

Aura of Shirdi Sai



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE —

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CONTENTS

	4
	5
<u>The Loving Way of Life</u>	6/21
<u>A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama</u>	7
<u>Dr. Ranvir Singh's Pictorial Message for Kids</u>	8
<u>Give and Take and Experience Peace</u>	9
<u>Desires Provide for Evolution</u>	10
<u>Gift of Nine Coins</u>	11
<u>Unto His Fold</u>	12
<u>Sai-Prachar Work By Guru of Maharajas</u>	13
<u>After Baba's Mahasamadhi</u>	14
<u>Make A Sense</u>	16
<u>Sai Baba Takes Us to Parvati Parameshwar</u>	18
<u>Sathe's Contribution</u>	20
<u>IshAvAsya</u>	21
<u>The Flower and the fruit</u>	22
<u>Sai Baba and Date with Divinity</u>	23
<u>The Power of Association</u>	24
<u>The Inscrutable Design that Weaves a Web of Desires</u>	25
<u>When Miracles Happen Out of The Blue</u>	
<u>Children's Corner</u>	

EDITORIAL

The First Word

All life is sacred and therefore compassion and respect towards all forms of life are the basis of a genuine sense of caring for humanity, says Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his masterpiece 'Life of Sai Baba'.

Today, technology has shrunk the world, bringing people from across the globe closer. An event in one part of the world has repercussions in other parts, too. With our lives so intertwined, altruism is a practical necessity. Religious teachings from ancient times also stress the need for altruism, practicing it as a matter of virtue or ethics.

In economic and environmental matters, countries need cooperation and collaboration, making the concept of 'us' and 'them' archaic. It is time we consider the whole world as 'us.' But, due to lack of awareness and insight, this is far from becoming real. We still believe in separateness, and many of our current problems are because of narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness. For instance, we are facing a serious, worldwide ecological crisis and the issue cannot be resolved by a powerful nation alone, but rather, in collaboration with others.

This small planet is the only hope for us, and all of us have the responsibility to look after it. Only a sense of global and universal responsibility can solve or minimize man-made problems. The logic is quite simple! Our interests are dependent on that of others, and unless that is taken care of, we cannot solve our problems. We should develop an attitude to help one another. We should visualize Sai Baba in each and every one of us. Serving others is equivalent to serving ourselves and God.

We will all benefit when we take greater care of others' rights and interests.

A majority of over six billion people on this planet do not seriously follow any particular faith. Although people say that they belong to a certain tradition, they may not necessarily be believers in their personal lives. However, they are also a very important part of humanity. When a child takes birth, it does not choose its faith. Even when the parents perform rituals, the child has no feeling for, or appreciation for those rituals. Its mind is free from any faith and it survives only on human affection and concern. The mother's physical touch or milk is what the child appreciates. These are very strong feelings of appreciation and human affection, without which the child cannot survive.

Thus, from the time of birth, every human being seeks affection. It is also a basic human nature to be gentle — gentleness based on affection. When our mind is calm, compassionate and open, we remain healthy physically. On the other hand, constant frustration, anger, agitation and hatred, affect mental and physical health alike. We learn this from Sai Baba's life.

While we promote intellectual or knowledgeable aspects of our nature and our valuable qualities, the most important of which is compassion must also increase. When we realize the impermanence of our own lives, and that of all others, while also thinking about 'how our lives are dependent on others,' we ensure that the brain and the heart function in tandem. Apart from this, we must take care of the environment for humans to have a better future. This planet is our home.

We must recognize the unifying 'life' within all sentient beings – recognizing that Sai Baba is our 'Antaryami' - and develop an attitude of respect towards all aspects of the environment — akin to what we give to our families. Disregarding needs and feelings of living, sentient beings will make us develop negative feelings about our fellow human beings and see them as weak, worthless and undeserving of respect. Compassion and respect towards all forms are the basis of a genuine sense of caring for humanity. It is time for each one of us to develop this kind of attitude. The need of the hour is for human beings to develop the virtue of compassion for everything, the entire humanity, the environment, each other, and the self.





'The loving way of life'

Blessed are Sai devotees who understand that life is one,
its forms do come and go
But life itself flows on!

Blessed are Sai devotees who resolve that they will serve society
To lessen suffering and pain
And attain to wisdom pure!

Blessed are Sai devotees who speak in sympathy gently to all
Who do away with bitter words
And never speak in anger or hate!

Blessed are Sai devotees who rightly act and put away all thought of gain
Who know that motive is the deed
And who renouncing power are pure indeed!

Blessed are Sai devotees who earn their daily bread in such a way
That brings no hurt or pain
To all living creatures on this earth!

Blessed are Sai devotees who cast out ill-will and pride in daily life
And act obedient to the Law
In sympathy and love!

Blessed are Sai devotees who walk the way aware that life is sacred
They strive for peace and ever before them shines Sai Baba's
Noble truths of life!

Blessed are Sai devotees who meditate in silence and see how rich indeed,
Is the life of compassion, service, love!
Radiant as Sai Baba in such a life!

By: Sushma S. Aradhya

A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama

Sahasranama for A Balanced State of Mind

By: 'Seetha' Priya

What kind of lifestyle would facilitate achieving liberation? Should one progressively withdraw from the external world and its inconsequential activities and live in isolation? Should one contemplate the Divine while being engaged in worldly affairs? Some sages advocate the path of rigorous ascetism, while others believe that one can gain enlightenment even as a householder. A spiritual aspirant is constantly debating – which out of the two is the better option?

Explaining this subject, Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his Masterpiece 'The Life of Sai Baba' quotes an anecdote from Mahabharata. A sage named Jajali stood motionless for many months while practicing extreme ascetism and some birds built their nest and laid eggs in his hair. Overcome by the thought that if he moved, the birds might suffer and die, Jajali remained in that position without food and water till the time the birds grew up and flew away. Jajali rejoiced that by doing so he had reached the pinnacle of ascetism, compassion and spiritual growth.

Just then a heavenly voice told him that a merchant named Tuladhara was more advanced in spirituality than him and he must visit Tuladhara. When Jajali met Tuladhara he observed that as Tuladhara went about his business of selling goods, different kinds of people came to the shop. Some customers were good, others were bad; some expressed gratitude while others ridiculed the merchant. But Tuladhara remained in perpetual equanimity. He was neither exulted by the love nor distressed by the hatred and went about doing his work honestly. While balancing the scales in his business, Tuladhara had achieved an inner balance that transcends duality.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji concludes that

'Enlightenment' is a transcendent state where one realizes that the 'Self' is different from body, mind and its sensory objects. Also, pairs of opposites such as pain and pleasure, love and hate, birth and death, attachment and detachment, loss and gain, activity and passivity are nothing but a playful manifestation of consciousness.

The seventh shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama bats for a balanced state of mind in the devotee.

'Agrahya Shashwatah Krishno Lohitakshah Pratardanah

Prabhutah Strikakubdhama Pavitram Mangalam Param'

Even though Lord Vishnu is 'Agrahya' as He cannot be grasped, He is 'Shashwatah' – Ever existing. He is 'Krishna' the dark-complexioned and bestower of Sat-chid-ananda the balanced state of mind. He is Red Eyed 'Lohitakshah' as in Fish incarnation and is 'Pratardana' – the destroyer of all our agonies. He is 'Prabhutah' - the biggest and existing in three regions as 'trikakubdhama' in the lower, middle and upper regions. He is 'Pavitram' - the holy and 'Mangalam Param' – the beneficent and best.

Consequently, the person remains in a balanced state, at all times and under all circumstances. The individual is full of bliss having experienced the vision of an absolute consciousness in Sai Baba. This ultimately leads to all the emotional, physical and psychological problems that troubled him to dissolve completely.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji got 'Sai-Sakshatkar' on 29th August 1936 as he stood in front of Sai Baba's 'Samadhi' at Shirdi after a rigorous itinerant life of eleven years to know the truth. What is important is that the individual contemplates absolute consciousness constantly and uproots whatever it

is that creates false illusion in his mind and drives him away from the truth. Whether he is meditating in a remote cave or envisioning the Divine while doing his job in a metropolitan city is just an ancillary event.

One powerful yogic technique that can help a person achieve this difficult task is 'Pratyahara', elaborated in the Shandilya Upanishad. Pratyahara is the withdrawal of the senses from their objects. We have experienced this practically in our conversations with Sri Radha-krishna Swamiji at Bengaluru. Whenever someone started discussing politics Swamiji started reciting Vishnu Sahasranama. Here he demonstrated that 'Pratyahara' is the withdrawal of the senses and not the external objects per se. Therefore, one can withdraw one's



attachment and attention to external objects anywhere, whether it is a secluded forest or busy shopping mall.

The withdrawal of senses is accomplished when one repeatedly tries to see the one absolute consciousness 'Sai Baba' who is hidden in all forms and aspects of creation. With repeated practice, awareness comes up, that all the senses and their umpteen objects, mind and body are a manifestation of absolute consciousness. The mind then

gives up craving, it reflects this one consciousness and stays in perfect balance.

