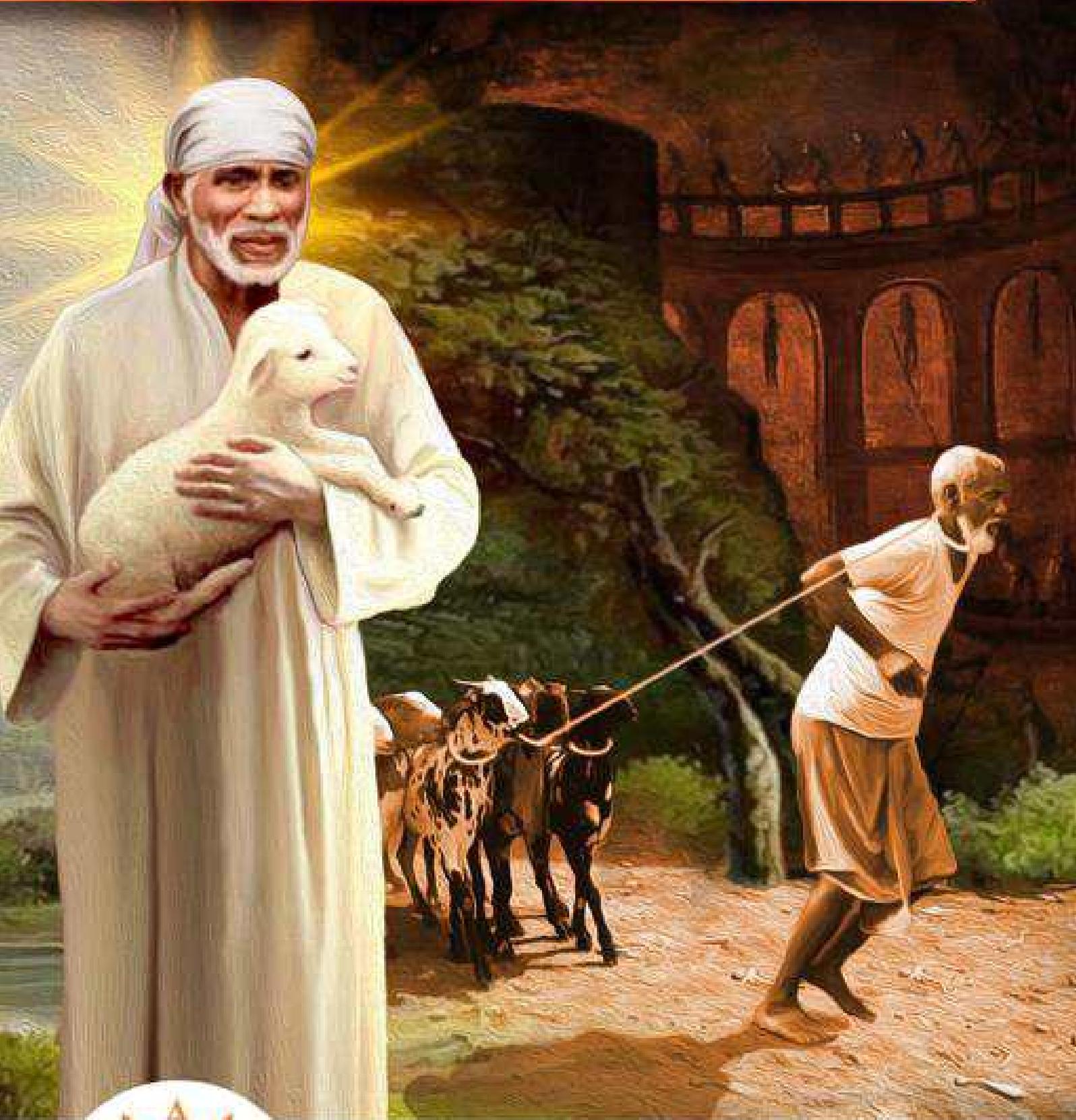


Aura of Shirdi Sai



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE

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SaiAura
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Editorial

First Word

Wouldn't it be great to wake up inspired and end the day in the new year 2022 feeling fulfilled with the blessings of Sai Baba and the work done?

