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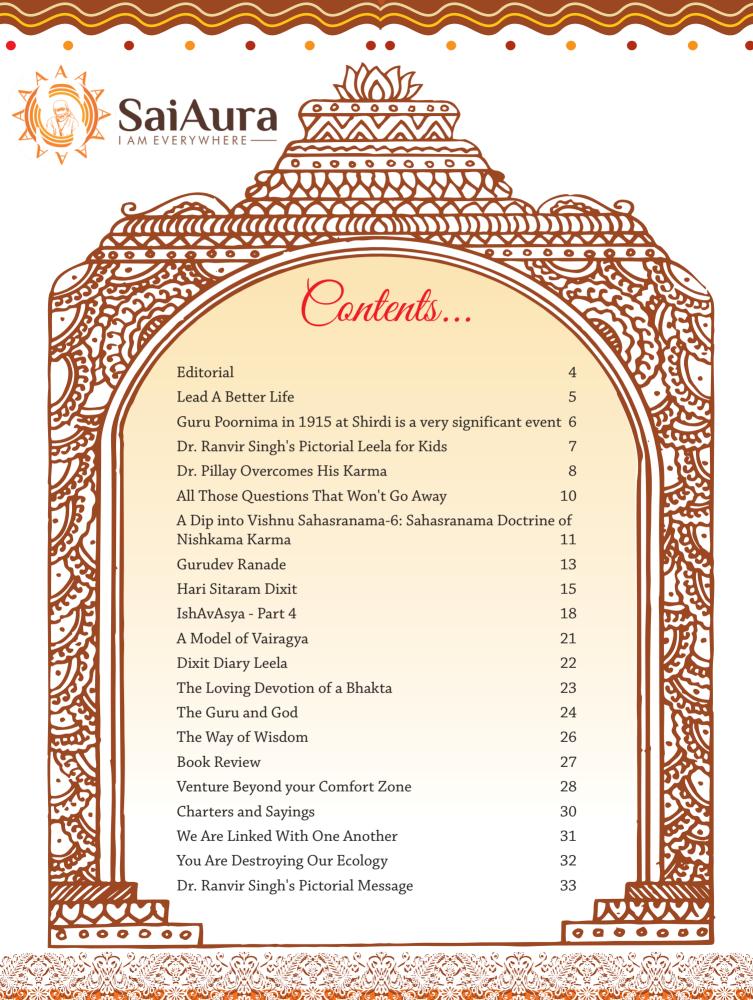
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Editorial

The First Word

eligion and spirituality are for the old. That is what the young generally think. They think that spirituality is a post-retirement plan; something which must be enjoyed with the gratuity and pension that you get after retirement. This is not true. It is the fault of the youth to think in this manner. More often than not, parents guard their children from anything even remotely religious or spiritual and encourage them to first get 'settled' in material life before starting a spiritual life.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji points out in his masterpiece 'Life of Sai Baba,' that our education and cultural grooming has led to unconcealed and unwarranted abhorrence for religious and spiritual matters. They are seen as elaborations of a strait-jacketed and non-consequential thinking. The result is that the moment one sees a devotee, a place of worship or a religious text, one tends to look away much like one would do on sighting garbage. Why so much aversion?

Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji points out that contrary to popular perception, spirituality is something we need when we are in the middle of our life, not just at the end of it. It is what you need when you are in the heat of the moment, when you are juggling with alternatives, when you are at a loss what to do, when you want to take a road but are still standing perplexed at the crossroads. That is when you need spirituality. That is when you need to get a hold on yourself. That is when your life begins, and that cannot happen without contemplation and soulsearching.

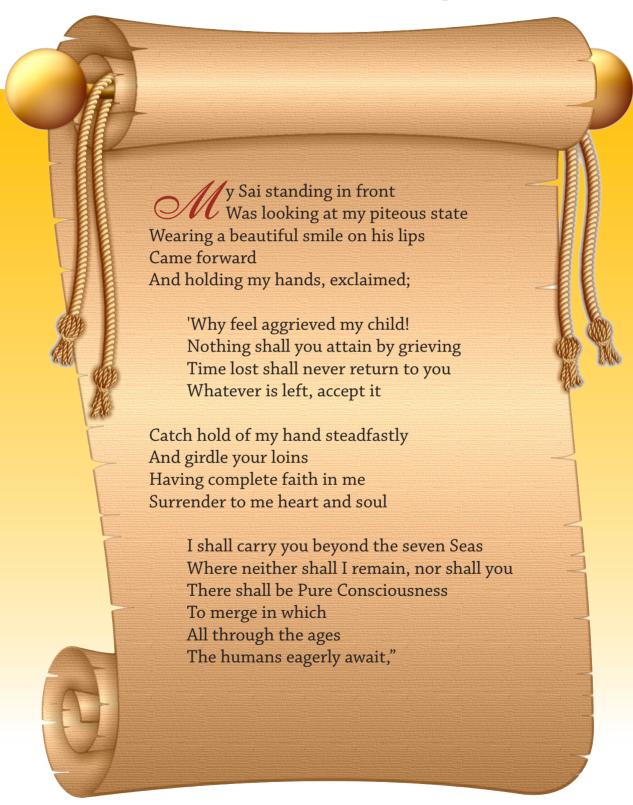
How to accomplish this? How to know what is the best course to take when one is flooded with choices? When you purchase some machinery or equipment it generally comes with a manual. This manual tells you the operating instructions and also to troubleshoot if something goes wrong. In practice, we do not go through this manual. It gathers dust till the moment we come across a problem. How nice it would have been if we had read the manual earlier! As far as our life is concerned, we can be prepared. We are blessed with manuals like Gita, Ramayana, Sai Satcharita, etc., they tell us what to do when things go wrong with our lives. They also teach us how to go about our lives in such a manner that no problems would arise.

To the question 'What should be the object of one's love?', Sai Baba answers, 'kindness towards the miserable and friendship with the good'. He goes to say that even the Gods offer their salutations 'to the one whose main virtue is daya, kindness'. For devotees of Sai Baba, compassion is the highest virtue. It is not a passive state of mind. It is not merely wishing for the happiness of others but adopting means and engaging in acts that lead to the removal of such suffering. It is an active endeavor to free others from their suffering.

Sai Baba led a life in which there is no 'other' in compassion. 'Í am Brahman, so are you'. Since all beings are manifestation of Brahma, there is an essential identity between all beings. There is no boundary separating a person from all else in the universe. So, alienation from others amounts to alienation from oneself.

Lead A Better Life

by Usha Ranganathan



Guru Poornima in 1915 at Shirdi is a very significant event

by Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar

🍞 ai Baba had decided to groom Upasani Maharaj as his successor. He had put Upasani on an internship of four years at Khandoba temple. Sai Baba had decided to drag him out of all worldly ties of temptations and its process was under way! Later he found food also repulsive – nauseous as excreta and had to stop taking it. Though spiritually advanced, his body became weak and fragile! He also developed insanity, abusing visitors to Khandoba temple and throwing stones at them. Adding fuel to fire, Nanavalli and his group of mischievous children were harassing Upasani! Thus humiliation, suffering, starvation, death of dear wife and all calamities of degradation one after the other increased the faculty of forbearance in him and his gender consciousness totally disappeared.

In these 46 months Upasani developed clairvoyance! He was able to know the mind and movements of Sai Baba from his own place! He could read the past, present and future of anyone! Cobra and other poisonous reptiles moved around without harming him. He had lost body consciousness!

Once an astrologer from Narsobawadi visited Shirdi. Sai Baba did not permit him to examine him. Somehow after two days of waiting, the astrologer could meet Upasani. He could see an accomplished saint!

Then Guru Poornima festival arrived. Baba told his devotees to worship Upasani first and later come to the mosque. The period of four years Baba had prescribed was still not fully over. But his experiments to make him a perfect saint came to their conclusion. Without speaking, without



looking at him, without keeping him in his constant company, Sai Baba had prepared his disciple! On this day of Guru Poornima (1915) he had a sudden whim of offering him the position of a full-fledged spiritual Master! So, Baba commanded some of his devotees to worship Upasani first before they performed his own 'pooja'! Those who had realized Upasani's high state of spiritual achievement rushed to him. Despite his protests they worshipped him as they would worship Baba! It was all new for the man in rags. He did not want this honor at all! He was furious! But obeyed Baba's orders!

It was three years ten months that Upasani had come to Shirdi! Only two months were left for Baba's mandatory four year internship for Upasani! He now had tremendous respect for Baba! He honestly believed that he was like dust under his Guru's feet! He could not bear the idea of being worshipped as 'Guru'. So, to stop this worship forthwith the only remedy was to leave Shirdi – he thought. He knew Baba would not permit it. So, he decided to leave without asking him. He secretly left Shirdi with the cooperation of Dr.Pillai and his brother! Clothes on his body were already torn or stolen by village urchins. The

only thing that was left was his piece of sack cloth. Before leaving Shirdi he prostrated thrice on the sacred land in front of Khandoba Mandir where Sai Baba had graced with his lotus feet long ago! Though he came in rags, now he left with a treasure of spiritual wealth!