Sai Baba states: "I see myself everywhere. There is no place without me. I fill all space in all the directions. There is nothing else but me."

(Sai Satcharitra – Chapter 14, Ovi 48)



you should not pray to God seeking any favours.

The reason for this is that ..

no one knows, what immensely precious, divine, and magnificent treasures lie .. in the treasure-house of Divine.

Grace waiting to be conferred on man.

Hence, man should not seek from God, nor desire, nor pray for some petty trifles.

If you wish to ask for anything from God,

pray to Him thus -

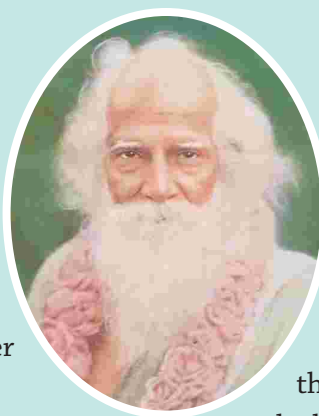
"Oh Lord! Let me have you and you alone."

Once you have secured the Lord, you can get anything you wish for ...



GIVE AND TAKE and EXPERIENCE PEACE

By: Sri Narasimha Swamiji



Life is all about give and take — this is an oft-used expression that devotees of Sai Baba keep hearing. While this is by and far true, where finding peace of mind and happiness is concerned, life is more about 'give,' rather than 'take.'

Giving anything — money, time, love, respect, praise, encouragement — is an art, and does not come naturally to man. Man, by nature is a collector, a hoarder. He believes in taking all that he needs and more and storing it away for a rainy day. Enough unscrupulous elements exist, who hoard everything from food to consumer items, so that their price will increase, and they can make a quick buck. The entire black-market industry operates on man's weakness to take more and more, and not being able to forgo anything.

In the long run, it is giving and not taking that gives happiness and bliss. When you take something from someone, with or without his consent, you are temporarily happy, till your need arises, you take more. Your happiness at taking something is often short-lived. In fact, if you have grabbed or taken something forcibly, the guilt of doing so does eventually catch up with you. As against this, when you give someone something, the happiness that you derive from the joy and contentment that the receiver displays, is much more in quality and quantity, than the happiness of taking. Kaka Dixit took a trunkful of silver coins to Sai Baba and in no time, Baba distributed them to the devotees present there.

You just have to give something to your house help or neighbor or a relative, to experience this. If giving

were without any benefit, we would not have great social workers and philanthropists in the world, at all. Though giving seems to go against our instinct, it is actually not so. For example, one of the happiest persons on this earth, at any given time, is a mother, who has given birth to a child and who is giving everything — time, energy, attention, love, and milk — to the baby. One has to watch a pregnant woman or a mother to see this bliss. Just imagine — if your mother were a taker, and not a giver, and refused to give you her love, affection and milk, where would you be? Ask any woman, what the happiest moments of her life were, and chances are that she'll tell you that it was when she was nursing and bringing up her child. Sai Baba is our mother and has given us everything we need.

As an extrapolation of this mother-child relationship, if Mother Nature was not to give us anything from its bounty of sunlight, air, water, earth, trees, animals etc. where would we humans be? Think about it. Occasionally, when nature is overwhelmed by man and his misdeeds, it does take back, in the form of an earthquake, typhoon, flood, but by and far, nature only goes on giving.

Sai Baba used to beg food from five houses. He mixed it and shared with dogs, pigs, sparrows etc., Follow his example to feed a hungry soul. The sooner you learn to give anything that you are capable of giving, the earlier you will experience an inner peace and satisfaction. This will be far greater than the joy you get by taking. Try it out once and see for yourself. Be a giver, not a taker, and the entire universe will flood you with more things than you can even handle.

Desires Provide for Evolution

By: Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji

The basis of life is desire. According to the Rig Veda, the universe came into being when 'it' desired so. When there is no desire, there is no life. We either choose life with all its ups and downs or opt for no desire and no life.

My Guru - Sri Narasimha Swamiji has stated in his book 'Life of Sai Baba' that 'Desire is an outcome of experience and the mind is relentlessly seeking experiences.

The moment the brain stops receiving a signal, there is no life. The brain craves experience since the neural pathways must be formed. The brain is an autonomous organ and there is continuous energy and material flow into it for making and unmaking neural pathways. These neural pathways then form memories and hence desires.

Therefore, 'Desire' is nothing but memories. The intensity of desire depends on how intense the memory is. This is also mediated by a strong will power, a function of strong memories. When the whole brain becomes focused on one desire, then, it becomes passion!

Strong, emotional memories are like knots. They lock a large number of neural pathways. It is the dissolution of these pathways that helps in resolution of desire that allows the brain to become very powerful and happy.

Happiness is a powerful brain, working at its full capacity without the encumbrance of emotional knots.

Patanjali said, that a Yogi's brain is like pure crystal. It reflects clearly, the object of perception.

We cannot remove memories easily. They can be reduced by long practice of austerities which allows the weakening of neural pathways so that the processing power of brain is increased. 'Nama Smaran'



like chanting Sai Baba's name and Vishnu Sahasranama will help achieve this.

All desires manifest themselves as something we want to possess, sexual, financial, food-related or any other desire. If satiation is not complete these desires in turn fuel more desires and the cycle will continue and can sometimes spiral out of control.

Just possessing the object of desire does not help in its resolution. Satiation has to occur at a much deeper level whereby its cause and its fulfilment is analyzed; meditated and contemplated upon. Then the desire knots or emotional memories are resolved and hopefully dissolved. This requires a very powerful brain. That is why I have stressed – 'A desireless person is a veritable Emperor'.

Another way to fulfil a desire is by using a virtual reality tool. It allows real life experiences and does not need very much energy, materials and resources. Again the resolution of desire knots via this tool requires a powerful mind to analyze, resolve and dissolve them.

The desire knots not only have to be resolved in our brain but their memories have to be removed from the Knowledge and also for achieving liberation from the cycle of death and birth.

As Patanjali has said, 'When the sanskaras (karma, memories, desires, etc) are resolved, they have no role to play in a person's life and then one achieves Kaivalya or Nirvana'.

Desires are extremely important for life and provide the forum for evolution and achievement. But we need to create desire for higher and noble things. This creates happy memories, a fulfilling life and contentment.

Gift of Nine Coins

By B. Rajeshwari

Lakshmibai Shinde was a well to do woman. Her full name is Lakshmibai Tukaram Shinde. Bhagoji Shinde was her husband's uncle. She used to prepare food for Baba every day. She had, during her entire lifetime, served Baba during day and night with utmost devotion and unswerving faith. Baba used to address her as "Lakshmi Ma". She was allowed access into the masjid at all times including nights, similar to the privilege granted to Mhalsapati and Tatya Patil.

Once, in the evening, as usual Baba was reclining against the wall and chatting with Tatya Patil. Lakshmibai came there and bowed down before him. Baba said, "Lakshmi! ! I am very hungry." Lakshmibai rushed to her home and gladly prepared rotis etc. immediately and brought that hot food to Baba. Baba picked up the plate of the hot food and placed it before a hungry dog. Lakshmibai was surprised to see this. She immediately said, "Baba, I hurriedly cooked the food for you; but you gave it to the dog. You did not even taste a morsel." Baba replied, "Lakshmibai, there is God in every being. If your food enters any mouth that is hungry, be assured that it has fallen into my own mouth." Thus, Baba indicated to Lakshmibai that feeding any hungry animal was same as feeding him. From that day onwards,

Lakshmibai started bringing rotis etc. for Baba. She mixed it with milk and with great love brought it to Baba. Baba on his part also waited for her rotis to come and did not touch any other food before her food arrived. On some occasions, the food from her would come late even though everyone in the masjid would be feeling very hungry. But still Baba would not start his meals till Lakshmibai's food arrived. After some period, Baba started demanding kheer (sweet) made from Shevaya from her. After Lakshmibai brought such type of kheer, Baba would ask her to sit by his side. Lakshmibai served Baba for about 45 years. Baba used to give her four rupees on a daily basis.

Lakshmibai brought meal for Baba, which was his last supper on 15th October 1918. Lakshmibai Shinde was one of the seven devotees who were present with Baba in the masjid when Baba passed away into Mahasamadhi. Baba gave her

first five silver coins and then four silver coins, total 9 (nine) silver coins of British Era. All were very much surprised to know as to how Baba got those silver coins of British Era and how he preserved them. They knew that Baba did not keep anything with him. Thus, as to how and from where Baba had got these 9 silver coins, had become a mystery.



When Baba's marble idol, made by B.V. Talim, the celebrated sculptor of Mumbai, was brought to Shirdi before installation, Lakshmibai Shinde was one of the few living devotees who saw the idol of Baba and expressed happily that the idol looked exactly like Baba and felt that Baba came back to Shirdi in the form of Life-Like idol. She was also lucky to observe the installation ceremony of Baba's idol at the hands of Sri Sai Sharananand in the Samadhi Mandir on 7th October 1954, the Vijayadasami day, exactly 36 years after Baba's Mahasamadhi.