As we begin with new hopes and renewed enthusiasm, let us look back to our loving God Sainath for answers. In the Sai Satcharita, he holds out the promise of victory to all of us in our battles to fight and hurdles to cross. Sai Maharaj reaches out to us, lifts us out of despair, and empowers us to emerge victoriously.

We all have greatness within. It is our responsibility to uncover it. What takes away our vitality and focus, our dynamism and enthusiasm? Thought of self is the culprit. It leads to errors, mediocrity, and failure. Thought of self makes you unhappy. And you remain stunted.

A character in the television series, 'The Handmaid's Tale', based on Margaret Atwood's novel about a dystopian society, makes a distinction between two kinds of freedom: Freedom from, and freedom to.

'Freedom from' implies freedom from physical privations such as hunger, poverty, and lack of shelter. 'Freedom to' is an individual's, or a society's, right to choice of thought and action. Totalitarian regimes focus on 'freedom from' while denying, or restricting, 'freedom to'. Democratic societies are constituted on the fundamental right of freedom to follow the dictates of one's choice.

Sai Baba has assured us that he takes care of the basic needs of food, shelter, and habitation we are to reach higher degrees of freedom for fulfillment. The next step is seeking comfort and financial security. After that comes the attainment of emotional well-being, finding love, friendship, and family bonding. And, finally, the realization of one's full potential as a human being.

As Sri Narasimha Swamiji puts it, "What a man can be, he must be." We are drawn, as though by a magnetic pole, towards the horizon of possibility that is nascent within us, and beckons us inwards to the 'Atman'

For centuries, India has developed the dharmic concept of the four progressions in an individual's life which lead to the ultimate goal of spiritual liberation.

The four stages defined by the Ashram system are Brahmacharya - student, a gleaner of knowledge; Grihastha - householder who attains prosperity and establishes family life; Vanaprastha - forest dweller or hermit; and Sanyasa - one who renounces all worldly attachments. The dharmic idea of individual mental and spiritual evolution reaches its highest point with 'Self-Realization'.

While each step of the individual's journey along the path of realization is a preparation for the succeeding stage, our surrender to Lord Sainath leads us into the transcendence of moksha, a state of being which is free of all earthly constraints and compulsions.

Each one is gifted with a rare ability, a distinct talent. Identify it. Find that one thing you are good at and fix a higher goal in that field. The higher the goal, the greater the energy and enthusiasm. Then put in hard work, grit, and perseverance to achieve your objective.

Watching Grand Canyon from the skywalk (Las Vegas, USA) I was thinking that nobody gets to the top without these prerequisites. There is no easy way to success. Kobe Bryant, the legendary basketball player, would do a vigorous workout starting at 4 am every day! Athletes, gymnasts,

businesspeople, and musicians struggle to fine tune their abilities before achieving success. People only see the laurels and accolades they win, not the exertion and toil that got them there.

With Sai-worship, sharpen your intellect, the discriminative ability. The intellect thinks, reasons, distinguishes between pairs of opposites, and guides you through the journey of life. Then Sai Baba helps you develop clarity of thinking and galvanizes your senses, actions, and feelings towards the goal. When all your resources are directed towards that one mission you generate energy. Feel deeply for your goal, be devoted to it, and work dynamically for it. Concentrate on every action, without meandering into past worries or future anxieties as Sai Baba is close behind your thoughts. Then you will achieve success effortlessly.

When we visit Shirdi we look at the tower on the Samadhi Mandir and the flag. This makes us develop the humility to admit our shortcomings and take the help of others who are better than us. Inspire others with a higher purpose. Reach out to them with love and affection. Make it a habit to empathize, appreciate, and applaud before you criticize. The positive impact will be profound.

Today, profit and money are the only measures of success. The Sai Satcharita takes you beyond mere wealth to happiness. When you act in a spirit of service and sacrifice for a higher cause, your desires reduce. You evolve spiritually. You transform from an ordinary mortal to an extraordinary immortal.