Sai Baba felt sorry that his disciple did not complete the four years of internship to become his disciple! So, he declared that 'there is no heir or disciple to him, and he will continue to look after the welfare of his devotees. When he casts off his mortal coil, the bones in his tomb will be ever vigilant and take care of his devotees!

Dr. Ranvir Singh's

Pictorial Leela for Kids



rinnanubandh

We are here because .. we have been with each other, for many many births.

you do not know about it but I know about it.

So when I look at you, I don't look at you as what you are today..

I know you from many many births and that is why..

we are here again and again and again, to spend time with each other.







"Oh Lord! Let me have you alone."

Dr. Pillay Overcomes His Karma

by Mrs. Maheshwari

r. Chidambaram Pillay was an intimate Bhakta of Baba. He loved Baba much and even Baba would inquire about him very lovingly and used to call him Bhau (brother). Morning and evening Bhau's place was near the hand railing, on which Baba used to rest his left arm while sitting in the Mosque (Dwarkamai). There were lots of mutual exchanges of ideas between Baba and Bhau. While smoking a chillum, Bhau had to be there. Bhau's presence was imperative always and was needed while taking decisions in any matter. Baba talked with him off and on and consulted him in all matters.

Baba used to take on himself much suffering on behalf of his devotees who were passing through inevitable karma due to their actions in earlier lives. This Pillay suffered very badly from guinea-worms. He said to Kakasaheb Dixit, "The pain is most excruciating and unbearable. I prefer death to it. This pain, I know, is for repaying past Karma, but go to Baba and tell Him to stop the pain and transfer the working of my past Karma to ten future births of mine." Dixit went to Baba and told him his request. Then Baba, being moved by his request, said to Dixit, "Tell him to be fearless. Why should he suffer for ten births? In ten days, he can work out the sufferings and consequences of his past Karma. While I am here to give him temporal and spiritual welfare, why should he pray for death? Bring him here on somebody's back and let us work and finish his sufferings once for all". The doctor was brought in that condition and was seated on Baba's right side, where Fakir Baba always sat. Baba gave him his bolster and said, "Lie calmly here and be at ease. The true remedy is, that the result of past



actions must be suffered and got over. Our Karma is the cause of our happiness and sorrow; therefore, put up with whatever comes to you. Allah (God) is the sole Dispenser and Protector, always think of Him. He will take care of you. Surrender to His feet with body, mind, wealth and speech, i.e. completely and then see what He does." Dr. Pillay said in return that Nanasaheb had put a bandage over the leg, but Dr.Pillay found no relief. "Nana is a fool," replied Baba. "Take off that bandage or else you will die. Now a crow will come and peck you, and then you will recover." While this conversation was going on, Abdul, who always cleaned the masjid and trimmed the lamps, turned up in the masjid. While Abdul was attending to his work of trimming, his foot accidentally fell upon the

stretched leg of Dr. Pillay. The leg was already swollen and when Abdul's foot fell upon it and pressed it, all the seven guinea-worms were squeezed out at once. The pain at once became unbearable and Dr. Pillay bawled out loudly. After some time, he calmed down and began to sing and cry alternately. Then Pillay enquired when the crow was coming for pecking. Baba said, "Did you not see the crow? He won't come again. Abdul was the crow. Now go and rest yourself in the Wada

and you will be soon all right." By application of the Udi and by taking it in the stomach with water, and without taking any other treatment or medicine, the disease was completely cured in ten days as promised by Baba.

Baba's life was replete with several instances where Baba Himself took over the illness/suffering of the devotees and reduced or eliminated the karma of the devotees.



CHECK TO THE PARTY OF THE PARTY

Mounam

ri Narasimha Swamiji states that which letter represents the condensed energy of the universe, and what it reads, it is a 'forbidden fruit'. Yajnavalkya had warned Gargi not to ask too much. That is why she did not ask the next question as to what that letter is and its meaning. That is why she asked the scholars to save their honor by letting Yajnavalkya take the cows. The Letter is to be found and shared in silence, not to be shared in public, for it is the most intimate secret of the universe which it guards so closely. Bandying it about is insult to the world stuff, Brahman and to the 'Atman' (Self).

How to share it in silence is illustrated in another story. A Sai devotee found an answer to Gargi's unasked questions in the silence of one's heart and went to Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji for confirmation. Unable to verbalize his question, he just looked at Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji quizzically. Swamiji gave a slight nod. The devotee left clear in mind. "Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji explained with silence, and the devotee understood in silence". It was – 'Gurostu Mounam Vyakhyanam Shisysthu Chhinnasamshayah'.

Sai Baba told his devotees, "Respect the strangers who come to your doorstep. Offer water to the thirsty, give bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked and some space to rest in your verandah to the needy. This will please the Lord" (Sai Satcharita, Chapter 19, Ovi 143).



All Those Questions That Won't Go Away

by Dr. H.G. Adisesh

ri Narasimha Swamiji tells us: "He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever." We usually ask other people questions, but there are more significantly those questions we must ask ourselves in order to live fuller lives.

Staying with the question for a while is almost a completely unknown skill. Turning it around in our minds can stop us from jumping to that quick answer — something we have been trained to obediently do since we were very young — which often gives just a part answer at the surface. Sadly, we settle for the most obvious, which may not be what can guide us or open to us.

Shri Narasimha Swamiji writes about questions that "have no right to go away." These are the questions that have to do with the person we are about to become. Soon after I finished my Final MBBS examination, I met Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji who greeted me as 'Doctor.' I hesitatingly told him that the results are yet to be announced. He laughed and told me "I have already passed my examination."

Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji asked me a question, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your precious life?" I told him about my plans to go abroad. He knocked me with a question – 'Is there any difference in the number of times you are going to eat in India or abroad?' When I told him 'No,' he asked me, "Listen – are you breathing just a little, and calling that life? Chant Vishnu Sahasranamam and that will brighten your life. Stay back in India and take care of your parents."



Swamiji gave me a children's book 'Zebra Questions' by Shel Silverstein. He wanted me to read this thought-provoking book. It goes "I asked the zebra, Are you black with white stripes? Or white with black stripes? And the zebra asked me, Or you good with bad habits? Or are you bad with good habits? Are you noisy with quiet times? Or are you quiet with noisy times? Are you happy with some sad days? Or are you sad with some happy days?".

Swamiji's intention was that I should dwell on these promptings and to unfold my responses to open the door to my yearnings. With his blessings, I did Post-graduation in Pathology and joined the Central Government Health Services.

Adopt the culture of the tree in one's own life. If you throw a stone at a tree, it will give you a fruit in return. This is the highest kind of positive behavior. By adopting this positive behavior, you can make the whole world turn in your favor just as the tree does. This is Sai Baba's message.



Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama-6:

Sahasranama Doctrine of Mishkama Karma

by Seetha 'Priya'

ishkama Karma is not mere worklessness, external passivity or idleness. It is the state of establishment in the experience that one is the Atman, the pure spirit, the uninvolved witness of passivity as well as activity of body-mind. Willful worklessness amounting to idleness is not the aim.

When one's ego identifies itself with the body and feels 'I am the body', he becomes an actor, one involved in works. On the other hand, if he feels that 'I am the Atman', he remains as spirit, the pure witness, this state is called 'nishkama' or egoless passivity of the spirit.



Further, absolute passivity is impractical as living becomes impossible. "To awaken, sit calmly. Let each breath clear your mind and open your heart" (The Buddha)

So, what is expected to do is to work, controlling the senses by the mind and doing his duty with utter dedication and submission to Lord Sainath and without caring for the fruits.

The fifth shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama states—

'Swayambhu Shambhur-Adityaha Pushparaksha Mahaswana

Anadinidhano-Dhata Vidhata Dhaturuttamaha'

The self-born Sai Baba is 'Swayambu' whose birth and lineage we are ignorant and is 'Shambhu' the bestower of good. He is the Sun-God 'Aditya' and is lotus eyed as 'Pushkaraksha'. As 'Mahaswana' He is Omkara of holy sound and is beyond birth and death as 'Anadinidhana'. He is 'Dhata' the supporter and 'Vidhata' the dispenser and the supporter of supporters, He is 'Dhatuttama' the best of all substances.

Sai Baba himself taught the businessman who came to him for procuring 'Brahma Jnan' that practice of nishkhama karma is easier said than done. Even though the businessman had a bundle of Rs.250 in currency he did not volunteer to give five rupees to Sai Baba when He was frantically seeking a loan. Ultimately Sai Baba rebukes him

for his infatuation towards money and still seeking 'Brahma Jnan'.

This is because an attitude of being a witness does not come unless one feels detached. This happens after he understands and appreciates about what one really owns in life as well as the glories of the Creator.

Nothing belongs to us. We came with nothing. Oxygen was provided to us and we are provided with food so that the body can last possibly a hundred years. Nature meets all our wants. Yes, the world is a well-endowed guest house. Thus, mutually we can live, helping each other, according to Nature's design.

