 - Guru Gita
- 166 Srimad Bhagavata XI (9) verses 22,
- 167 Verses 161 to 165 Guru Gita
- 168 Guru Gita verses 167
- 169 Bhagawad Gita Chapter 10, 41
- 170 Bhagawad Gita Chapter 4, 11 already quoted
- 171 See Taittiriya and Svetasvatara Upamshads
- 172 Guru Gita 53-55
- 173 See Appendix VII
- 174 Baba's Charters and Sayings 104, 144 to 148.
- 175 Baba's Charters and Sayings 167 - 174.
- 176 Worship of one form at one time and another form at another
- 177 Baba's Charters and Sayings 58 - 60
- 178 Bhagawad Gita (4) 11
- 179 Baba's Charters and Sayings 609
- 180 Baba's Charters and Sayings 455 to 501, 473, 497.
- 181 Bhagawad Gita (6) 41-45
- 182 See Chapter XI Supra

- 183 Bhagawad Gita (5) 25
184 Bhagawad Gita (5) 7
185 Bhagawad Gita (6) 32
186 Srimad Bhagvata XI (23) 31-61
187 Srimad Bhagavata XI (18) 29
188 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 28
189 Katho Upanishad VI (2) 8
190 In Baba's Charters and Sayings 178
191 Narada Bhakti Sutras 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 41
192 Narada Bhakti Sutras 47 and 48
193 Narada Bhakti Sutras 65
194 Narada Bhakti Sutras 35
195 In Chapter XIV verse 23
196 Ashta Bhavas are - gurgling in the throat when one speaks -
horripilation, hair standing on end flow of tears and pespiration-
dancing-
shouting and laughter
indifferent to other's views-
falling or rolling on the ground
-Trance
197 In Baba's Charters and sayings 145
198 Skanda XI Chapter XV (1)
199 Skanda XI Chapter XV (8)
200 Srimad Bhagavata XI (15) 32
201 In Chapter IV 7 and 8.
202 Such return after thirty days is reported about Adi Sankara Acharya see
Sankara Vijaya
203 Bhagawad Gita VII 15
204 Bhagawad Gita VII 24
205 Bhagawad Gita VII 25
206 This is repeated in IX (11)

- 207 Bhagawad Gita IX (13)
- 208 Bhagawad Gita XVI 1-3
- 209 Bhagawad Gita Chapter X
- 210 Bhagawad Gita Chapter XV (7)
- 211 Bhagawad Gita Chapter X (41)
- 212 Bhagawad Gita Chapter VII and IX
- 213 From the All India Sai Samaj or Shirdi Sai Sansthan.
- 214 Bhagawad Gita Chapter IV Verse 11
- 215 Baba's Charters and Sayings 507 - 518
- 216 Bhagawad Gita Chapter IX (29)
- 217 Bhagawad Gita Chapter XVIII verse 65
- 218 In Verse 69 Chapter XVIII Bhagawad Gita
- 219 Baba's Charters and Sayings 516
- 220 Baba's Charters and Sayings 14
- 221 Baba's Charters and Sayings 15
- 222 Baba's Charters and Sayings 16
- 223 Guru Gita Chapter II verse 13, quoted and explained at page 159
- 224 In Baba's Charters and Sayings 13
- 225 Bhagavad Gita VIII 14
- 226 Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.
- 227 Baba's Charters & Sayings 400 to 450
- 228 Baba's Charters & Sayings 373
- 229 Baba's Charters & Sayings 56
- 230 As mentioned by him in Gospel para 56
- 231 Gospel Para 96
- 232 Baba's Charters and Sayings 57
- 233 Ekadasa Skanda Chapter XV Verse 21
- 234 Bhagavad Gita Chapter VIII verse 42
- 235 Bhagavad Gita Chapter VIII verse 43
- 236 Srimad Bhagavata VI 2, 7, 14