SAI AURA wishes all its readers a happy and prosperous 2022.

The All-embracing Secular Approach

By: B. Rajeshwari

“Let no one ask man's caste or with whom he eats
If a man is devoted to Lord Sainath, he becomes
Sainath's man”.

“Divinity is omnipresent. It depends, how much
You allow it to manifest in your life.

Once you surrender to Lord Sainath, miracles happen.”

“The ego in an individual is not the reality
All that one does for the sake of one's ego is an
Effort in illusion because the ego is a changing center”.

“Only the great can measure, evaluate and assess
the great”.

“It is sincerity and devotion that can bind the
Lord Sainath, not worldly wealth and power”.

“Lord Sainath's life is a clear sign of WILL,
CONSCIOUSNESS and LOVE are the sources of
All creation”.

“Morality and right living are the expressions of
Lord Sainath's Love in ACTION”.

“Deceptions arise when one Fancy that time is an imperishable
reality. Time changes, the ABSOLUTE does not”.

A Dip in to Vishnu Sahasranama - 17 and 18

Remove The Outer Clay, Access the Gold

By: Seetha 'Priya'

There is a part in all of us that is often anxious that we may not be 'good enough'. Not good enough to be loved, to be successful, to handle the problems we face, to reach our goals. We end up continually judging ourselves, imagining being seen negatively by others, doubting our basic worth.

When we feel this way, if someone tells us that we have, at our core, a true worthiness which is our basic nature, it sounds like a cruel joke. Lord Sainath prompts us to access gold within through Sahasranama

The Seventeenth shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama is –

**Upendro Vamanah Pramshur
Amoghah Suchirirjitaha
Ateendrah Sangrahaah Sargo
Dhrutatma Niyamo Yamaha**

Irrespective of whether it is Indra's brother Upendra (Upendra), or Vamana the dwarf, Lord Vishnu stands tall (Pramshu), beyond limits (Amogha), pure (Suchi), and holy and remains always firm (Urjitaha). He transcends all senses (Ateendrah), Collector of all our information (Sangraha), Creator of all (Sarga), and controlled Self (Dhrutatma) is director of our life with an orderly manner (Niyamo Yamaha).

The Eighteenth shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama is –

**Vedyo Vaidyah Sadayogi
Veeraha Madhavo Madhuhu
Ateendrio Mahamayo
Mahotsaho Mahabalaha**

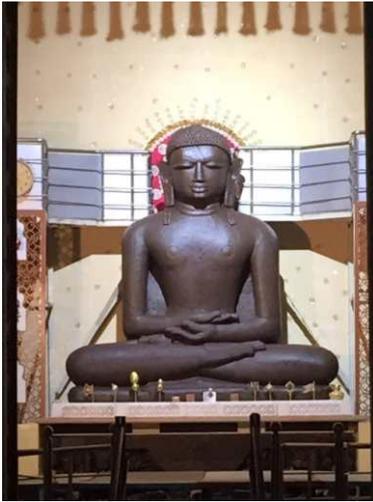


Lord Vishnu is the knowable (Vedya) and knower (Vaidya), at the same time an Eternal Yogi (Sadayogi). This Lord of knowledge (Madhava) gives the sweet honey (Madhu). He is beyond all senses (Ateendria), is a great illusionist (Mahamaya), full of energy (Mahotsaha) and strength (Mahabala).

With Sahasranama we need to work on ourselves, to penetrate the layers of judgment and doubt that conceal beneath them a bright goodness, presence, and love. Doing this, we initially begin to get tiny glimpses of this, but we repeatedly lose sight of it.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji names one of the six emotional styles that reflect our personality as 'Outlook', which he deems 'how long you can sustain positive emotions.' We have more positive emotions than we realize. The key, perhaps, is training ourselves to regard it more attentively when it is present. This also involves Vishnu Sahasranama as our inner worthiness. A real-life story is worth looking at in the light of this 'hidden goodness'.