You cannot be an owner if you are not the author. The Creator is the material cause of Creation in addition to being the efficient cause. You cannot say that you created a business empire, because you must exist to start with, and all that was needed by you, like the ground, building materials, human beings and other raw material, was already available.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his book 'Life of Sai Baba' points out that human ownership is only a notion of Sai Baba's will by man's egoism. When this distortion is overcome through devotion and submission to the divine will of Sai Baba, complete peace and perfection is attained even in the midst of all work. Sri Narasimha Swamiji wants us to establish this reconciliation between Sai Baba and the devotees. Then it will be easy to practice detachment, slowly graduating to the state of being a witness. One will begin to see and appreciate Sai Baba's manifestations all around with a sense of awe and wonder.

Creation and Time are endless, being cyclic. The process of Creation has a purpose for the 'Jiva' or individual soul and that is to help him evolve to regain his full divine nature. Human birth is said to be precious as it is the only vehicle with potential to reach the goal. The worldly man needs only to change his attitude towards work.

One will be successful in doing 'nishkama karma' when he can dwell in the state of a witness in discharging life's duties, without caring for results. This can happen in two stages, the first in which all fruits of action are resigned to Sai Baba -'Sainatha Arpanamastu'. This is called 'prasada buddhi', graceful acceptance as 'prasad', a Divine blessing.

The yogi has still the sense of agency, the feeling of doer-ship. At a higher level of perfection, the sense of agency is also resigned, this is known as 'Isvararpana buddhi', offering of choice of action to the Divine. This attitude is based on an appreciation of the Divine even before you begin your action.

Thus, it is 'Bhakti' that completes the Vishnu Sahasranama doctrine of dedicated and detached work and practice of nishkama karma leads one eventually to 'nishkama siddhi' - an interim stage before enlightenment.

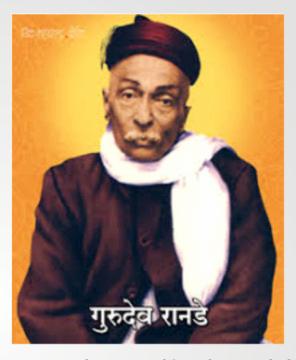
Gurudev Ranade

by Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar

Devotees' Convention at Hubli-Dharwar (Karnataka, India) in 1952, both Sri Narasimha Swamiji and Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji visited the Nimbal Ashram, near Sholapur, to meet Gurudev Ranade of the Navnath Sampradaya. Here Sri Narasimha Swamiji exclaimed, "The sacredness of this place reverberating with Divine Name and the presence of Ranade awakens divinity." Much later in 1987, when I visited this Ashram, the words 'Narayana, Narayana' emerged automatically from Gurudev Ranade's Samadhi. Indeed, Nimbal Ashram is one place where aspirants can rush to attain God, vision, peace and tranquility.

Ramachandra Dattatreya Ranade, known all over the world as Gurudev Ranade, whose premonastic name was Rambhau, was one of the foremost spiritual leaders of modern India who dedicated his life for the spiritual upliftment of millions. Considered in the lineage of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj (1789-1875) and Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj (1843-1914) of the Navanth Sampradya, he was a great saint, making the mystic teachings of India available to the world through his profound experience and study of the poet saints of Maharashtra and Karnataka. He travelled all over the country preaching 'Bhakti Marg' - initiating many sadhakas with 'Nama mantra.' He made devotees look at the illuminated vision of God and meditate silently on His name even when they are busy in doing other activities.

He was born in Jamakhandi, Bijapur District of Karnataka on July 3, 1886. After completing his schooling, he studied at the Deccan College,



Pune. In 1901, he was saved from drowning by his friend Kallu Bokhare who also took him to his Guru, Bhausaheb Maharaj. The great Guru brought a spiritual transformation in young Ranade. He blessed him with two rupees and advised him to use one for the 'prapancha' and the second for his 'paramartha.' Ranade asked, "Can the worldly life be made happy by meditation?" The Guru's reply was, "Nothing is impossible for God."

In 1914 he passed M.A. with two Gold Medals and joined the teaching staff of the Fergusson College, Pune, and then at the Willingdon College, Sangli. Later he joined Allahabad University in the department of Philosophy where he rose to become a Professor, Dean and retired as Vice-Chancellor.

In 1920, on a visit to Benares he happened to hear in the Shankar Math the song of devotion, "Bhaja Govindam: Be devoted to Lord Govinda – a lesson in Grammar will not save you when the death is at hand." This gave him the impetus to make a thorough study of Indian philosophy and mysticism as taught by the saints of India. He wrote meticulous books on Indian mystics and their philosophy with informative comparisons to the great mystic traditions. He articulated the teachings of Jnanadev, Nivrittinath, Eknath and Muktabai, as well as the teachings of Tukaram. His monumental work is 'A constructive survey of Upanishadic philosophy' in 1926. He wrote 'Pathways to God' in Marathi and Hindi. He practiced teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba.

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Sri Narasimha Swamiji's biography on Ramana Bhagwan directed Gurudev Ranade to Tiruvannamalai to meet Ramana. Both Ramana Bhagwan and Nisargadatta Maharaj influenced his spiritual thinking. He also met Annie Besant who recognized his high caliber, but he declined to join the world-wide Theosophical Society Movement. Instead, he created 'Adhyatma Vidyapeeta' for Comparative Philosophy and Religion' in Belgaum.

Ranade had his share of troubles in life, the loss of a child, his wife and his mother. Even then, he prayed to God, "You and I shall now live together." He also struggled with health problems for much of his life, but he cared for and struggled for the highest good of all those who approached him. He developed great dispassion and renunciation right after his Guru's initiation.

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In 1921, Ranade was looking for a place near his Guru's Samadhi. He had a vision of a tall person standing before him who said 'Nimbargi Maharaj has gone to Nimbal.' The vision ended and the next day Ranade could buy 48 acres of land near Nimbal Railway station. He built an ashram there and lived there after his retirement. He had the vision of God in every nook and corner of that ashram.

He cast off his mortal coil on the 6th of June 1957. Aliving tradition continues in Maharashtra due to the devotees of Guru Ranade, with centers and temples which actively function with a rich tradition of Guru Bhakti, meditation and Nama yoga.



Hari Sitaram Dixit

by Sneha Dhamle

ari Sitaram Dixit, H.S. Dixit was also called Kaka Dixit, Dixit or simply Kaka. He maintained a diary covering all the incidents and miracles in Shirdi. This diary not only covers the period after his arrival in Shirdi, but also prior to his arrival. His diary covers the period from 1909 to 1926 & is the first written document on Baba.

Dixit was born in 1864 in a Brahmin family in Khandwa. He studied in different places, including Mumbai, graduated with a Law degree and was practicing as an eminent lawyer, a Solicitor of repute and earned a very good name. He was also a Notary Public and Justice of Peace, a Member in several public institutions and was a prominent political and social worker. He was an elected member of the Legislative Council and rendered exemplary service to the public with selflessness.

Dixit was an active member in National Congress. Kaka and Nanasaheb Chandrokar were old and close friends. Kaka was in London and one day while boarding a train in 1906, he slipped on the platform and got his leg injured leading to permanent disablement. Due to this reason he was not able to walk straight. He went through surgery and therapy in England but still he was not able to walk properly, and this remained as it was. Due to his lameness he got a chance of placing his feet on the soil of Shirdi. In the year 1909, He went to Lonawala on vacation and he met Nanasaheb Chandorkar, his classmate. After school education, Nanasaheb got engaged in government service and Kakasaheb started his own legal practice. After many years they met in Lonawala. On the advice of Nana, Dixit wanted to visit Shirdi. He was in Ahmednagar staying with Mirikar, his friend and wanted to go to Shirdi. At



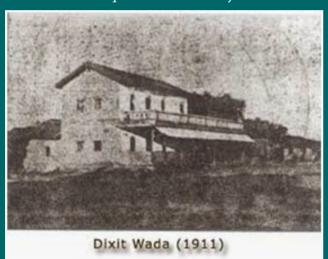
that time, Shama was also in Ahmednagar to see his ailing mother-in-law.

Mirikar came to know about this and arranged Kaka's visit to Shirdi through Shama. Kaka and Shama went to the railway station, but train seats were not available; however, through a railway official whom Kaka knew, got accommodation in 1st class and reached Kopargaon where they met Nana who was on his way to Shirdi. All the three reached Shirdi. Kaka came to Shirdi first time on November 2nd 1909 and had darshan of Sai Baba with utmost happiness. Baba told him that he was waiting for Kaka's arrival and that he also arranged to send Shama to bring him.

In Shirdi, in Lonavala, and in his house in Vile Parle, Bombay, Dixit regularly invited his friends and even strangers and offered food. His house came to be known as Anna Dhana Centre. In his Vile Parle house also, he regularly allowed several

cats and dogs to eat food without any restriction. He was a very generous person and followed all the views of Baba.

Dixit got Baba's permission to construct a residential quarter in Shirdi on December 9th 1910 and started construction work forthwith. He completed the construction work in about four months and the quarters were ready in 1911.