She lived for 115 years up to 1963 and passed away on 2nd June 1963 which was an Ekadasi day. The nine coins were kept with the statue of Lakshmibai in the small house which is open to the public for darshan.

The house with her Samadhi in front, is located a few meters near the Chavadi. In 1963, Lakshmibai handed over these divine coins to her daughter-in-law, Sonubai who performed puja for these coins from the year 1963 to 1984 in the house. Later these coins were handed over to her son. Afterwards the coins were handed over to her fifth generation of descendants. Thus, the coins are moving from one generation to another and her descendants are keeping them as a treasure. All the family members from generation to generation, were happy and did not have any financial problems and on the other hand they were financially well off through Baba's Grace.

Even now Lakshmibai Shinde's descendants have preserved these 9 coins very carefully and they shine now in the same way as they were when Baba had given them to Lakshmibai. It was a fact that when Baba had come to Shirdi for the first time, it was Lakshmibai only who had offered food to Baba. Now many devotees visit their house for the darshan of these 9 blessed coins and it is believed that mere darshan of these 9 coins, one's problems get solved.

UNTO HIS FOLD

Kaka Dixit visited Ahmednagar for election work. Next morning after finishing bath, rituals and breakfast, Kaka Dixit sat down leisurely to have a chat with the family members of Balasahib Mirikar. The topic of Sai Baba came up all of a sudden! Kaka Dixit was happy that Mirikars too were Sai devotees. He therefore expressed his desire to visit Shirdi for Baba's darshan. Hearing Kaka Dixit's desire, Balasahib suddenly remembered Baba's picture! He got up quickly and uncovered the photo of Sai Baba kept in the center of the hall.

The first darshan of Sai Baba in a sitting posture on a large stone in Dwarakamayi thrilled Kaka Dixit. He felt Baba's grace on him! It fascinated Kaka Dixit at its very first sight! A picture of a simple Fakhir! Grey beard, an imposing look, a kind expression, torn clothes, piece of cloth on his head with a big knot protruding on its left side. Style of sitting with right foot folded over the left one resting on the ground – all these exhibited a rich simplicity of a Loving God! Kaka Dixit had a feeling of achieving something he had missed so far in spite of his having everything in life! The lotus feet of Baba attracted him, and he gave them a permanent place in his mind. He shed tears of joy in fulfillment of the emptiness of his life. Kaka Dixit spoke to his hosts – “Balasahib, this very moment, I feel, my life is complete! Now I am looking forward to my visit to Shirdi.”

(Source – 'Loving God')

Sai-Prachar Work By Guru of Maharajas

By: Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar

Sri Subrahmanya Iyer was a contemporary of Sri Narasimha Swamiji and Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji. He spent the last three years of his life at Surveyor Street in Basavanagudi in Bengaluru as a neighbor of Kannada poet, Prof. A.R. Krishna Sastry and as a friend of in the company of former Diwan M.N. Krishna Rao, famed Social Activist P. Kodanda Rao and Justice Nittur Srinivasa Rao. Sri Narasimha Swamiji named V. Subrahmanya Iyer, a guru to the monks and Maharajas. The Maharaja of Mysuru, Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar brought him to Karnataka and as a scholar, he was sought by many from India and abroad.

Subrahmanya Iyer was born in Salem in Tamil Nadu in 1869. After initial education at Madras Christian College, he studied Mathematics and Physics at the Bangalore Central College. He then started teaching at the University of Agra. While travelling in North India, the Maharaja of Mysuru was impressed by Subrahmanya Iyer's scholarly wisdom. The Maharaja invited him to Mysuru. Though reluctant to leave Agra, Subrahmanya Iyer came down to Mysuru eventually and held different teaching posts, before becoming the Registrar of Mysore University in 1919.

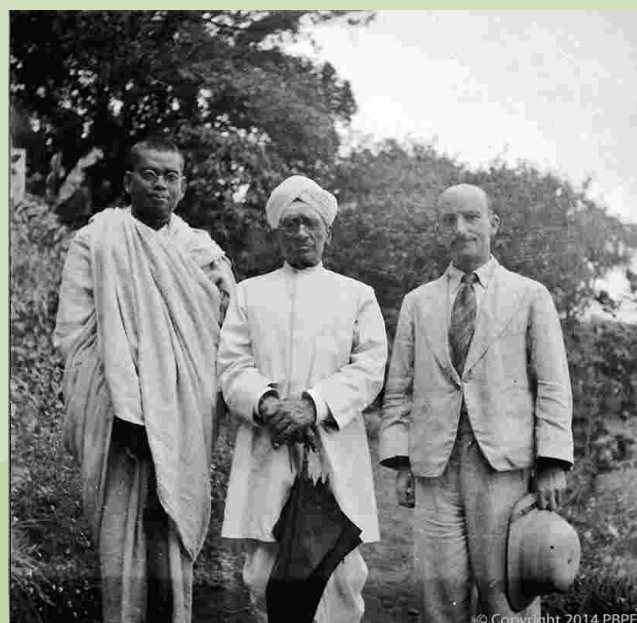
In 1900 or so, he was drawn by the magnetic spell of the then Shankaracharya of Sringeri, Satchidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bharati Swamiji and later his successor, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Swamiji. The renowned Jagadguru initiated him into Advaita philosophy.

After retirement from the University of Mysore in 1926, he was appointed 'Raja Guru' of the Maharaja, Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar and held this post for the next 20 years, even after the philosopher king's death in 1940. The Maharaja even took Subrahmanya Iyer along with him on his trip to England in 1936. Subrahmanya Iyer who

knew Sri Narasimha Swamiji right from his Salem days again met him in Mysuru during Sai-Prachar work.

Besides Subrahmanya Iyer, the then Sringeri Jagadguru had also initiated Y. Subba Rao, who went on to become Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswati and established his own Ashram in Holenarasipur. He is widely known for his spiritual wisdom. Subrahmanya Iyer, being his senior, guided Subba Rao and taught him the doctrines of Vedanta. Another notable personality was Paul Brunton, who had come to Mysuru on the invitation of the Maharaja. Paul Brunton was an admirer of Sri Narasimha Swamiji at Ramanashram in Tiruvannamalai.

Paul Brunton and Subrahmanya Iyer formed a strong Shishya-Guru relationship. For Paul Brunton, Subrahmanya Iyer became the Guru after Ramana Maharshi. Encouraged by the Maharaja, a circle of Vedantic studies was formed in Mysuru in the 1930s, which gave birth to Ramakrishna Ashram. Subrahmanya Iyer taught Vedantic



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scriptures to the monks of Ramakrishna Mission from a scientific perspective. It was here that Paul Brunton came in touch with Swami Siddheswarananda, one among many monks benefitted from the scholarship of Subrahmanya Iyer. Swami Siddheswarananda subsequently became the first president of Mysuru Ramakrishna Ashram and also helped in the Sai-prachar work of Sri Narasimha Swamiji at Mysuru eventually.

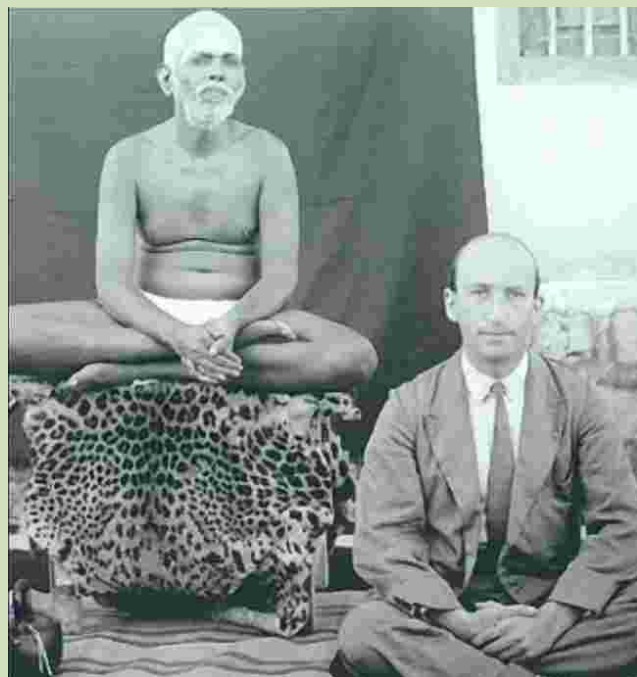
Subrahmanya Iyer, Paul Brunton and Swami Siddheswarananda embarked on a tour abroad and attended the Ninth International Congress of Philosophy, organized by the University of Paris at Sorbonne in 1937.

In 1938, the Indian Government invited Swiss Psychiatrist Dr. C. J. Jung to the 25th anniversary of the University of Kolkata. On this occasion, Dr. C. J. Jung, who had come to know about Subrahmanya Iyer through Paul Brunton, met him and had in-depth discussions. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who later became the President of India, was also a student of Subrahmanya Iyer.