For centuries an enormous clay statue of the Buddha sat in a temple in Bangkok, Thailand. Its origins were unknown, it became something of a



fixture there. Over the years the monks would tend the statue, fixing cracks that kept appearing in the clay. It was later moved to the Wat Traimit since the old temple housing it was in disrepair. Then in 1955, it fell and cracked while being relocated, revealing something shining within. When the stucco was removed from the statue, the now-famous Golden Buddha, approximately seven centuries old, was revealed. It is believed that the heavy, pure gold statue had been covered with plaster and clay six hundred years earlier to protect it from invading Burmese armies, but later, successive generations of monks had neglected or forgotten to pass on the story.

We can see the Golden Buddha now as representing our true, abiding nature, and the clay that covered the statue for so long as the hardening muck of self-doubt, fear, anxiety, insecurity, and maybe even self-hating worthlessness that hides this from us.

We perhaps have added layer upon layer to protect us from hurt and harm -- but like those monks, we forget. Over the years we become primarily identified with our coverings; we have forgotten to trust that core of goodness they conceal.

Some parents and teachers, well-meaning but misguidedly thinking they are motivating young people, suggest they are good, but not good enough; talented, but not talented enough; successful, but not successful enough.

We internalize these messages, and soon it is

our own 'voice', not theirs, saying these things over and over again. Then this 'never enough' becomes a chronic habit of mind. We constantly seek approval and validation; we are easily slighted; we can even become irrationally angry as others don't seem to fulfill our needs. No wonder we feel anxiety and stress -- if we're not good enough, why would anyone want to love us, what will happen when everything collapses, and we can't handle it? If we're not good enough, what will happen when people find out?

When you connect with the God – Lord Sainath through Vishnu Sahasranama - the worthiness of yourself -- you see more goodness flowing your way. Then you realize that actually, the goodness has always been there; you are simply becoming more sensitive and attuned to it.



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

By: Shreyas Devaraj

Spiritual Truth of Shirdi Sai Baba
does not need an external witness".

"For a fair Sai Bhakta,
there is nothing to be called bad.

Any adversity of life provides a step for
A Sai devotee's growth,
provided he knows how to utilize it".

"Moksha (Realization) is not to be sought in
heaven or on earth
or in the nether regions.

It is synonymous with Self-Realization.

It is not anything to be got afresh,
for it is already there to be realized.

Such realization arises with the
elimination of ignorance".

"Illumination is unqualified
by the limitations of objects.

Deliberation is qualified by the limitations
pertaining to the objects seen, and is the forerunner
of their clear definition".

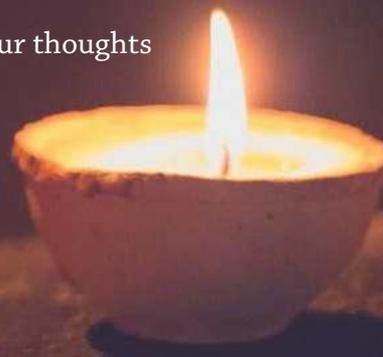
"Take the first step in FAITH or Shraddha.

You don't have to
see the whole staircase, just take the first step".

"Only those who will risk going too far can
find out how far one can go".

"SABURI Patience, Determination is the power
that sees one through
all frustrations and obstacles".

Lord Sainath is close behind your thoughts



A 'Skhanhai - Guftani' on Shirdi Sai Baba



By: M. Hidayatullah

(Former Chief Justice and Vice President of India)

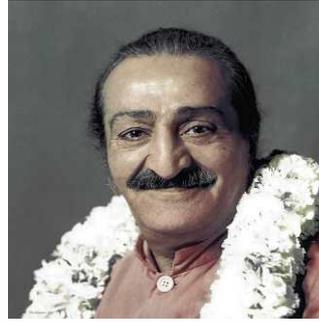
I am overwhelmed by the request to contribute an article on Sai Baba of Shirdi. The word 'article' is hardly appropriate for what I intend to say. In Urdu books, sometimes the expression sukhanhai- guftani (usually some words to say) is used. I am writing this in this sense. It is difficult to add anything to the accounts given by the devotees in this magazine. It is a complete picture of a life of piety, full of miracles and devotion, written with inspiration and care. I for one had not the good fortune to meet the saint but I often get the prasad through devotees who visit Shirdi. There can be no doubt that saints possess enormous spiritual powers which they receive from the Almighty.