The residential quarters were called Dixit Wada and was inaugurated on Ramanavami day of the same year. Dixit Wada was located just across from Gurusthan. Dixit lived in a modest room on the first floor, leaving the entire area for the use of visiting pilgrims. Dixit did parayana every day in this Wada which was attended by several people, including visiting pilgrims on Baba's advice. Dixit used to daily read the 11th Chapter of Nath Bhagvat, which is most important. Puja was also performed regularly in this Wada. It was in this Wada that Hemadpant, the author of Sri Sai Satcharitra used to stay whenever he visited in Shirdi. The building was later used as Bhojan Griha or canteen in Shirdi till mid1990s. Dixit bequeathed part of the Wada to the Sai Sansthan and later the whole Wada was given to the Sai Sansthan. A small part of it was open as a reading room. In a recent extension to the Wada, a few of Baba's personal things and the

items used by Baba were subsequently put on display in a museum called: "Museum Hall".

After seeing Baba, his interest in his profession started diminishing and in 1911 he stayed for a long time in Shirdi in Dixit Wada. Dixit jotted down noteworthy instances indicating the miracles done by Baba on a regular basis and thus wrote a diary in Marathi covering all the incidents and miracles in Shirdi.

He gave up his lucrative legal profession in 1912. He reserved a room in Dixit Wada on the 1st floor for his stay and use. He lived alone for 9 months during 1912 in that room in complete solitude as per Baba's desire. Baba used to send his Prasad daily to Kaka. In that room, he was reading pothis, and religious books. After some time, Baba sent a message through Shama that Kaka could attend midday aratis and permitted him to join for the meals in the masjid. At this stage, he almost lost his liquid finances and became poor.

Seeing terrible change in Kaka's life, his wife Saraswathibai was perplexed and came to Shirdi to live with Kaka. But as per practice no ladies were allowed in the Wada upstairs. Baba was also firm in this regard and told Kaka to continue his practice undisturbed by anybody. Baba also told Saraswathibai that she should not have any fears about Kaka, and He would look after Kaka carefully. Kaka was fond of bhajans, devotional songs and used to sing bhajans on Baba. Baba once gave a kafni to Kaka who used to wear it during his stay in Shirdi. Thus, Kaka became an ascetic in Shirdi.

After Baba's Mahasamadhi, Bade Baba wanted to live in Shirdi; but nobody was prepared to give him any shelter, even a house on rent. This was all due to communal prejudices prevailing at that time. Despite protests by several people including Nanasaheb Chandorkar, Dixit gave him shelter in

his Dixit Wada. This approach of Dixit proved that he literally followed the footsteps of Baba, literally.

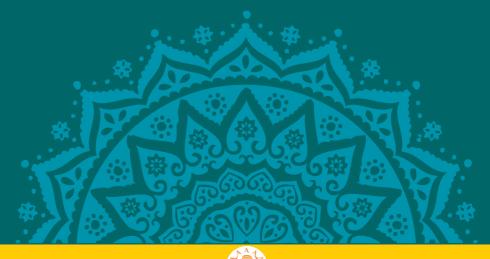
Dixit had a leading role in Baba's Samadhi in Buti Wada and in creating the Saibaba Sansthan of Shirdi in 1922. He worked as Honorary Secretary of the Saibaba Sansthan till his death in July 1926. In 1923 he started "The Sai Leela" magazine in Marathi which was edited by Kaka Mahajani.

Even after Baba's Mahasamadhi, Kaka continued his services to Baba. After his Mahasamadhi, Baba helped Dixit in several ways. Once when he was in financial troubles and when he was asked to repay a large sum of Rs.30,000/-to his creditors within a few days, he was in a quandary and was perplexed. Baba came to his rescue and suddenly, his old friend's son, on his own, brought the same amount and gave it to Kaka—which solved the matter.

In July 1926, Dixit, Dabholkar and Purandhare were going in a train and after boarding the train, Kakasaheb said, "How kind is Sai Baba? He takes care of the minutest needs of His devotees. If we had missed the train our day would have spoiled, and we had to spend the night

in Colaba". Eulogizing about Baba, Dixit closed his eyes. Purandhare and Dabholkar assumed that Kakasaheb got fully immersed in Baba's devotion. After some time, Dabholkar whispered to Kakasaheb, "Bhau, are you awake?" He repeated this statement for about three times, but he did not get any reply from Kakasaheb. So, a railway doctor was called at Mahim station. On examination, the doctor concluded that while speaking about the greatness of Baba, Kakasaheb left his mortal coil. Then Kakasaheb's dead body was taken to his house in Vile Parle. On July 5, 1926, Monday, Ekadashi day at the age of sixty two, Kakasaheb merged with Lord Baba which is heaven. Baba once told Dixit, "Kaka! I will take you in vimana (heavenly vehicle)". Kakasaheb's death was pleasant and peaceful. From the angle of attaining beatitude, his death could be considered as a blessing from his Sadguru. It is said in Gita, "The last wish or thought that a man has at the hour of death, determines his future course (for next birth) and that person attains the same".

Dixit was highly devoted to Baba and had greatest faith in Baba who blessed him spiritually. He was a devotee of the highest order and followed scrupulously all the directions of Baba.



IshAvAsya - Part 4

by JayakrishNa, Nelamangala

here is a popular idea that we can live happily without any philosophy. On the contrary, this upanishat teaches in this mantra that lack of knowledge of tattva is destruction of oneself. This needs to be understood with a deeper inquiry into the matter. There is another popular idea that there is emancipation for everyone. On the contrary, the next upanishat mantra teaches about something quite the opposite state called andhan-tamas, which proves that the tradition of upanishat has rejected the popular idea that there is emancipation for everyone. There is yet another popular idea that any means will do for emancipation. If everyone follows their own variety of means, and if all of them reach the highest, then any discussion on those means would be futile. These mantras in this upanishat establish that just as mukti is a permanent state, so also is andhan-tamas. This shows how disastrous wrong knowledge can be. By this, the greatness of right knowledge becomes established. That right knowledge is the right knowledge of Vedic Brahman. It is the only means for emancipation as Veda has made it clear. Opposing Vedic Knowledge is itself the disaster. On the contrary, right knowledge itself is bliss. The highest state of bliss is in the state of emancipation. This is how the knowledge of the Highest results in the highest state of bliss. Right knowledge that comes from Veda is obtained as a result of inquiry. Inquiry into Veda is in the form of study-contemplation-application and this is the path prescribed in upanishats.

आत्मा वा अरे दृष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेयि आत्मनो वा अरे दर्शनेन श्रवणेन मत्या विज्ञानेन इदँ सर्वं विदितं ।

ātmā vā arē drstavyah śrōtavyō mantavyō nididhyāsitavyō maitrēyi ātmanō vā arē darśanēna śravaṇēna matyā vijñānēna idam sarvam viditam | So teaches sage yaajnyakalkya.

In the previous mantras, the suitability for knowledge was described. The necessity for the third mantra in IshAvAsya arises because, after obtaining competence for knowledge, the curiosity to obtain proper knowledge of Brahman through Veda is to be quenched. The process of obtaining proper knowledge automatically involves the recognition and rejection of all that is not proper knowledge. In this mantra, the upanishat teaches what happens to the individual who has the improper knowledge.

We should remember that knowledge is always with a being. It is not something that can be found outside of beings. Thus, whenever 'knowledge' is talked about, two questions automatically should arise: 1) knowledge of what? and 2) whose knowledge? Similarly, for improper-knowledge the same two questions arise: improper knowledge of what? and whose improper knowledge?



उपनिषत्: Upanishat:

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः। ताँस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चाऽत्महनो जनाः ॥ ३॥

asuryā nāma tē lōkāha anḍḥēna tamasāvritāha | tāgumstē prētyābhigaccanti yē kē cātmahanō janāha || 3 ||

There is no exception to the rule that, one who has knowledge that is opposed to what is established by pramANAs i.e., tattva, he will receive mahAdukha, without fail. As students of Vedanta, what we should notice here is this. purā as already contained the meaning of these words such as "asuryA nAma tE lOkaaha" that show up in upanishats. So, while interpreting

those upanishats, śrīmad ānandatīrtha brings out their meanings consistent with those purāṇaas. For this reason, he profusely quotes from purāṇaas, bhāgavata, gītā and other works of śrī vēdavyāsa. We also notice that he does not quote anyone else.



उपनिषत्: Upanishat:

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः| ताँस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चाऽत्महनो जनाः || ३ || asuryā nāma tē lōkāha anḍḥēna tamasāvritāha | tāgumstē prētyābhigaccanti yē kē cātmahanō janāha || 3 ||

अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः anḍḥēna tamasāvritāha — The stations that are covered in dense darkness

असुर्या नाम ते लोका asuryā nāma tē lōkāha - such stations which are full of only misery, called 'asuryA'

ताँस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति tāgumstē prētyābhigaccanti - are attained after death by those

ये के चाऽत्महनो जनाः yē kē cātmahanō janāha — that did not get the knowledge of Parabrahman as established by pramANa and hence have killed their own thinking principle.