On 25th December 1949, Subrahmanya Iyer passed away, at the ripe age of 81. In a tribute to him, Sri Narasimha Swamiji wrote in 'Sai Sudha': "I

still hold that Subrahmanya Iyer had only one more incarnation to take, that he was a genius for intellectual understanding of the most esoteric truths. He had been initiated into the traditional esoteric doctrine of Shankara, which is not written in the books, but only taught in private."

Subrahmanya Iyer is spiritually alive in his scholarly works on Advaita philosophy. Paul Brunton Foundation has published all his works.



AFTER BABA'S MAHASAMADHI

On the same night when Baba left his body, he appeared in Das Ganu's dream at Pandharpur. He told him – "Ganu, I have given up my body! Come there and adorn me with Bakut flowers!" Das Ganu rushed to Shirdi to fulfill Baba's command of covering his body with plenty of bright red flowers (BAKUT).

Madhava Rao's uncle Lakshmana Kaka too had a dream – "Lakshman, that Babu Jog thinks I am dead! It is not so! I shall be ever living for you all! He will not do arathi! At least you do it." Early morning Lakshmana Kaka went to the mosque and prepared for the morning prayer. Ignoring all protests, he performed 'arathi' as usual!

Das Ganu reached Shirdi and looking at Baba's lifeless body he was very much moved! The emotional vibrations caused in his heart shaped into words which flowed out of his lips singing Baba's glory! He began to decorate the body with flowers of poetic compositions! Other devotees too cheerfully joined him in offering flowers!

(Source – 'Life of Sai BABA' by Sri. Narasimha Swamiji)

Make A Sense

By: Dr. Masha Bhalla

Every individual has a story or a personal experience to make sense of this world. But many things happen beyond our comprehension. Over a period of time, we imply that we know all the right answers, that everything is under our control; we know that it is not so. We are, as things indicate, in that 'space between stories'.

I have been a devotee of Sai Baba since 1971, when I was studying in the Bangalore Medical College and it was Chengaiah uncle who took me along with his daughter Vasundhara to Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji. Jyoti aunty was too good to me. Since my parents and grandparents belonged to different regions and religions, Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji called me a 'Rainbow Child'.

In the Southern California town of Claremont, where I now live, there is a retirement community called Pilgrims' Place. It looks like an ordinary neighborhood of modest homes, but everyone who lives there is a retired missionary or church worker of some kind.

Once a year, the community hosts a festival to which the whole town is invited. Among the activities, many of the residents set up tables in front of their homes. Through photographs, artefacts and personal stories, the ex-missionaries share the adventures they have had in countries across the globe.

Every year, my father would attend the festival. Even though he was a Punjabi, he particularly enjoyed talking with the retired missionaries.

The festival is held during the dry season in Southern California, but one year there was an

unexpected rainstorm. It was a warm rain and considering the conditions many of the missionaries had lived under, a little rain hardly deterred them. They donned raincoats, covered their displays with plastic and carried on as usual!

Making a joke of the weather, my father said to one of the missionaries, "Considering how much you have given to God, it seems the least He could do for you is give you good weather for the festival!"

Without missing a beat, the retired missionary replied, "Weather is a decision made by Management. My career was in Marketing."



Sai Baba Takes Us to Parvati Parameshwar

By: Smt. Seetha Vijayakumar

Since my marriage, I had requested my husband to take me to Kullu-Manali in Himachal Pradesh. When we were about to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of our wedding, unannounced he gave me a surprise. He took me to Garhwal where we had darshan of Sai Baba in a magnificent temple built by a schoolteacher Sri Goyal, whom we had known since the Seventies. We went to Haridwar and Rishikesh and were guests at Sai temples there. Suddenly my husband told me that we will be travelling to Kullu-Manali on a week's honeymoon when we both had crossed fifty!

The devotion and camaraderie between people from different religions left a lasting impression on us when we made this trip to Kullu and Manali, where we visited a temple, a gurdwara and a Tibetan monastery.

"Sir, shall we go to Manikaran tomorrow?" asked our taxi driver Atul while returning from a waterfall on the third day of our tour to Manali. I asked him about Manikaran, and he said there was a Shiva temple, a gurdwara and a hot spring. Till then, we had no idea of our itinerary on the fourth day and were planning to take rest.

It was bright and sunny after three days of incessant rain. We left for Manikaran, located in Kullu district. Along the way, River Beas followed us at several feet below, and up above, the mountain peaks shadowed us, one after another. As we stopped at a dhaba for tea, the owner explained that the mountains are connected to Mount Kailash where Shiva resides, and from

Manikaran there is a way to Leh and from there to Mt Kailash. "Once you reach Manikaran, you won't feel like coming back," he said.

For a second, I thought my dream of going to Mt Kailash had come true, but I quickly returned to my senses and continued on our drive to Manikaran.

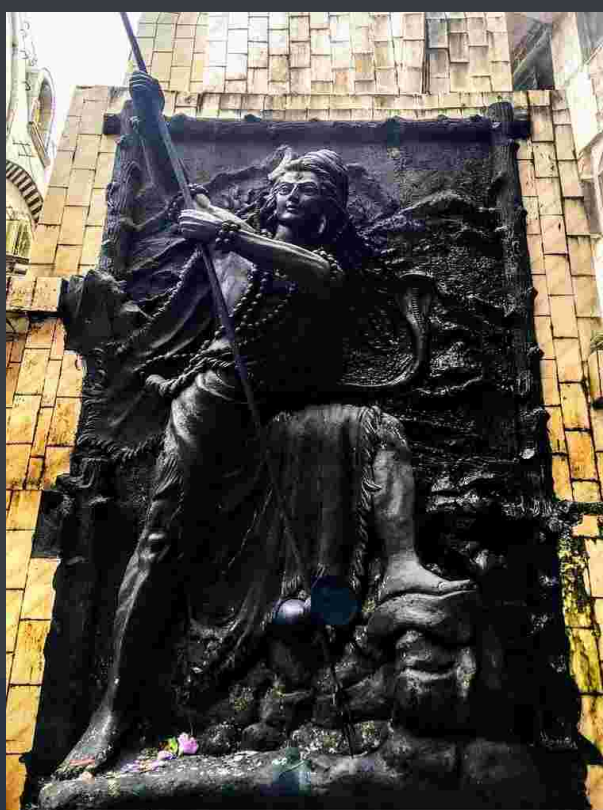
After more than two hours of travel, we reached Kasol, a village with a good number of foreigners living there. I wondered if Manikaran would also be the same as Kasol. Finally, as we reached Manikaran, Atul showed us the way to Gurdwara Shri Manikaran Sahib. There was a small sanctum for Shirdi Sai Baba.

For me, this was the first ever visit to a gurdwara; there was pin drop silence with only the voice of a priest reciting hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib, which added to the serenity. We first prostrated before the altar where the Holy Scripture was kept — as we do in temples back home — and then stood in silence for a few seconds, offering our prayers. As we were about to

leave, we were called by a person to receive the prasad, which was new to us. We chanted Vishnu Sahasranama as we received the Prasad.

Our next stop was the water tank. Cold water poured through a pipe into the tank, which was connected to the hot spring. "This tank contains water from the hot spring. It has medicinal value and cures people of skin diseases," said our driver.

We took a bath reciting Vishnu Sahasranama in the holy water and followed our driver to the Shiva temple.



People stood surrounding a small tank in which hot water was bubbling below the Shiva temple.

A huge statue of an angry Shiva with a spear in his hand was etched in black on the wall above the tank, and it was covered by the steam from the hot spring below. "The langar attached to the gurdwara uses water from the hot spring to cook rice and daal," said the temple priest pointing at four vessels kept covered inside the hot water just below Shiva's statue.

When we went around the shrine, we saw Shiva in the form of a lingam decorated with fragrant local flowers. The shrine, surprisingly, was free of crowds as it was the hot spring which attracted most of the tourists.

The local story is that Parvati lost a piece of her jewelry in the river during the divine couple's stay in Manikaran. After a long search, Shiva used his spear to bore the river and the jewelry appeared in the hot spring, and since then the spring has been spewing hot water at 83 to 90 degree centigrade, while the river water flowing outside is cold. As we recited Vishnu Sahasranama, we were joined by another family from Tamil Nadu and we began talking in Tamil. We talked of how nice it would be to have a water source such as this for our cities – Chennai and Bengaluru!