Our Holy Book, the Quran, mentions aulia (holy men) and charges us to 'fear' (respect) them. I have had some experiences as in Nagpur we had the well-known saint Tajuddin Baba whose maqbara got constructed by the Nizam through my father. He sent me a half-smoked bidi through one of his disciples who lived in the jungles of Mornala near Chhindwara. I was then 10 years old, and I was told by the messenger that would be my pen and I would ride an elephant. This incident is described in full by me in my memoirs My Own Boswell. From that day I have never looked back and have gone from strength to strength.

Another saint, Meher Baba, who kept silent for many years, also blessed me. Once, in Delhi, I presided over a meeting where devotees expressed their devotion to him. He was not present, and it seems that a tape of the proceedings was sent to him. I had spoken and, as was his practice, he wrote a message of one line. It read: "You will remember me on my birthday." I could not understand it till his birthday came on the 25th of February and I was sworn in as the Chief Justice of India. I remembered his message and him. Often on the 25th of February, I remember him, and I am reminded of him on that day in some way or the other.

My father was City Magistrate in Nagpur and Tajuddin Baba was lodged in the Mental Hospital as he used to throw stones at the vast crowds which pestered him. Raja Bhosle then gave him shelter in his palace. Once, my father in the company of one Azam Shah, went to Shakardara where he was residing in a hut. My father related that he was seated with his eyes shut in a maraqba (contemplation of God). He gave my father and Raja Azam Shah two pieces of chappati lying there. My father ate it, but Azam Shah threw his piece behind his own back. Tajuddin Baba did not see this as his



back was towards them, but he said: "You do not eat the bread given by a faquir. Now you won't be able to eat your own bread." From that day he had to be force-fed every day at every meal!

No wonder the Quran said: "Be afraid." In Delhi, there is a maqbara of Hazrat Nizamuddin (R.A.). There is another of Hazrat Chisti at Agra and of Gharib Nawaz Mohiuddin at Ajmer. At the last place, I prayed that I might stand first in the examination, and I did. I had never stood first before that time. I hope Sai devotees will read this with devotion and belief and respect it. They will cover themselves with divine grace. I commend it to them and thank the devotees for the privilege of giving me a chance to pay this homage.

Before I leave this, I may recount an incident connected with Sai Baba. As a Judge of the Supreme Court, I tried the case of a Muslim butcher who made an appearance as the saint whom he resembled and collected money from the public. He would appear in an alcove dressed like him and the people would prostrate and give money. He was caught and received jail punishment. When his case came before me, a plea was made that the sentence should be reduced. I said of all the people a Muslim butcher should do this was outrageous and I was sorry that the Whipping Act had been repealed as the proper punishment was not jail but whipping!

(Bombay, 16 May 1991)

Justice M.B. Rege in Tune with Sai Baba

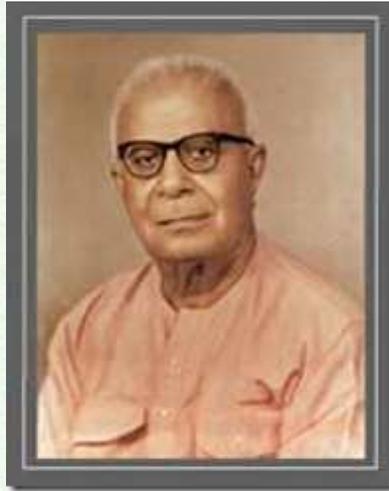
By: Dubagunta Sankaraiah

Justice M.B. Rege was a Judge of the Indore High Court. Rege was a very religious person and devotee of Goddess Durga in Goa (his family deity) from his infancy. He strictly performed the Sandhya and chanted the Gayatri.