The phrase 'yē kē ca' in the upanishat indicates the fact that, those that have killed their own thinking principle as a rule end up in misery and darkness. There is no exception to this rule. 'ātmahanō janāha' in the upanishat stands for those people, who do not understand the Paramaatva-tattva as it is but understand it in quite the opposite manner.

This shlOka contains a warning that is given to every student of shAstra. One should let go of every abhimAna (hanging onto something that pramANas have shown otherwise) and other defects, while understanding philosophy. Then

and only then, Parabrahman as the sole meaning of Veda can be known. When there are these defects, what is known through the same Veda also has defects, and therefore it cannot be the Defectless Parabrahman. Those who get such wrong knowledge, as a rule, go to andhan-tamas. Therefore, a student of shAstra, must examine every concept that is thrown at him. Did pramANas establish that concept? Whether Veda has been interpreted to teach that Defectless Parabrahman? Whether the interpretation is due to abhimAna and such other defect? All these different concepts that are given to him as Vedanta are part of his understanding in ShravaNa. It is up to him to do the 'manana' based on what he has heard and understood from shravaNa. Thus, 'manana' is the most important step for progress in one's shAstraic knowledge. All this is possible, only through a constant manana in the form - what is the correct meaning of this shruti-vAkya?

'manana' is defined as:

प्रतिवाक्यार्थं अयं वाक्यार्थो युक्तः अन्योवेति संशयादि निरासक विचार शास्त्रं

prativākyārtham ayam vākyārthō yuktaḥ anyōvēti samśayādi nirāsaka vicāra śāstram.

For every sentence in shruti, whether this meaning is the correct meaning, or some other meaning is the correcting meaning? Enquiry which removes all these doubts is called 'manana'. Thus, all doubts get cleared at the stage of manana, so that one may commence an incessant concentration on it, in the nidhidhyAsana stage. This is an iterative process. One level of jignyAsA leads to the next level of jignyAsA.

We should also remember that the entire Veda establishes only one thing: that is Parabrahman who is denoted by OmkAra. But 'how?' is the question. It is through what is called shAstrasamanvaya. For this reason, a student of shAstra

must examine every kind of interpretation and see what they establish or fail to establish.

We will come back to this aspect of brahmajignyAsA, when it is taken up by the upanishat itself later. For now, let us recall that Bhagavad-Gita has listed 'abhimAna' as a demonic quality.

दंभो दर्पो अभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च । अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीं ॥ (गीता १६.४)

dambhō darpō abhimānaśca krōdhaḥ pāruṣyamēva ca | ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadamāsurīm || (gītā 16.4) Pretense, arrogance, conceit, anger, cruelty, ignorance are the qualities of a person born with demonic qualities. Maana means valid pramaaNa. pramaaNa generates true-knowledge. Abhimaana is that which is opposite to maana. Invalid-pramaaNa produces 'knowledge' that is not true. Knowingly holding onto such knowledge, is conceit. Not knowing what is valid and what is invalid is part of ignorance. Both ignorance and conceit are the qualities of a person with demonic qualities.

Shree krishNArpaNamastu,

The section of the se

Guru pooja

ai Baba revealed himself as Satchidananda Guru, a roving incarnation of Dattatreya in fakir attire. His close devotees Nana, Dasa Ganu, Dixit, Upasani and many others observed this attribute and they became the foundation stones and basic material of his cosmic mission as Guru. Baba was simultaneously helping 'sansaric' and materialistic men and women who had faith in him to develop as 'Bhaktas' surmounting their shortcomings and faults. For this recognition, Sai Baba started celebrating 'Guru Purnima' from 1909 onwards and this has become a regular feature.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji has noted that in 1908, Sai Baba made all Guru Bhaktas worship the pole against which he leaned in Dwarakamayi. Next year onwards he allowed them to worship his feet. He said: "I am not God. I am his servant. God dwells in the sky occupied by Brahma and operates even from a pole, like this pole in Dwarakamayi. You adore this pole, which symbolizes my fakir Guru. Guru is not an image or figure. He is a principle".

His devotees sought a mantra to rekindle their hearts with the flame of his own heart. Baba told them that dedication and surrender to one's Guru was the secret of Bhakti. His message 'You look to me, I shall look to you' is the essence of secret of Guru marga.



A Model of Vairagya

mong close associates of Sai Baba, Nanavalli is considered a model of Vairagya. Shankar Narayan Vaidya alias Nanavalli was a peculiar person. It was not clear whether Nanavalli was treating Baba as a divine saint. He was treating Baba with love and lot of respect. His early childhood and background were shrouded in mystery. He was notorious for his erratic and eccentric behavior. Baba warned him several times not to create problems in Shirdi village. Many people were afraid of him. Sometimes, he would carry snakes in his pockets and scorpions in his mouth. He would also violently abuse and attack some people for no valid reason. He called himself as the General of Sai Baba Army. Some others felt that he was a great person with lot of foresight. His appearance was wild and disheveled. Sometimes he would appear nude and at some other occasions he was dressed in an old sacking. If we study the life of Nanavalli, we will understand about his strong but concealed devotion towards Baba and also as an outstanding model of vairagya (dispassion).

Similar to Sai Baba, little was known about Nanavalli's background, birth and other details. One account says that he was a Brahmin by birth and some others say that he was born into a Muslim family. Sometimes he wore the clothes of a Muslim fakir and at other times he was found in the dress of a Hindu ascetic. Then again like Baba, his religious roots were not known. However, both versions agree that as a small boy Nanavalli served in a Muslim darga and came to attend Baba upon divine inspiration. Nobody knows when he came to Shirdi, but some say that he was already there when Baba arrived in Shirdi with the wedding party. At that time, on seeing Baba, it appeared that Nanavalli greeted Baba

by Dr. K. Nagesh

affectionately, saying, "Oh, Uncle, you have come!" Thereafter, he always addressed Baba as "Mama" or "Uncle." Nanavalli was content to see Baba occasionally and from a distance, but his devotion to Baba was such that Baba should get lot of fame and glory. He used to say, "My duty is only to protect my uncle". Nanavalli could not bear immorality or hypocrisy. He seemed to read the inner thoughts of devotees and target them accordingly. He was known to occasionally wait outside the masjid and abuse and beat certain individuals for no apparent reason. Though people would rush to Baba and complain, and though Baba would warn Nanavalli, He would ask the devotees to be careful about him.

H.V. Sathe was a prominent devotee holding the post of a Deputy Collector. Sathe constructed the first wada, called Sathe Wada as per the orders of Baba for the benefit of the visiting pilgrims to Shirdi for having darshan of Baba. Earlier there was no such shelter in Shirdi for the pilgrims to stay. For some reason, Sathe was particularly harassed by Nanavalli. During the Chavadi processions, Sathe had the privilege of carrying a sort of Regal Scepter (Royal Staff) and used to walk in front of Baba. On one such occasion, Nanavalli attacked Sathe on the back with a piece of broken glass. Another time, when Sathe was about to go to the masjid to worship Baba, Dada Kelkar, his father-in-law observed and rushed to the masjid and begged him not to do any harm to Sathe, as Nanavalli was waiting near the masjid with an axe threatening to kill him. Sathe was so afraid that he had to leave Shirdi with Baba's permission and settle in Pune once and for all. This incident happened in 1916.

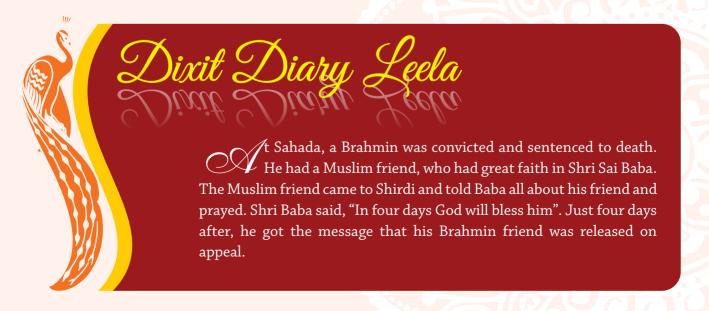
Shyamrao Jayker, the famous painter who painted Baba's original portraits and Dr.

Chidambaram Pillai, both staunch devotees of Baba, were initially moving with Nanavalli who also once beat Dr. Pillai. Then Baba warned Nanavalli and cautioned both to not move with Nanavalli. Like that, some other devotees also had similar experience with Nanavalli.

As Baba's fame grew, a large number of pilgrims started visiting Shirdi and Baba was worshipped with increasing pomp and splendor with royal dignity. One day Nanavalli suddenly came into the masjid, which was crowded with many visitors and to the surprise and horror of one and all present, he asked Baba, saying, "Please get up. I want to sit there" Baba immediately got up from his gaddi/seat and then Nanavalli sat in his place. The devotees were shocked at his audacity and thought of dragging him from that place. But seeing the calm posture of Baba, they stopped that idea. Thereafter Nanavalli addressed Baba as Nawab and asked Baba how he was. Baba replied saying that he was not a Nawab, but only the same fakir. Then Nanavalli asked Baba how the world was looking to him. To this, Baba replied saying that the world was looking the same as it was earlier and that there was no change. Then Nanavalli exclaimed, "Shabhash".