We were asked to buy rice and channa and cook it in the hot water. It took nearly 15 minutes for both to get cooked in the spring. It was a unique way of displaying our devotion to Shiva and Parvati. We remembered Sai Baba cooking in Dwarakamayi. There was bhakti, devotion, especially among the local residents and camaraderie between the Hindus and Sikhs in the

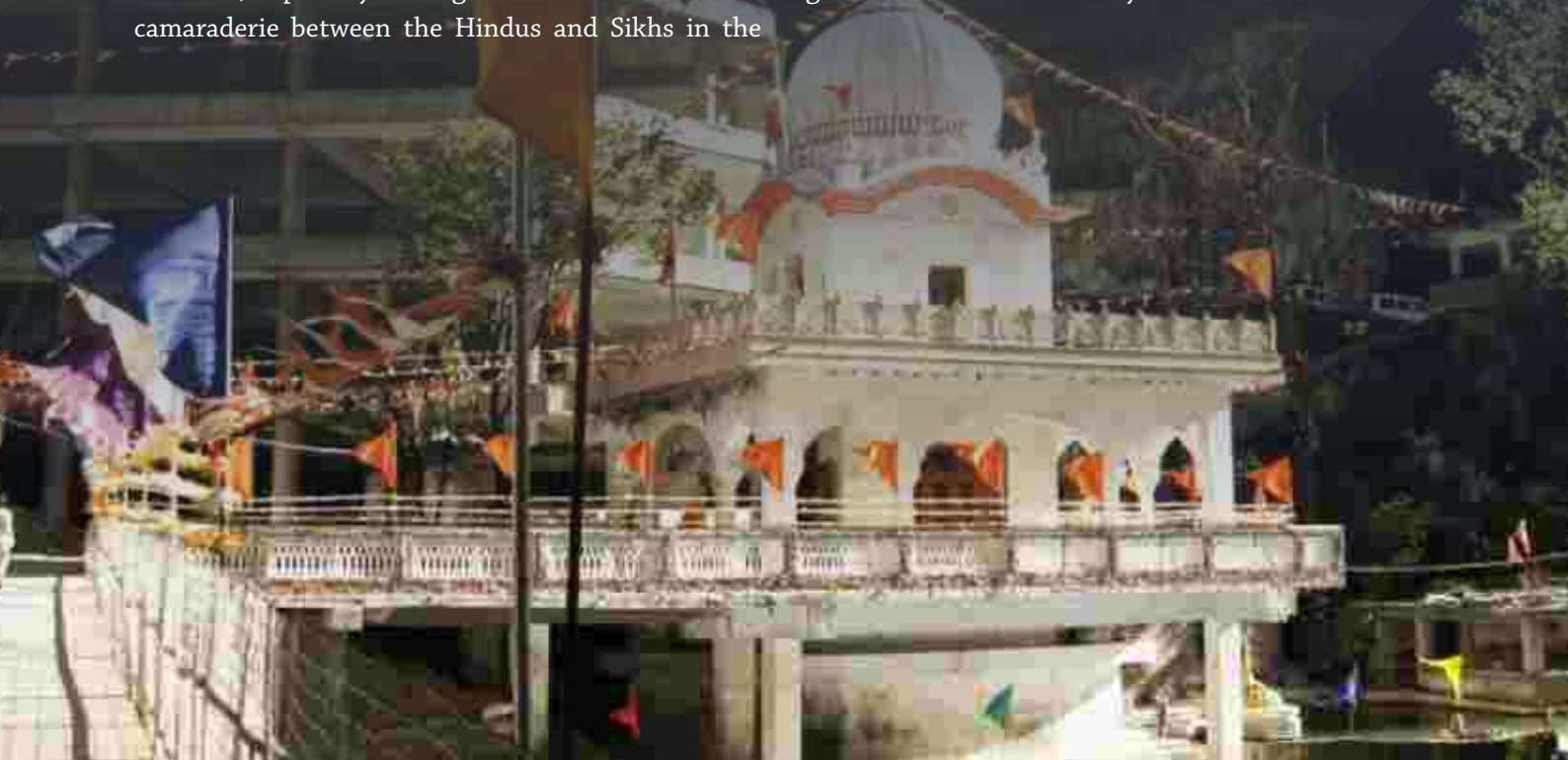
area. Soon after we left the hot spring, we were led into the langar hall. We had to cover our heads, but we easily mingled with the gurdwara devotees. Though we had seen a langar on TV, this was the first time we were part of the people sitting in the langar waiting to be served hot food, straight from the hot spring.

It was a humbling experience to eat rice, daal, chapatti and khichri with everyone together. We had to put away the plates at the designated area within the langar hall, where they were being washed by volunteers. We left the langar, after this altogether different experience.

Back in Manali, we went shopping as it was our last day there. We also visited a Tibetan monastery. There was a huge moorthi of the Buddha and people stood in silence before it. In temples, we chant shlokas and mantras, and make offerings to gods, but in the gurdwara as well as in the monastery, people offer their services by keeping the place clean and by serving visitors — to me these were completely different approaches to please God. All methods work well as long as they are done with humility.

Back in our hotel room, we wondered how lucky and blessed we were to have visited spiritual places of three religions on the same day.

For the outside world, Manali is a place full of fun and frolic and attracts honeymooners; for us it was different. We returned to Bengaluru but couldn't stop recalling the wonderfully different experiences we had of Sai Baba taking us to Parvati and Parameshwar, the gurdwara and the monastery at Manikaran.



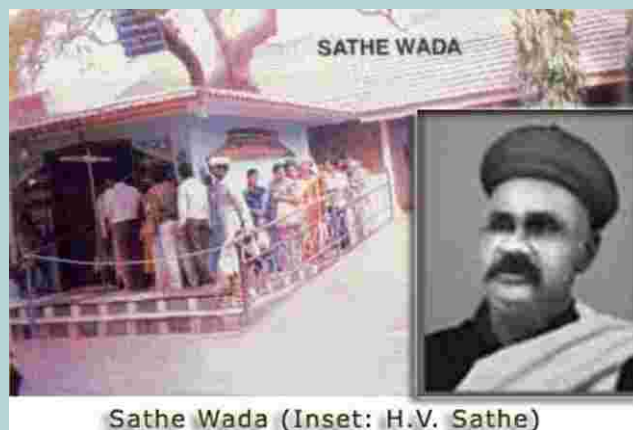
SATHE'S CONTRIBUTION

By B Uma Maheswara Rao

Hari Vinayak Sathe constructed, on Baba's orders, a residential quarter called "Sathe Wada" in Shirdi for the convenience of the visiting pilgrims. He also sent Megha to Shirdi who introduced congregational worship to Baba.

Hari Vinayak Sathe was born in 1855. H.V. Sathe became a Deputy Collector and then Land Superintendent at the time of his retirement. Sathe would be remembered for two great services rendered in Shirdi. The first service was to provide residential accommodation in Shirdi for the devotees called Sathe Wada which he constructed in 1905-06. This gave immense relief and comfort for the devotees visiting Shirdi. Prior to the construction of Sathe Wada, visiting pilgrims had to stay in the houses and sometimes under the shade of trees as Shirdi was a small village at that time. The second service he provided in the masjid, was introducing congregational worship by the devotees through Megha whom he had sent to Shirdi. Till then, the devotees were performing individual worship only, to Baba. Sathe had sent one young man by name Megha to Shirdi. Megha was an illiterate orthodox Brahmin, devoted to the service of Lord Shiva. Sathe told Megha that Baba was an incarnation of Shiva and that Megha could perform his devotional service to Baba. It was Megha who started the congregational service to Baba and became the first priest to Baba and a devoted bhakta. Baba liked Megha very much.

Sathe lost his wife when he was 44 years and had a daughter but no son. Though friends pressed him for second marriage, he was reluctant as he was nearing 50 years and was not sure of getting a son. His friend, Barve, the Mamlatdar of Kopergaon taluk, took him to Shirdi in April 1904 and both had darshan of Baba. Barve told Baba about the marital position of Sathe and his desire to have a son. Baba immediately said if Sathe got married again, Allah would bless him with a son. Again, a very famous astrologer visited Pune where he was working and told him about his past and



Sathe Wada (Inset: H.V. Sathe)

his daughter correctly, and that he would get a son by his second wife after his 50th year. Then Sathe was transferred to Ahmedabad.

A person by name Ganesh Damodar who was called Dada Kelkar was in search of a groom for his daughter. Kelkar wrote a letter to Sathe, enquiring whether any suitable groom was available in Ahmedabad for his daughter. Sathe thought that this must be an act of Baba and hence he wrote back to Kelkar saying that no groom was available in Ahmedabad except himself and it was for Kelkar to decide taking into consideration his age and other pros and cons. Kelkar readily agreed at this proposal. However, Sathe insisted that Baba should see the girl and approve for the marriage. Kelkar being an orthodox Brahmin was not in favor of approaching Baba whom he considered as a Muslim saint and instead was willing to consult any Brahmin saint. However, Sathe insisted on consulting Baba and then Kelkar took his daughter to Shirdi and Baba on seeing the girl blessed her and told Kelkar to send her to Ahmedabad at which Kelkar was very much surprised and felt extremely happy. Sathe married her in 1906 on his 50th year. During first seven years, he got two daughters first and then a son was born in 1913.

Dada Kelkar was also instrumental in starting Guru Poornima day celebrations in Shirdi in 1909.