- 237 Here is an instance of using God's name by way of joke or fun among a particular set, Resorting to drink or bottle is spoken of as resorting to 'Midasannam Govindappa' that is, the narrow necked govinda is given as a description of the bottle
- 238 Pandava Gita verse 52
- 239 To Benefit by Bhagawad Gita VIII 42
- 240 Bhagawad Gita Chapter VIII verse 43
- 241 Baba's Charters and Sayings 28
- 242 Therefore Baba's Charters and Sayings 28 will clearly apply to such people.
- 243 That is explained in Baba's Charters and Sayings 25
- 244 Baba's Charters and Sayings 19
- 245 Baba's Charters and Sayings 20
- 246 Sai Krishna in the 20th Century gives the above quotes in B.aba's Charters and Sayings 19 and 20 as his way of announcing the same fact.
- 247 Baba's Charters and Sayings 23
- 248 Baba's Charters and Sayings 25
- 249 Bhagawad Gita chapter IX verse 22
- 250 As mentioned in Baba's Charters and Sayings 25
- 251 Especially Charter 1 to 57
- 252 Srimad Bhagavata (19) 41
- 253 Srimad Bhagavata (8) 44
- 254 Taittiriya Upanishad II 8
- 255 Baba's Charters and Sayings 113
- 256 Ibid 121
- 257 Skanda XI Chapter XI verse 1
- 258 Skanda XI Chapter X 20, 21 and 30
- 259 See Sainatha Manana 217
- 260 Srimad Bhagavata XI (11) 10-12
- 261 Bhagawad Gita 7, 14
- 262 Bhagavad Gita (2) 62-63

- 263 Srimad Bhagavata XI (10) 5
- 264 St. John XII 28 to 31
- 265 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 17
- 266 Baba's Charters and Sayings 127
- 267 That is the concentration advised in chapter XIV verses 24 to 29 and chapter VII verse 42.
- 268 Mundaka Upanishad VI 6
- 269 Of Narayan Asram's experience in Devotees Experience 1:85

Appendix

Appendix I

Baba is inscrutable, a sphynx

More Babaku marma Janare Koi More

None knows the inwardness or secret of my Baba^r

Koi Kahe donge koi pakhandi More

Koi kahe divana re

Some called him hypocrite, some heterodox, some called him mad

Koi kahe lobhi koi kahe bhogi More

koi kahe bade syana re

Some called him greedy, some sensualist, some called him a wise sage

Koi kahe yogi koi kahe tyagi More

koi sadhu janare

Some termed him a *yogi*, some a self-sacrificer; some a *sadhu*.

Koi guru sadguru Vako More

Koi Iswara jaana re

Some called him a *Guru*, a *Sadguru*, some knew him to be Iswara Divine

Sri Babaki siddhavasta More

Koi Virala pahchana re

Sri Baba's state is that of the *Siddha*. Some alone see him as different from all.

Apana Apana sab phala pave jisne jaisa More

jaana re

Each gets a reward suiting his own idea of Baba

Mehbub Sabaki suni para, Turn mat More

dhoka khanare

O Mehbub author of this song, Do not get confounded by listening to the views of all.

Appendix II

Baba allowed Nana Chandorkar's son, Bapu to apply sandal paste to his forehead as the child was accustomed to apply sandal paste to the forehead of the image he worshipped at home. Similarly another elderly person who was

accustomed to worship his own *Guru* by applying sandal on his forehead did the same to Baba considering Baba to be his *Guru*. Baba knew his thoughts and could not prevent him. It was thus that others were emboldened and all claimed to be the children of Baba, claiming also the privilege of applying sandal paste to Baba's forehead as Bapu Chandorkar did.

Appendix III

The Bhikshu's ways of facing insult and trouble

In the Srimad Bhagavata, Bhikshu Gita, Chapter XXIII we find the rationale or the intellectual basis of one's equanimity in the face of insult and trouble, set out in great detail. We may refer to the essence of what is said therein. A rich Brahmin miser, on account of his miserliness, got into bitter terms with his relations, friends and almost every one and his property was also lost. Then he began to realise the absurdity of relying upon riches for happiness and determined to adopt a monk's role, and went about with his staff, *Danda* and begging bowl *Kamandalu*. But several people recognised who he originally was and began to trouble him in various ways. Some mocked at him, others plucked away his staff and begging bowl. Some passed water in his begging bowl and took delight in tormenting him in various ways. He was able to endure these *tapatrayas* or troubles of three sorts; which came from the animal kingdom or from the body or from finer forces; philosophically being assured in his mind that they were all the result of his *karma* and so inescapable. He convinced himself that the pains he endured just like the pleasures he had were all due to his mentality and not to any other causes. Therefore, he resolved that his only course was to bravely appeal to God, completely surrender to him, and face all pain and pleasure with thorough indifference based on his surrender to God. He found that the people who gave him trouble-who were considered to be the cause of his pain, were really not the cause of his pain. He analysed the situation thus:

the cause of the trouble given may be stated to be one of six things namely

- the body of the troublesome persons.