(Good, well done) and then prostrated before Baba and expressed happiness and danced ecstatically before leaving the masjid. This had happened in 1915 on a Thursday. It is difficult to understand the behaviour of Nanavalli. About this incident, some expressed that Nanavalli wanted to test Baba whether any egoism had crept in, following lot of fame of Baba due to influx of large number of devotees, but others also felt that he had no such doubts but simply wanted to demonstrate to the public at large about Baba's simplicity, purity and detachment. But Baba did not comment on the incident and none dared to ask Baba about it.

Nanavalli's attachment to Baba was so great that he used to say, "If Baba goes, I'll not be around for long" Accordingly, when Baba passed away into Mahasamadhi, Nanavalli rushed to the masjid and cried, saying, "Uncle, without you, how can I live? I am coming with you". He then went to the Hanuman Mandir where he wept grievously and took no food for several days. On the thirteenth day after Baba's Mahasamadhi, Nanavalli passed away on 27th Oct 1918 at the age of 70 years and his Samadhi is in the Lendi Bagh. His ways were always inscrutable.



The Loving Devotion of a Bhakta

by O.K. Varda Rao

rishna says in the Bhagawad Gita that a arphi true devotee - a bhakta, is one who "is not hateful towards any creature, who is friendly and compassionate, who has no idea of egoism, ()() who is the same in sorrow and happiness, who is forgiving, who is ever content, who has selfcontrol and who has firm conviction." Sri Narasimha Swamiji was a true devotee with no personal desires or undertakings. His desires coincided with the desires of Lord Sainath.

Swamiji's mother Angachiammal brought him up as a true Bhakta right from his childhood. She directed the child Narasimha to water the Tulsi plant and feed a cow every day before taking food. When Narasimha wanted to know the reason, she said. "It is not proper to take food before offering it to others."

Angachiammal used to give alms to beggars whenever they approached her. One day, seeing her give alms to a well-built beggar, Narasimha prostrated that she was being kind to a man who did not deserve it. In reply, his mother said, "Narasimha, who are we to judge who is worthy and who is unworthy? All who come to us for help are God in human forms. So, we must provide whatever help is within our means." She was also very considerate towards the so-called untouchables and it was from her that Narasimha learnt that "he who gives is a God, but he who withholds is a devil." Angachiammal's utterances taught Narasimha that service performed in the right spirit of 'karma yoga' becomes 'worship of Shiva in the Jiva,' which is one of the most effective means of self-purification and Godrealization.



Narasimha's mother used to serve neighbors in times of need. On one occasion when a neighbor was indisposed, she went to cook for them having finished her own cooking at home. Disapproving this, Narasimha said, "Mother, you are selfish. Why didn't you cook for them first and then do our cooking?" His mother replied, "If I cooked their food first, it would get cold by the time they ate it." The answer went straight into Narasimha's heart."

The large hearted Angachiammal was an effective Guru to her son. In his later life Sri Narasimha Swamiji hardly talked about himself; he occasionally used to speak of his mother's influence on him.

The Guru and God

by Seetha 'Priya'

🕜 elationship between a Guru and a T Disciple:

Once a contact between the Guru and the bhakta(disciple) is established, the relationship between master and disciple becomes a thing of beauty. This leads us to consider the principle of reciprocity which operates in this relationship. In return for the innumerable demands which a bhakta makes on the Master, it is but natural that the Guru too should impose a few conditions on the bhakta. The Guru expects total surrender, absolute obedience and, the last and most important, supreme effort.

Guru's mission:

The Guru's mission appears to be two-fold. The first and most important concern of the Guru is to awaken, elevate and transform the seeker. The second and final purpose of the Guru is paradoxically to help the disciple seeker to transcend this state of complete dependence on the Master, which dependence the Guru himself had taken such pains to foster. The final spurt of realizing his true identity with God is exclusively the Seeker's job.

Saint of Shirdi - Shri Sai Baba - Saguna Brahma - Guru:

The Saint of Shirdi recognized and emphasized the beauty of a Guru-guided life. Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi is the Guru incarnate to live on this earth in the late part of 19th century and early part of 20th century. Shri Sai Baba gave tremendous importance to the adoption of the Guru in one's spiritual "Sadhana" (pursuit). With an innate compassion Shri Sai Baba often declared -"I am your savior, not only from the weight of sin, but



from the weight of care and misery". "Guru is all the Gods", said the Saint of Shirdi. Moreover, Baba declared reassuringly though as the allpervading Guru he would naturally expect complete surrender, obedience and loyalty, he promised that through his supreme powers he would extend complete protection to those who put their implicit faith in him.

Is Surrender to the Guru the only Sadhana Prayer?

This question was hotly debated even in the presence of Baba. The answer to this complex question as given by Shri Sai Baba comes straight out of Sri Sai Satcharitra.

Kakasaheb Dixit (an ardent Devotee of Shri Sai Baba) has published his notes regarding this matter. Next day after Hemadpant's meeting with Sai Baba, Kakasaheb went to Baba and asked whether he should leave Shirdi. Baba Said, "Yes".

Then someone asked - "Baba, where to go?" Baba said, "High up." Then the man said, "How is the way?" Baba said, "There are many ways leading there; there is one way also from here (Shirdi). The way is difficult. There are tigers and wolves in the jungles on the way." I (Kakasaheb) asked - "But Baba, what if we take a guide with us?" Baba answered, - "Then there is no difficulty. The guide will take you straight to your destination, avoiding wolves, tigers and ditches etc. on the way. If there be no guide, there is the danger of your being lost in the jungles or falling into ditches."

Dabholkar was present on this occasion and he thought that this was the answer Baba gave to the question whether Guru was a necessity and he thereupon took the hint that no discussion is possible as is illustrated in the instances of great Avatars like Rama and Krishna, who had to submit themselves to their Gurus, Vasishtha and Sandipani respectively, for getting self-realization and that the only virtues necessary for such progress are faith and patience. (Vide Sai Satcharita, Ch. II, 191-92).

Has Shri Sai Baba qualified to be a Guru?

Not only did the Saint of Shirdi perform his duties of Guruship during his life but was able to establish a lasting Guru-parampara (successors of Gurus) through his vision and foresight.

Shri Sai Baba was not content to transfer his messiahship to his descendants. In the last years of his life, he said to his devotees with a mother's solicitude, "Do not grieve when my body passes away. My tomb will live and move and speak with all those who make me their sole refuge." Happily, though we have celebrated 100 years of his

mahasamadhi, Sai Baba's promise is abundantly fulfilled even today. Millions of devotees flock to his Samadhi regularly to seek his blessings. Through decades of void there comes echoing down the years the gracious message- "Lo, I am beside you always".

Significance of Guru Poornima Day.

The Poornima (Full Moon) Day in the month of Ashadha (July-August) is known as Guru Poornima. This is a very sacred day on which special worship is performed to the Acharyas (Gurus), who, through their Infinite Compassion and Supreme Grace, have imparted the Knowledge of the Absolute (Brahma Vidya) through a long and continuous line of Acharyas (Guru Parampara) to all the Seekers of the Self.

Celebration of Guru Poornima Day in Shirdi

The celebration of Guru Poornima began in Shirdi around 1908. One day Shri Baba told his disciple Shri Dada Kelkar, "Do you know this day is the day to approach Gurus? Bring your worship articles". Then Shri Kelkar and his friends looked up the calendar and found that the day was Guru Poornima day. They started worshipping Shri Sai Baba as their Guru, and that practice has continued till today not only in Shirdi but all over the world where prayers are offered to Shri Sai.

How does one celebrate Guru Poornima?

Guru Poornima is celebrated by devotees by performing Guru Pooja (offering prayers to the Guru) to our Lord Shri Sai Baba. Each Sai Devotee can either perform the Sai Guru Pooja (prayer) at home or attend a Sai Guru Pooja

The Way of Wisdom

by Sri Narasimha Swamiji

In life, we should not let others circumscribe us or define us. If you allow them to do that, they will reduce you and your work to zilch - as if what you are and what you have achieved don't count at all. If we are fooled into accepting their definition of us, we would be found wanting, definitely. Not just materially but intellectually and emotionally as well. On the contrary, if we remain calm observer of ourselves, we could see ourselves in a far more positive light as Ganesh Rao did. It is an internal processing exercise with splendid results.

Anna Saheb Dabholkar was prejudiced against Sai Baba. Even before he could meet Sai Baba

physically, Baba gave a dream vision and visited his residence in the form of a portrait. Later when Dabholkar visited Shirdi, Sai Baba sublimated his ego and made him compose the epic 'Sai Satcharita.' Similarly, Baba showered his grace on Megha who was just a cook. He changed his mental set up and enabled him to be engaged in rituals to attain 'Moksha.'Shri Sai Baba, Tapobhumi Mandir, Kopargaon, MaharashtraTherefore, when people comment on us or our ability, listen to our 'Antaryamin.' If we have done our job with honesty and dedication, we should not look forward to appreciation from all. Detractors will always be there. If we look inside objectively, we see the whole picture, not the fragments stitched together by those who are inimical to us.