On Baba's desire, Sathe purchased a piece of land near the neem tree under which Baba had performed

his penance earlier. Sathe wanted to construct a residential quarter for the use of pilgrims who would be visiting Shirdi for the darshan of Baba. Pilgrims accommodation in Shirdi was a big problem in those days. An interesting thing about the laying of the foundation stone for this Sathe Wada deserves to be mentioned. A day was fixed by Baba for this purpose and Sathe was unaware as he was not informed. But Sathe on his own left for Shirdi with Barve. However, Baba was aware of Sathe's arrival in Shirdi and told Kelkar, his father-in-law that Sathe would be in Shirdi on the day fixed for starting foundation work. Sathe and Barve reached Shirdi on the day fixed for laying of the foundation stone and Sathe was very happy that he came to Shirdi at the right time. However, Baba was not in favor of any formal foundation ceremony with pomp and gaiety.

In 1908, there was an obstruction in the construction of Sathe Wada. Baba when first came to Shirdi, was meditating sitting under the neem tree which was considered sacred. The branches of this neem tree were obstructing the construction work. Hence Baba asked the people to cut the obstructing branches. But nobody came forward to do this and then Baba himself cut the branches, facilitating the construction work of Sathe Wada.

Sathe got the residential quarters constructed in 1908, including the old village wall as per Baba's desire. These residential quarters were called Sathe Wada

In the year 1915, H.V. Sathe established an organization by the name 'Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha'. Ramchandra Patil was its secretary.

Sathe did not approach Baba for his religious and spiritual upliftment and hence did not improve much spiritually. But Baba on his own kindness corrected him from his errors as once he was about to be lured by a wicked woman and put him on the right path. Off and on, he was exhibiting too much anger in his interactions with devotees. In such matters, Baba was immediately intervening, controlling and advising him suitably. In 1905 with Baba's Grace, there was however a change in Sathe's life for the better. Sathe frequently visited Shirdi between 1906 and 1916.

Sathe did so many other minor things interfering in the internal matters of Shirdi village and incurred

the displeasure of Shirdi residents who developed hatred and hostility towards Sathe which he faced boldly with the ever-vigilant guidance and protection from Baba. At the instance of some of the villagers in Shirdi who were jealous of his official position, Nanavalli became furious and started harassing Sathe. Sathe was so afraid that he fled Shirdi with Baba's permission to leave. This happened in 1916. He settled in Pune with Baba's consent.

Baba continued his blessings, guidance and advice to Sathe even in Pune. One instance is quoted here to show how Baba was helping him continuously. In 1914, Kaka Maharaj, a famous Sadhu living in Dhupeshwar arrived in Pune. Though Sathe invited him to his house, he declined. But after a few hours, the Sadhu himself sent word to Sathe, agreeing to visit his house and this was due to Baba's intervention which Sadhu told Sathe later when he visited his house.

Sathe did not get much encouragement in his job.. He was not in favor of continuing in his job and told Baba accordingly. But Baba advised him to have patience and wait for some more time. After a few months, he got elevated in his position and got a posting as Land Superintendent in Kolhapur with increased salary with scope of higher pension. However, at the time of retirement, Sathe had difficulty in getting full pension sanctioned. But with Baba's blessings, he got full pension payment settled and released.

When Sri Narasimha Swamiji interviewed Sathe in 1936, he was 81 years. Sathe told Narasimha Swamiji about the importance of Sathe Wada and said that Kelkar also lived in Sathe Wada, Jog did daily parayan in Sathewada, Khaparde also wrote part of his diary in this Sathe Wada and Arathi was also performed regularly to Baba's picture kept in this Sathe Wada.

Sathe passed away in 1942. In 1924, Sathe Wada was bought by R.S. Navalkar and his heirs gave it to Sansthan in 1939. In about 1941, Sansthan added four more rooms for the use of pilgrims and part of the Wada was there up until 1998 being used by Sansthan as an administrative office. Later it was pulled down when the Temple complex was modified. Thus, great service was rendered by Sathe to Baba and for the comfort of the pilgrims.

Mantra #5

IshAvAsya

By JayakrishNa Nelamangala

This world is under the control of Vedic Parabrahman, Vishnu. This truth is sometimes expressed as this world is under the fear of Brahman. There are several statements such as 'bhayaadasya agnistapati', 'bheeshaasmaat vaatah pavate' coming from katopanishat and taittareeya which establish this vedic truth. In the brahma-sootras, there is what is called 'kampanaadhikarana' fixing the meaning of all such vedic statements. The next mantra in this upanishat starts with the words 'tadejati tannejati'. 'एजृ कंप्ने ējṛ kampanē' The root word 'ējṛ' has the meaning 'kampana' – to fear, to shake. This world is under the 'fear' of Brahman. Hence, 'tat ejati' or 'tadējati'. However, Brahman Himself is not under the control of anything. Hence, 'tat na ejati' i.e., tannējati. Vedic Brahman is the closest one to all since God is present in the inner most recesses of heart in every being. This is a vedic concept that is expressed at several places. 'अस्मिन् सन्दोहे गहने प्रविष्टः asmin sandōhē gahanē praviṣṭaḥ' of the brihadaaraNyaka. The inner space in the heart is also known as 'dahara-Akaasha' in shaastra. This truth is stated in the Geeta at several places.

“ईश्वरस्सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशे अर्जुन तिष्ठति
īśvarassarvabhūtānām hṛddēśē arjuna
tiṣṭhati'

'Ishwara is situated in the heart of all beings, Oh! Arjuna" - Geeta 18.61.

“सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टः

sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ”

'I am situated in the hearts of all'. Geeta – 15.15.

Hence the closest one to us, is the Inner residing Vedic Brahman which is taught by this upanishat as 'tad u antike' तदन्तिके. At the same time, Vedic Brahman is the farthest one of all, it is farther than the farthest.

munDakopanishat expresses it as:

“दूरात् सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च पश्यत्सु इहैव निहितं गुहायां
dūrāt sudūrē tadihāntikē ca paśyatsu
ihaiva nihitaṁ guhāyām”

The one that is the farthest is the closest which resides here itself, for the one who can see it in the inner cave of the heart.

The point here is the fact that Parabrahman is omnipresent. The Parabrahman that is everywhere is the farthest and also the closest to everyone.

With this background, we will try to understand the upanishat mantra.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

तदेजति तन्नेजति तदूरे तद्वन्तिके ।

तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्य बाह्यतः ॥ ५ ॥

tadējati tannējati taddūrē tadvantike |

tadantarasya sarvasya tadu

sarvasya bāhyataḥ ||5||

तदेजति tadējati- This world is fearful under His Control

तन्नेजति tannējati - because there is nothing that Controls Him, Parabrahman is not fearful

तद्वरे तद्वन्तिके taddūrē tadvantikē – Vedic Brahman is nearby and also far away

तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य tadantarasya sarvasya - It is in all

तदु सर्वस्य बाह्यतः tadu sarvasya bāhyataḥ - yet it is indeed beyond all.

What is far away is Parabrahman. What is nearby is also Parabrahman. The same Parabrahman is indeed inside of all things. The same Parabrahman is indeed outside of all things. We should notice that, this shloka establishes three mahimās (greatnesses) of Parabrahman:

1. all things are 'scared' of Him, and He is not 'scared' of any. This is in support of His Independence or svātantrya.
2. He is far and near to everything; this is in support of His mahimā, greatness that He is sarva-gata i.e., sarva-antaryaami.
3. He is inside and outside of everything. This is in support of His mahimā, greatness that He is sarva-vyāpee i.e., Omnipresent.

The concepts behind these "mahimā"s of Parabrahman viz., svatantra, sarva-gata, sarva-vyāpī, go lot deeper than what has been mentioned here. To "understand"

God is to understand "mahimās" of God. The more we study vēdōpaniṣats, the deeper their meaning gets. This is how, Brahma-jignyāsā in the form of Veda-

vichāra-jignyāsā is indispensable for getting the knowledge of God. When we

understand Parabrahman's other mahimās through other parts of vēdōpaniṣats, we

should understand them only as not opposed to these "mahimās" already established in this part of the Veda in this upanishat.

This is specifically mentioned here because, Veda needs to be understood with the help of principles laid out in brahma-mīmāṃsā by Sri Vedavyāsa. It is under this circumstance that Veda will teach its object, which is Parabrahman, The Highest.

Test all your actions, words, thoughts on this touchstone -
"Will this be approved by God ? Will this rebound to His renown ?"

When you dedicate yourselves to the glorification of the Lord, you will revere the body, the senses, the intelligence, the will and all the instruments of knowledge, action and feeling as essential for His work.



While others will get intoxicated with pride, the devotee will be suffused with selfless love.

you may not always oblige, But you can always speak obligingly.