So far as their bodies are concerned they were insentient and it was the bodies of the troublers that troubled his body; and if the troublers were treated to be mere bodies then he also should be treated as a mere insentient body; then there was nothing to complain about. It is one part of insentient nature troubling another part though both together form one nature. In a particular organism, sometimes the teeth bite the tongue and his present trouble was in no way different. If the teeth bite the tongue what is a person to do? Whom is he to blame?

- the finer forces presiding over the organs with which they gave trouble.

Again, if their organs which trouble his organs be considered to be the movement or action of the Gods presiding over their organs - Indra presiding over the hand or the moon presiding over the mind, what does that matter? He himself was not an organ but the pure *atman*. The hand of those persons was striking his hand. So it is Indra striking Indra. Sometimes even our own hand may beat the other hand in our own body, who is to complain to whom? All together form one.

- the *Atma* or the spirit that ensouled those people. As for the third consideration that the troublers should be treated neither as their bodies nor as the Gods presiding over their organs, but as the pure *Atma* alone,

What is there to complain of? *Atma* cannot injure itself. There is nothing besides *Atman* to hurt the *Atman*. Therefore there is nothing in the matter for complaint.

- the trouble might be due to planetary positions in his horoscope.

The fourth cause of trouble namely planetary action and the position of the planets at the time the injured person who is suffering was born. This is also inapplicable as the planets can only affect that which is born, which is the body. But I am not born. I am the soul and so the planets cannot give me pleasure or pain. Besides books on Astrology say that some planets fight with others by *Padavikshanyam* and *Ardha Vikshanyam* and they take the position of the Sun in the 8th or 12th house from the *Lagna*. If one planet fights another what is that to me, the *Atman*!

- Previous *Karma*

If *Karma* is the cause of all pleasure and pain, who does what *karma*? The body cannot perform any *karma*. It is insentient. The *Atman* being Pure Intelligence cannot do *karma* either. Therefore there is no cause for pleasure and pain to me, the *Atman*, who is independent.

- *Kala* or Time

Lastly, the question of *Kala* or Time. I the *Atman* am the soul of *Kala* or Time. Does fire burn itself or ice chill itself? So, there is no reason for anger or discontent. So, the fully realised person, who has fully surrendered himself at the feet of God, has no one blame because his mind does not turn to the question of trouble or blamer but sees only the supreme person Iswara in every one including the troubler. Hence full faith in and surrender to God is the best basis for *titiksha* and the wise man must control his mind by concentrating it upon the feet of God.

Appendix IV

Bedil the Sufi of Sind says about the great *Avalias* who have cast off their mortal coil - 'These men do never die'. They are God Himself. That Unification or harmonisation of Hindu, Muslim, and other Indian faiths was and is Baba's mission, or rather a part of it. This is impressed daily upon all Sai *Bhaktas* by their Noon *arti*, which says,

Bheda Na Tatwin Hindu yavanancha Kahim

Daavayaasi Jhale Punarapi Nara Dehi

Paahasi Premane Tu Hindu Yavananhi

Daavisi, atmatvane Vyapaka Ha Sai

This means, In essence or basic principle there is no difference whatever between Hindu and Islam, you Datta *Avatar* took birth in human body to point out and establish this. You look with affection on both Hindus and Muslims. This Sai who pervades all as the soul of all, shows

Appendix V

Derivation of Guru

Guru means Great or *Mahan*

Guru Gita stanza 44

Gukarascha andhakaro hi Rukaras

teja uchyate

Ajnanagrasakam Brahma Gurureva

Na Samsayah.

This means, *Gu* means darkness and *Ru* is light. As light swallows up darkness. *Guru*, is *Brahman* the Swallower of Darkness, without doubt.

Guru Gita stanza 46

Gukarascha gunatito, Rupertito Rukarakah

Gunarupa vihinatvat Gururityabhidiyate

This means, *Gu* means *Gunatita*, that is, beyond the senses, *Ru* means *Rupatita*, that is beyond all form.