It stretches through our entire life. Small



actions and behavior patterns become more understandable when we widen our perspective. That is when we will see that those who dismissed us as 'useless,' not up to it,' 'not satisfactory,' did so from a very narrow perspective. A freer objective assessment would have come up with another, more pleasing picture.

Why is it important for us to engage in an exercise of self-assessment, a kind of taking stock? It is just so that we do not get misled into believing the poor report of those who cannot see our potential, our good qualities. So why not do

some morale boosting? It is great way to get energized. And set about exploring the treasure trove tucked away inside.

We all go through those vulnerable moments when what others think of us, howsoever wrong or unflattering they are, begin to prey of us, and we might end up believing everything they say. These definitions are sometimes so powerful that they influence our notions of good and bad. Once a certain group of people see one as a troublemaker, or someone who questions the status quo or looks at reality critically to preserve their own turf, they might try to cut you off by defining you in a negative way. We face these situations everywhere.

Sai Baba's definition of us is of course the best of all. He called us 'his children.' With this definition before us, we become self-respecting, dignified and are able to walk with confidence. When the path becomes slippery, Sai Baba holds our hand. When our steps falter, Sai Baba steadies us. When we begin to become negative about ourselves, Sai Baba's grace fill us with reassurance.

When we draw the full picture, we won't allow vicious critics to have the final word. It is the picture we create for ourselves that determines 'who we really are.' So, the next time someone tells you what a poor opinion they have of you, you can tell them to take a chill pill. For you have already done that, haven't you?

Book Review



THREE SAI PRACHARAKS: TRIVENI': Sri Narasimha Swamiji, Sri Radha krishna Swamiji, Sri Sivanesan Swamiji' - is a compilation of life sketches of three ardent devotees of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba.

Compiled by: Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar. (Rendered into Tamil by Sri S.S. Mahadevan).

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http://auraofshirdisai.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ssm-ji-book-work-english-Final.pdf

Price: Sai Seva

Bharat, because it bestows spiritual solace to the entire world through great souls generation after generation, is known as Punyabhoomi. Sri Shirdi Sai Baba is one such great soul. Last year saw the completion of one century of Baba's Mahasamadhi. Today, crores of Sai devotees lead a life of pristine nature treading the path of Sri Baba's life and thought.

Today, practically there is no one who does not know Sri Sai Baba. But the great saint remained unknown to anyone for long years. It goes to the credit of three eminent devotees of Baba, Sri Narasimha Swamiji, Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji and Sri Sivanesan Swamiji, that Sri Sai Baba now adorns the homes and hearts of devotees the

world over. The trio, the Triveni, silently devoted their entire life in achieving the great mission. Even those devotees who are well aware of Sri Baba's spiritual powers might not even have heard of these three great visionaries.

Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar, has come out with this book, so that Sai devotees would greatly benefit. (Chennai - based senior journalist Sri S.S. Mahadevan has rendered it into Tamil).

It is hoped that Baba's devotees would receive this book being published by 'Bengaluru Kethuhalli Dwarakamayi Sai Mandir' as a blessing of the three great souls, the Triveni, and discover the purpose of their life in performing Sai Seva.

By: R. Varaearajan

Venture Beyond your Comfort Zone

by Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji

n his masterpiece 'Life of Sai Baba', Sri Narasimha Swamiji refers to many parables from Sai Baba's life. Similarly, in the ancient epics of Ramayana and Bhagawatha the lure has not dimmed. Each time I have read anything on Sai Baba or in the ancient epics, I have found something new.

One of my favourite domains is Sai Baba's reference to previous births and in Mythology the existence of extraterrestrials and our interaction with them. Surprised? I do not know why you should be. Life is eternal, birth after birth unless we attain 'Moksha.' Similarly, Gods and Goddesses are there, right before us. We always assumed that deities' extra limbs, heads and eyes are symbolic. Each explains of some virtue. But what if they were actual extraterrestrials with anatomy like ours, yet slightly different? Could they have travelled through space to earth and tried to replicate themselves? Many myths have subtle clues pointing to a story behind a story.

Let us travel back in time a bit. Revathi was the only daughter of a proud and powerful king called Kakudmi. He ruled the wealthy kingdom of Kusasthali which was under water but also included some land. This king was proud of his daughter and considered few to be worthy of her. So, he drew up a list of people and went along with his daughter to seek Brahma's counsel. When they reached, Brahma was enjoying a dance of Gandharvas. Father and daughter waited patiently for Brahma's attention. When the performance ended, King Kakudmi respectfully presented his request.

Brahma informed the king that the short time they had waited on this plane of existence was equal to four chatur yugas on earth and by this time all the eligible men would have passed away. Seeing the father's downcast face, Brahma suggested that he find Balarama who had incarnated along with Krishna. He would make her an ideal husband. Happy to hear of this, father and daughter returned to earth and found Balarama. Because of the difference in their ages, Revathi was much taller than Balarama. So, he tapped her on the head, and she became more natural to that age.

Now zoom into the story. Did anything catch your attention? For example, did you find the time difference part odd? How can four chathur yugas pass away in such a short time? How is it possible unless the duo travelled out of the planet into space? Just like light travelling from the Sun to the Earth takes a certain time to reach, so will any human travelling time to voyage in outer space. For four chathur yugas to pass, imagine how far Brahma's planet must have been?

Can you find any hint in this story? Are you adventurous or brave enough to look for a mystery in those ancient words? It requires an effort, but it can extremely rewarding, I assure you!

Many such anomalies lie hidden innocuously in the 'Life of Sai Baba.' One just needs to spot them, rather like fitting the parts in a puzzle. The next time you read on Sai Baba, read it with fresh perspective. Read between the lines and you will be surprised at the wonderful things you get to see!

One such hidden messages can be understood when we read about Sai Baba's two sheep and a weak goat incident in which Shama grumbles, "Baba what kind of purchase is this? You paid sixteen rupees for a sheep worth not even three! You returned the sheep too and retained a dying goat! You have lost money and the sheep!" Baba explained: "Do you know the divine practicality of this bargain! They were brothers in the past birth! They loved each other! They would come to me always together - the elder one was a crazy chap! He did nothing to earn. The younger one was active and earned a lot. This made the elder brother envy his prosperity. Both started fighting over the money. One day that ended in killing each other with axes. The result was that they were born again - but as two sheep! It makes you suffer life after life! Seeing them today I took pity

on them and so after feeding sent them away! In the story of Veerabhadrappa and Channabasappa, Sai Baba implicated a personal touch of three births.

Watch the way Sai Baba treated Mrs. Khaparde. Baba explained "Once she was a cow belonging to a Bania. Everybody was pleased with her sweet milk! Later she was born in a Mal family and then as a Kshatriya and now a Brahmin lady married to Khaparde! Everybody cooks food, but she puts her heart in it! She pours love in it! And with affection she serves it to all!"

We look at everything from our personal hologram. So, if we want to make a change it is just a question of shifting the hologram and perhaps out of our own comfort zones. Then the legend and stories come alive.

THE WALL

Extra Baggage

Narasimha Swamiji has stated in his masterpiece 'Life of Sai Baba' that it is not easy to shed extra baggage in the form of anger, hatred, jealousy, greed etc., which hang on to us as pre-judgments of others. Unpleasant memories of the past become a burden. We should try to not pay them too much of attention. In Sai Baba's idea of the world as 'perception', beyond the space and time we create for ourselves, I have allowed all such encumbrances to come in my way! Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji felt that I have given too much of importance to those who view me negatively and who can never see anything good in me. He prompted that these perceptions are not the real me; what others think of me is not my problem.



Charters and Sayings

by Shri. Narasimha Swamiji

91. Baba on each Guru Poornima day was seated at the Dwaraka Mayee. Devotees came to him, each with a book in hand, gave it to him for receiving it back with His blessings for the fruition of his study. Baba generally returned the books to the giver. Sometimes he gave the book of one to some other, substituting some other's book for his. On one such occasion a Bhaktha M.B.R. had brought no book at all.

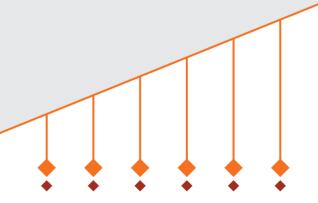
Baba (to M.B.R, looking at him): You are right DO NOT READ ANY BOOK. These people think they will find Brahman (God) in these books, but they find Brama (confusion) in them. It is enough if you KEEP ME IN YOUR HEART and make your heart harmonize with the head.