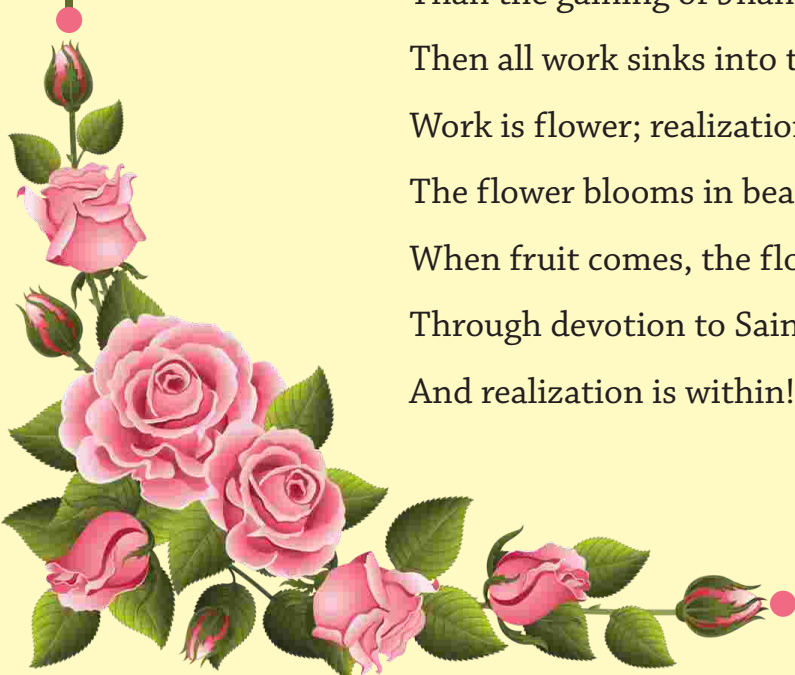
The Flower and The Fruit

Lord Sainath shines in my heart
Alas, my eyes do not see the Lord!
Within me sounds the drum of eternity – 'Om Sai Ram'
The unstruck music of Lord Sainath's blessings
Alas my ears do not hear!

So long as a man clamors:
“This is mine! This is mine!”
His actions all reduced to naught;
His actions are but ashes and dust,
But when 'mine' and 'mamta' are dead,
Then the Grace of Lord Sainath is on you!

For devotion to Lord Sainath has no other aim
Than the gaining of Jnana, wisdom, self-realization.
Then all work sinks into the secondary.
Work is flower; realization is fruit,
The flower blooms in beauty for the fruit.
When fruit comes, the flower withers, is of little importance.
Through devotion to Sainath we reach realization;
And realization is within!

By: S. Sai Priya



Sai Baba and Date with Divinity

By Smt. Malati Purushotham

Rs 250 for a quick darshan” reads a signboard atop a ticket counter outside the Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain. We rush to the counter and we were happy to see a portrait of Sai Baba blessing us. We purchased four tickets to fix our date with divinity. Thousands of people have converged at the Mahakaleshwar Temple for a glimpse of their favorite deity on Kartik Amavasya day in Ujjain. A serpentine queue leads to the sanctum sanctorum. A few years ago, we wouldn't have been able to come anywhere close to a large crowd, let alone go to a Shiva temple on an Amavasya day. But since we are in Ujjain and the magnetism and energy of the Mahakaal drew us towards it after our trip to Shirdi, I found myself braving the crowds fully trusting in Sai Baba. While in the queue, I joined others in chanting loudly, 'Har Mahadev'—a traditional chant that invokes Shiva, in the form of the Mahakaal, a plea to release one from the cycle of birth and death. As the way to the sanctum sanctorum winds through downward-sloping, narrow alleys, we also recited Vishnu Sahasranama. As you walk through them, you can see the temple pond and its shikhara or tower through the fenced windows. With Vishnu Sahasranama I visualized Shiva and Lord Vishnu as one. Devotees believe that the Mahakaleshwar Temple has existed since prehistoric times.

Over the years, the temple saw various architectural styles. An inscription related to the temple says that it was reconstructed in the 12th century in the Bhumija style of architecture — in which the central shikhara comprises several smaller ones — favored by the Paramara dynasty.

In the meanwhile, my husband who also happens to be a Trustee of Sripuram Golden temple in Tamil Nadu



spoke to a Senior Police Officer of Ujjain and we could perform 'Abhisheka' too. This was totally unexpected and perhaps Sai Baba made him use his connections, which he generally does not use!

Another pleasant surprise that Sai Baba sprang on us was that we were joined by a group of twenty Sai devotees from Malaysia and Singapore loudly chanting Sai Bhajans. Their leader Sri Ravishankar distributed Sai-Udi and pictures of Sai Baba to those present there. We had Baba's blessings in abundance.

Slowly the crowds from two other alleys converged in a verandah leading to the sanctum sanctorum. I became unmindful of the milling crowd, although I was now surrounded by complete strangers. The only thing that was common between us is our faith and the quest to meet Shiva. There are three rows in the main hall, from where devotees can view the deity. To avoid being trampled, I held on to my husband and the railing. From the third row, I tried to look for the Shiva Linga just like video game enthusiasts do, when they are trying to catch an elusive Pokémon! Finally, after elbowing through the crowd, I got to see the Shiva Linga. There... this was my elusive Pokémon, my reward for persevering with the crowd. Even long after I left the temple premises, Shiva was still with me, unlike virtual Pokémons who disappear as soon as we turn off the app on the mobile phone. I can 'poke' Shiva anytime, anywhere, for He is the omnipotent and omniscient Ishwara, preserver and destroyer of the universe. My Ishwara cannot be restricted to the walls of the Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain or to any other form. After the blink-and-miss darshan, I came out of the temple, contented that Shiva will be with me wherever I go! Lord Vishnu is close behind my thoughts as I recite Vishnu Sahasranama!

THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION

By: Swami Shantananda Puri



Walking past a bookstore in Guangzhou, China, a lady I know glanced at the display of newly released books in the front window. Her attention was drawn to a picture of Shirdi Sai Baba. Stopping, she studied the face more closely and spontaneously began to weep, overcome by an unexplained emotion. Composing herself, she continued her walk, but within a short distance she stopped again and was drawn back for a second look at what had so moved her. Again, tears came to her eyes as she entered and purchased a copy. That book was 'Incredible Sai Baba' by Arthur Osborne.

Dramatic as this story is, is it not unique. I have heard similar accounts and in fact, my own introduction to Sai Baba was much the same! I was drifting aimlessly when I came upon Sai Satcharitra and my life radically changed course. It was as if a door had opened, inviting me into another realm. My Guru, Swami Purushothamananda remarked, "It is because Sai Baba has put his 'vibrations' into it!"

What did my Guru mean by that? Just as we know spoken words convey a speaker's consciousness, so too does the written 'voice' reveal an inherent character. Some immediately attract us like iron filings are attracted to a magnet while others do the opposite, repelling us. That woman in China was sensitive to Sai Baba's 'magnetism' which awakened long buried feelings and 'memories'.

The analogy of a magnet is particularly apt in the study of spiritual pull. In Physics, proximity to a strong magnet converts an iron piece into a magnet. Similarly, subtle pranic currents influence our senses.

Magnetism is the secret of all spiritual and material success and is within our power to increase or change. We draw to us those people, circumstances and opportunities with which our karma resonates. Ask yourself, "To what am I magnetically attuned?" Prosperity and health come not by karma alone but also by our power of our attraction. Change your magnetism and you will change your life.

(Source – 'Fragrant Flowers')



The Inscrutable Design that Weaves a Web of Desires

By: Ramaswamy Seshadri

Sri. Narasimha Swamiji met young Radhakrishnan in Ooty when he went there for Sai Prachar work. Radhakrishnan had a spiritual bent of mind and Sri Narasimha Swamiji recognized in him a potential disciple. While accompanying him to the bus stand, Radhakrishnan asked him as to why he has been named so. Sri. Narasimha Swamiji asked him to come to Madras and join him in Sai movement.

At that time Sri. Narasimha Swamiji explained in simple words the intense conversation between Sage Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi, on the notions of love, desire and possessiveness, and the inexplicable connection with one another, expounded in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Yajnavalkya is preparing to leave his householder responsibilities towards the close of his middle years and embark on Vanaprastha, the renunciate stage of life and wants to settle all family affairs between his two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani.

Even as Yajnavalkya begins to explain his intent of dividing all of his property equally between the two women, Maitreyi startles him by asking whether this wealth that she will acquire will give to her a permanent state of happiness and joy. Yajnavalkya is taken aback, but Maitreyi persists with her question. Yajnavalkya tells her bluntly that though this wealth will give her material comforts, the satisfaction she will derive from material possessions will be only temporary; the state of happiness which Maitreyi is alluding to is not possible through such possessions.

Maitreyi then expresses her disillusionment with this material settlement and requests

Yajnavalkya to tell her of the way by which an unbroken state of happiness can be acquired.

Yajnavalkya now expands the concept of wealth and explains how a comfortable state of mind operates. The mind derives its comfort through the physical acquisition of wealth or feels satisfied through attaining a particular social status. This conditioning of mind gives rise to our sense of possessiveness with that external object and draws a veil on the temporality of that external object as well as our own temporariness. But this external acquisition does give us happiness for we still want to own, possess, desire, enjoy and feel this happiness, however temporary or imagined it may be. Why does this happen?