As the *Guru* is beyond all *gunas* and forms, the *Guru* is so termed

Guru Gita stanza 47

Gukarah Pratamo varno Mayadi

Gunabhasakah

Rukaro Asti param Brahma Mayabhranti

Vimochakam

This means, *Gu* is the first letter, and that is *Maya* appearing as *Gunas*. The next *Ru* is *Param Brahman*, which removes *Maya bhranti*, that is, the delusions of *Maya*.

Guru Gita stanza 91

Gukaram cha gunatitam Rukaram

Rupavarjitam

Gunatitam arupam cha yo dadyat sa guru

Smritah

This means, *Gu* is *Gunatita* beyond the *gunas* *Ru* is *Rupa Varjita*, that is free from form. *Guru* is so called because he is *Gunatita* and *Arupa* and enables us to be *Gunatita* and *Arupa* that is, to realise ourself as ourself as beyond form and all attributes.

Appendix VI

Guru Gita in verse 285 to 287 raises the question when ignorant men afraid of death and having some *Vairagya* or detachment from worldly objects seek a *Guru* and fall under the influence of a *Nishiddha Guru* teaching *mantras* for achieving worldly aims through *Marana*, *Vasikarna*, *Mohana* and *Akarshana* and whether there is hope of ever escaping from such a *Guru*. The answer is in verse 286, that one having *Vairagya*, dispassion will be saved by a self-realised *Guru* whose contact he will surely obtain as the Bhagavad Gita says,

*Nahi Kalyanakrit kah chit
durgatim Tata gachhati*

that is, those who do the right thing will not be lost.

Appendix VII

Question of Caste

It has been noticed in Chapter XV that amongst the objections raised to Sai Baba's worship, one is based upon caste. Some objectors say that Baba is not a Brahmin but a Muslim, and so he should not be taken for a *Guru* nor worshipped by Brahmins and other Hindus. Such objections have generally been driven out by a personal approach to Sai Baba (even apart from Baba's Charters and Sayings 57, 505 and, 506). His very *darsan* has made sensitive or suitable people feel that they are in the presence of a grand Divine Personality. All doubts, fears, and troubles of the heart melt away by his *darsan*, and people at once felt that Sai Baba is a divine agent to show a way out of all temporal and spiritual difficulties. Feeling thus, those that visited Baba bowed, prostrated and surrendered their *Tan Man Dhan* to Baba. This was *prapatti*. To such a person a discussion about Baba's caste would be absurd, for he has already followed the direction in the Srimad Bhagavata, the Skanda Purana, the Brahma Vidyopanishad 334 and the Guru Gita that the *Guru* must be treated as all the gods put together *Sarvadeva mayo guruh* including *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Siva* and all the pantheon of Hindu gods. Even after His *Mahasamadhi* some have had such contact with Sai Baba. It is those who have not been fortunate enough to have such contact mental or

physical with Baba, that have to struggle with the question of caste, and for their benefit we mention the following :

Even supposing that they do not feel that Baba is God still there is no basis for the assumption that Baba is not a Brahmin, Baba himself said that he was a Brahmin, that his Masjid was a Brahmin's Masjid and he also said that his parents were Brahmins of Patri and that his *Guru* was also a Brahmin, Venkusa alias Gopal Rao Deshmukh of Selu. This is enough to prove Baba's Brahmin birth and initiation or Brahminism according to ordinary ideas. But, as a child, he was brought up by a *Fakir* for four or five years and lived all his adult life in a Mosque at Shirdi, and thus he passed for a Muslim. He was totally indifferent whether people called him a Hindu or a Muslim. But some would be *Bhaktas* are making enquiries, and therefore the question seems to be important.

The authorities are very clear that the question of origin of a *Parama Jnani* or a *Parama Bhagavata* or saint, with remarkable *siddhis*, psychic powers and who spends all his time and energy for the benefit of mankind, whether he is a Hindu or Muslim by caste, is not permissible. For instance, verse 14 of the *Guru Gita* says,

Sva asramam cha Sva jatim cha

Sva Kirtim pushti vardhanam

Etat sarvam parityajya

Gurum eva samascrayet

this means, Brush aside your *ashrama*, your caste, your reputation and all glory and take refuge with a *Guru*. There are many more authorities of the same sort. The feeling of this caste or *kulam* in a disciple is false *pascam* or bond, one of the eight which the *Guru* in his kindness cuts off. The enquiry into the origin is generally discouraged, for example, by the motto :

Rishimulam Nadimulam Na vicharyam

Kabir also gives the same direction. *Sant ka Jat mat pucho* that is, do not ask for the caste of a saint Narada Bhakti Sutra:72 says, Among them prevails no distinction of caste, erudition, beauty, lineage, wealth or profession.