Baba orders Guru Poornima Celebration

552. Baba's (group) Arati and pooja on ordinary days was started in 1909, but for some time, there was no celebration of Guru Poornima by special worship of Baba on that day. Baba

himself sent for Dada Kelkar on Guru Poornima day and said "Do you not know that this is Guru Poornima. Bring your worship materials and do your Guru Pooja" The Guru Pooja was done on that day and this practice of celebrating Guru Poornima by all the devotees worshipping Baba. then begun, has continued up-to-date. But Baba objected to stealthy midnight worship of himself on Sivaratri, by H.V.Sathe.

On one occasion (a Guru Poornima perhaps) when all devotees (except MBR) had brought and placed garlands upon Baba M.B.R. was mortified at his own forgetfulness to bring a garland. Then Baba lifting up a bundle of garlands from his body, said to MBR-'All these are yours'.





We Are Linked With One Another

by **Swami Shanthananda Puri**

ai Baba has taught us that we are all linked with one another. Sai Satcharitra is full of anecdotes which speak of his deep love and connection with nature, animals and birds. Akin to Sai Baba's kindness, there is a folktale from Hawaii, which teaches us the same thing.

Two large mynah birds spied a ripe mango hanging from a tree; the fruit was perfect, ready to eat. The older bird declared, "I have lived longer than you. I should be the one to eat this luscious

fruit!" "You are old and can learn no more," replied the younger, pulling out his chest. "I will be in charge after you are gone. So, the mango should be mine!"

Rising into the air, they attacked each other again and again. Amidst this, a mother and father sparrow pecked small pieces of the mango to feed their large hungry family. Flying together back and forth from the nest to the fruit, the sparrows carried piece after piece into their fledglings' open mouths. Finally, the children were full and feel asleep.



After hours of squabbling, the mynahs collapsed, tired and hungry. They turned to look at their prize mango, and much to their surprise saw hardly anything was left.

Sai Baba advised a person desirous of acquiring the great knowledge of 'Brahma Jnana,' to strip off the coat of attachments! Attachments cause ego – a desire to possess creates infatuation, greed, lust, anger, pride and jealousy in human beings. These are the six enemies – 'Ari Shadwargas' which keep man away from Brahma – to God!

With this greed for wealth a man does not recognize a man, father forgets his own son, wife knows not her husband, a brother is not a brother, a friend is not a friend! The only relative man recognizes is money!

Brahma means the understanding of oneness of soul – 'Aham Brahmasmi,' which means 'I am God.' When we feel connected and supported by each other, we all thrive; but we all lose out when connection and support are not found. (Source – Fragrant Flowers').

You Are Destroying Our Ecology



by K.R.S. Iyer

The desire for power has created many things in the world. Science has come as a desire for power; and it has created power. But indiscriminate use of power is destroying humanity. A devotee asked Sri Narasimha Swamiji, "If you were born again, what would you like to become? "He said, "Never a lawyer again. Rather, I would like to become a plumber." Swamiji always felt that science would overpower nature and destroy all its mysteries.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji used to feed the sparrows with wheat at the backyard of

All India Sai Samaj every morning. One day, he told us a story. A very unusual idea occurred to Frederick of Prussia.

He was in the country when he saw sparrows eating some grains of wheat. He thought that these small birds consumed a million pecks of wheat a year and this cannot be allowed. They must be either conquered or destroyed. Since it was difficult to terminate them, he promised a price for each dead sparrow. All Prussians became hunters and soon there were no more sparrows in the country. What a great Viceroy?

Frederick was happy. He celebrated the event as a great conquest over nature. But the gloating



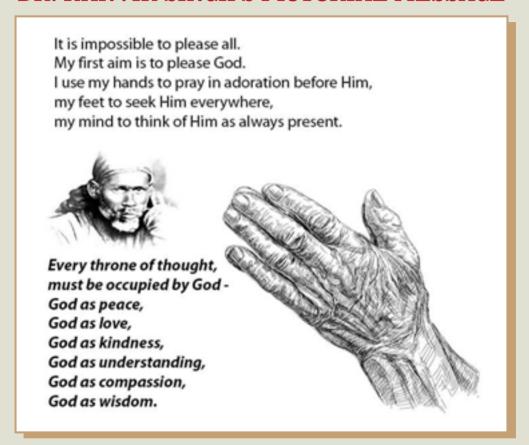
ceased when in the following vear he was told the caterpillars and locusts had eaten the crops because without sparrows the whole rhythm of life was destroyed. Sparrows go on eating caterpillars and locusts. There being no sparrows, the whole crop was destroyed by caterpillars. Then it was necessary to bring the sparrows from abroad. And the King said, "I certainly made a mistake. God knows what he is doing."

Science tries to penetrate nature to get more power, and there are many systems which penetrate your innermost

being – but again the goal is to get more power. Whether you become powerful in a scientific way, or you become in psychic way, it makes no difference.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji has concluded that a Sai devotee should always be in deep harmony that there is no question of conflict. He is always in love with the Universe and never seek power. He asks, "How to be in such a total surrender that I do not move in any way against the whole or separate from the whole, so that I can move with the river of life. And wherever the river of life goes, I can go with it."

DR. RANVIR SINGH'S PICTORIAL MESSAGE



'I am in you and you are in me' - This is a message of great hope.

t means that you and Sai Baba – that includes me, yourself, our friends, and all you come across in life. Shri. Radhakrishna Swamiji stressed that everyone has the potential of Sai Baba explaining that fire can be produced by a stone taken from the bottom of a river and that a candle can light up a place that has been dark

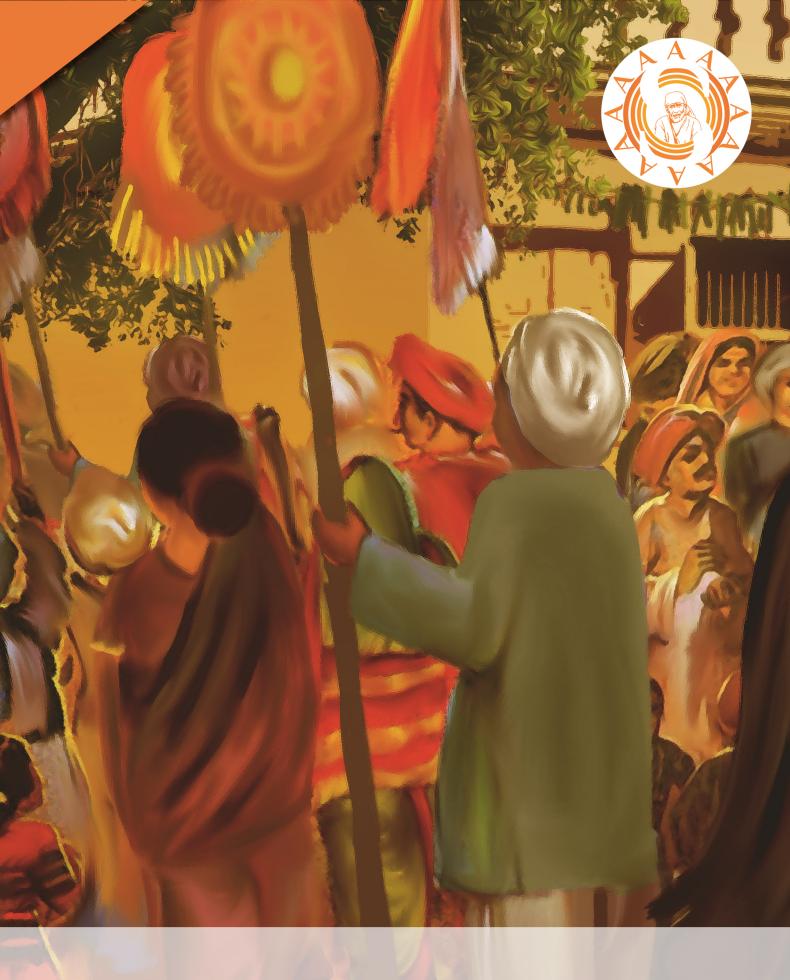
Of course, the qualities of Sai Baba - wisdom, courage, joy, life force and compassion – are more manifest in some Guru-bandhus than others, but Swamiji's message 'I am in you and you are in me' means that we have their qualities deep inside, in a latent state waiting to be tapped.

Even now in the 21st century, the spirit of equality has disappeared with ordinary people and the 'divine'. There is no better example of this than the belief in some subsects of Hinduism that women should not chant Vishnu Sahasranama, as if women did not deserve its merit!

Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji was an ardent votary of reciting Vishnu Sahasranama. He suggested that the seeker could choose anytime and anywhere to chant Vishnu Sahasranama and invoke the blessing of the Supreme Being. He said this is very dear to Sai Baba and there is no gender bias for its recitation. Vishnu Sahasranama is not 'pick and mix' religion.

'I am in you and you are in me' – this is a message of great hope. It means that you and everyone else can become indestructibly happy, that we have enormous untapped potential, that we are capable of progress even in the most difficult of circumstances, often in ways that we never imagined.

We can overcome the differences that separate us. We are all equal. A person is not great because of his social standing, fame, academic background or position. Swamiji proved this fact time and again.



Complimentary copy. Not for sale.