Yajnavalkya points to an inscrutable design working behind desires that grip our mind from time to time and which give us satisfaction and happiness when those desires get fulfilled.

The samvad, dialogue, between husband and wife picks up pace, as Yajnavalkya puts across his exposition of the inscrutable design behind each desire, longing, each possession and behind the need to love and be loved. Behind the mind's desire for a particular thing or person is the desire to be one, to be united with that external object, however impossible it is in practicality. Yajnavalkya goes deeper behind this peculiar condition of mind to be united with externalities and points to an inner longing to be one with our inner Self, without which we feel restless, unsatiated and incomplete. The mind twists this inner longing to make it seem as if happiness could be achieved through external means.

Similarly, the love expressed between spouses, between man and woman, parents and children, between any two humans, are all part of a search for that love which alone will make us complete and impart to us a permanent state of happiness. The search for love, Yajnavalkya says, is the search for the Self, which alone can satiate us completely. No relationship can be dearer than the one we forge with our inner Self. Having initiated Maitreyi into this inscrutable principle of life, Yajnavalkya walks

away into the great forest (Brihad Aryanka), literally as well.

We know that Radhakrishnan was impressed by this conversation and very soon leaves his family bonds to join Sri. Narasimha Swamiji in Sai movement. This advice of Sri. Narasimha Swamiji becomes the core of his renunciation and later he evolves to be a great saint – Radhakrishna Swamiji.

His statement – “A desireless person is a veritable Emperor” is very popular.

When Miracles Happen Out of The Blue

By: Smt. Usha Ranganathan

A poster I recently read got me thinking. It said: “The grass is always greener where you water it.” I thought of what some people speak of as miracles, and some call luck; both groups refer to something desired but kind-of-unexpected. In both instances, one feels a bit surprised. What is often ignored is the 'background' to the actual lucky event or miracle.

Of course, miracles sometimes do hit us seemingly out of the blue – that is why we call them miracles. If we believe or have some faith, then we tend to notice these small or big miracles. If we do not or even are pessimistic, we may overlook them. Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji said, “Believe it and you will see it”.

Sri. Narasimha Swamiji was approached by members of a village near Madurai, during a time of great drought. They confessed trying many other approaches before reaching out to him, but with no success, so they now asked if he could help bring rain to their dry fields.

Sri. Narasimha Swamiji agreed and asked for a small hut with a garden that he could tend. For three days, he tended the garden. Much to the surprise of the villagers, he performed no special rituals, chanted no particular prayers, or needed anything more from them. All he did was to plant seeds and carefully work on his garden.

On the fourth day, it started raining on the parched earth.

When asked how he had achieved such a miracle, Sri. Narasimha Swamiji simply smiled and pointed to the photograph of Sai Baba. It was left to the villagers to later recall and recount how, even in that dry spell, he had lovingly cared for the garden as if he expected the rains and complete his task.

Many people consider themselves to be lucky or unlucky. But Sri. Radhakrishna Swamiji gave me a significant message – 'Luck is what happens when preparedness meets opportunity'. Good luck like good faith works much in the same way as bad luck or lack of faith.



Children's Corner

Dear Children,

When you interact with others, you should imbibe Sai Baba. Remember Sai Baba used to beg for his food. He did not bother if someone offered food or declined. Read this below narration:

Sai Baba went to Kulkarni Physician's house with his begging bowl. That house belonged to a Brahmin and Baba was waiting for alms. Brahmin's son scoffed at Baba – “You will not get anything here. This is a Brahmin's house. Get lost as we do not feed Muslims.”

Baba did not get humiliated. He affectionately told the boy – “Listen dear, never say 'No' to a beggar! Tell your refusal in a polite manner!”

The boy's mother appeared with a Roti and some curry in a plate. She scolded her son – “Ram, how many times did I tell you not to abuse anyone coming at our doorsteps? You are just like your father! You do not know in what form God will appear at our door to test us one day!”

Turning to Baba she begged earnestly - “Forgive us, Baba! My son is ignorant. He does not know what he talks! Please accept this little food.”

Baba expressed his happiness, “Allah will be kind to you” after putting the Roti into his shoulder bag and pouring the curry into the tumbler. Blessing the woman Baba went to the next house.

Baba's apostle Sri. Narasimha Swamiji was also a great Mahatma. Everyday he used to go for a short walk. One neighbor staying in an upstairs house used to throw garbage on his head. Sri. Narasimha Swamiji did not mind this abuse. Even though it occurred daily he used to wipe his head and proceed. One day to his surprise he did not get garbage. Swamiji thought was something wrong. He stopped and went to the upstairs house. He saw the man who used to throw garbage on him was sick and lying on bed. He consoled him and prayed for his early recovery.

A full-term pregnant cow came to Sri. Radhakrishna Swamiji. He gave the cow water to drink and gave a loving look. Next morning the cow knocked at his door and had come to see Sri. Radhakrishna Swamiji to express its grateful thanks.

So, children, develop an attitude of universal brotherhood.

Yours SAI BABAlly
SAI AURA team

PUZZLE

In a Delhi School, a skit was played in which the boy who acted as Sai Baba posed a puzzle—
“You can drink from me, then play this game; What I am made of is my name. What am I?”

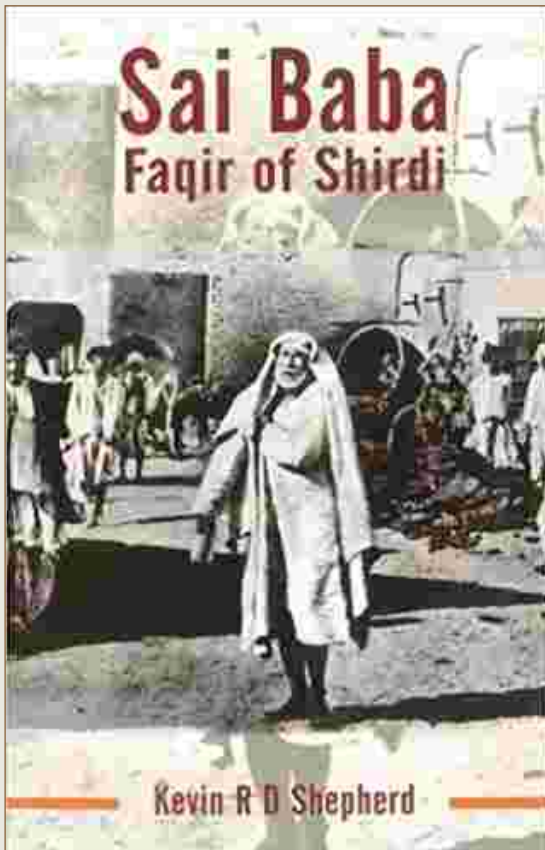
Answer: GLASS

Poem

Such is A Saint

When the heart burns at the sufferings of others
 That is Lord Sainath's own heart
 When eyes strain to see others happy
 Through them Lord Sainath himself sees.
 When hands toil for others' relief,
 These hands move only by Sainath's will.
 When the tongue sings His name
 That voice is the voice of Sainath
 Such is a saint – Sainath's own image.

By: Sivanesan Swamiji



BOOK Review

SAI BABA – FAQIR OF SHIRDI

By: Kevin R.D. Shepherd

Published by STERLING PUBLISHERS, NEW DELHI
 263 PAGES, RS. 200/-

This book takes us through a divine journey with Sai Baba. The inter-religious dimensions of Sai Baba are well emphasized in this book. Many aspects of Sai Baba's life are probed here. His contact with Hindu and Muslim devotees achieves great profile. There are details about such factors as his begging rounds, his avoidance of initiation, his complex temperament that is often misrepresented, and his affinity with bhakti. Features included are the Notebook of Abdul Baba, the Shri Sai Satcharitra the Diary of Khaparde, and the memoir of Hari Dixit. Kevin Shepherd also offers a critical assessment of the Sufism. Also covered are saintly entities with whom Sai Baba had diverse contact, namely Bane Miyan, Gadge Maharaj.

Reviewed By: Smt. Maheshwari

Dr. Ranvir Singh's Pictorial Message



**The Lord is pleased ..
Only when you do the things,
As the Lord desires.
How else can you win His grace,
But by nursing and nourishing His children.
you must not merely have the enthusiasm to serve,
But also the intelligence and the skill and,
only then can you be efficient and useful.
Enthusiasm without efficiency is often a source of loss and grief.**

Any act done anywhere, is only because of the will of God.
Every day, without fail, you find sunrise and sunset. Why ?
The stars that glitter at night, why do they hide themselves ..
during the day ?
The wind God takes no rest even for a moment.
Why should He give us breeze untiringly, continuously, like the ..
running brooks, wherever we look in Nature, for all beings ?



"SABKA MAALIK EK"



**Why then do we observe differences on grounds of -
money, caste, colour, country or community ?**



Complimentary copy. Not for sale.