Anyhow, what is the definition of a Brahman? Is it a question of birth or parentage? The answer is No. Manu is a great authority, and Mahabharata is another great authority. Both say No, Manusmriti X 65 says,

*Sudro Brahmanatam eti
Brahmanas chaiva Sudratam
Kshatriyatjatam evamtu
vidyat Vaiscyat tathaiva cha*

this means, The Sudra becomes a Brahmana and a Brahmana a Sudra by conduct. Know this same rule to apply to him who is or of a Kshatriya or of a Vaisya.

Manusmriti II 157 and 168 says,

*Yatha Kashtamayo hasti
Yatha Charma mayo mrigah
Yahcha vipro anadhiyanah
Trayaste Nama dharakah
Yo anadhitya dvijo vedam
anyatra kurute sramam
Sa jivan eva sudratvam
Ascu gachchati Sanvayah*

this means, As a wooden elephant, as a leather patched deer (of the taxidermist) such is an unlearned Brahmana; the three are but Nominal Brahmins. Only in name are they Brahmins.

The Brahmana who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere becomes a sudra in that very life together with his descendants.

In Mahabharata, Vana Parva Chapter 313 in verse 108 says:

It is not birth nor *samsaras*, nor Vedic studies, nor one's *kulam* or ancestry that form the cause or basis of one's being a *Brahmin* or *Dvija* or twice bom.

in Chapter 80, verses 21, 25 and 26 says:

That the cause or basis is mere *vrittam* that is, behaviour or conduct. A Brahmins conduct should be truth, a disposition to give that is *dana*, *kshama* or forgiveness, *seelam* or virtue, gentlemanliness, *tapas* and mercy. These make a

man a Brahmin. If these are seen in a man whatever his birth may be, he is a Brahmin, and if these are not seen in one, whatever his birth may be, he is not a Brahmin. Vishnu Bhagavata says that *Bhakti* makes a man a Brahmin and only *Bhakti*. Other authorities say *Brahma Jnana*, God-realization makes a man a Brahmin.

As to Truth, Chandogya Upanishad IV 4 says that the speaking of to one's own disadvantage indicates Brahmin-hood. Baba was the soul of Truth. The question is, Was Baba a *Jnani*? Baba, who said *Main Allah Hum 'I am god and I am all'* was undoubtedly a *Jnani* of the highest order and he had all *siddhis* resulting from concentration on God, and he always remembered God. So, undoubtedly Baba was Brahmin and necessarily a Brahmin.

Manu, Vishnu Bhagavata VII II 35, says

Yasya Yallakshanam Proktam

Pumso Varnabhivyanjakam

Yad Anyatrapi driscyeta Tat tenaiva vinirdiscet.

this means, Whatever qualities are said to be indicative of a caste will, if found in any person, entitle that person to be considered of that caste. Sridhara's comment on the above is, Brahmins and other *dvijas* are recognised by Sama-peace. chiefly - and not by birth.

Brahmavidyopanishad says in

Verse 2

Hamsa vidyam imam labdhva Guru susrushaya Narah.

By service to the *Guru Hamsa Vidya* is obtained

Verse 3

Atmanam Atmana Sakshat Brahma budhva Sunischalam

Dehajatyadi sambandhan varnasrama samanvitam,

Thereby one realises oneself as Brahman steadily. Let one ignore the body, its caste *varnas* and *asramams*,

Verse 4

Vedasastrani chanyani padapamsumiva tyajet.

Gurubhaktim sada kuryat sreyase bhuyase Narah.

Gurureva Harih Sakshat Na anya iti abravit srutih.

And the injunctions of *vedas* and *Sastras*, and treat them as the dust of his feet. Let him have devotion to the *Guru*. That will benefit him greatly. The *Guru* is no other than God, the Vedas declare.