Justice M.B. Rege had some visions in 1910 at the age of 21 years and in one vision he felt that he was moving in some strange way. It was like levitation in the air. In the vision, he was carried to a village where he found someone there and asked him what village that was. He said it was Shirdi and then he asked that person, "Is there any person named 'Sai Baba' here?" "Yes," he answered, "come and see." Then in the vision, Rege was taken to a masjid and there he saw Sai Baba who was seated with legs outstretched and then Rege went and reverently placed his head on Baba's feet. Then Baba got up and said, "Do you take my darshan? I am your debtor, I must take your darshan," and Baba placed his head on Rege's feet. Then they parted. All this happened in the vision. This had happened in 1910. These visions impressed Rege greatly.

Rege went to Shirdi and when Rege went to Sai Baba in the masjid, there were many other people with Baba. He went and prostrated, placing his head on Baba's feet. Baba then said, "What! Do you worship a man?" At once Rege retreated some distance and sat in the masjid. It was true that his scholastic pursuits made him not worship any human being which Baba knew. When he was slightly away, Baba gently beckoned to him to come near. Thus, encouraged he went and placed his head on Baba's feet. Baba at once hugged him, asked him to sit nearby and Baba also said to him, "You are my child. When others, i.e., strangers are in the company, we keep the children off." Then Rege felt extremely happy.

Whenever he visited Shirdi, he was always staying in



the residence of Radhakrishnamai.

Rege was of the view that he progressed in his spiritual pursuits by Baba's instructions and guidance through Radhakrishnamai. For achieving spiritual progress, Rege and Radhakrishnamai thought that Namajapa only was the best method and they decided that they should use only Saibaba's name in the Japa.

Rege intently meditated on Baba and had Baba's vision during meditation. He was not in the habit of studying even Gita until that time and did not pay much attention to any spiritual study in his earlier days. Baba said to Rege, "You are alright. Do not read books but keep me in your heart." Rege was therefore concentrating always on Baba with intense devotion and love.

During the Guru Poornima time in 1912, he went to Shirdi and observed that each devotee at Manmad was having a basket full of flower garlands meant for Baba and he immediately thought that he had forgotten carrying a garland to Shirdi. He then went to Shirdi and in the masjid, he found that Baba was fully covered with several garlands. Baba was under a heavy weight of flower garlands and Rege felt sorry for having not brought any garland. When these thoughts were flowing in his mind internally, Baba lifted a bundle of the garlands with his hand and said to Rege, "All these are yours." Rege was surprised at Baba's kindness and all-pervasiveness.

Again, he visited Shirdi in the same year, 1912 and he took with him Rupees 100.00. When he visited Baba, Baba asked him Rupees 40.00 as Dakshina which he readily gave. After some time, Baba again asked him another Rupees 40.00 which was also given with equal

readiness. Once again, Baba asked him for the balance of Rupees 20.00 as Dakshina which was also given without any hesitation. He was very happy for having given the entire amount he had without any pie left with him. Then Baba again sent word for him and when he came to the masjid, Baba again asked Rege for Dakshina. At this stage, he said that he had no money to offer to Baba. Then Baba asked him to go to some other persons and get money from them. Shama then said that Rege did not understand Baba correctly and asked, "Does Baba care a rap for your rupees?" Shama also said, "No, what he wants is your mind and heart, your time and soul to be devoted to him. That is his meaning." Rege went back and told Baba what Shama had said. Then Baba smiled and said, "Go to Dixit and ask him to give money." He then went to Dixit and told him what Baba had advised him. Dixit then replied that Baba's direction to him had to be understood in the circumstances as a lesson meant for Rege. Dixit told Rege that he should not feel the absence of money or the begging for money as an embarrassment or anything else as a humiliation and that Rege should not treat himself as above the level of begging. Rege again went back to the masjid and informed Baba what all Dixit said. Baba again smiled and then asked him to go to Nanasahab Chandorkar and ask him for a loan. But Nanasahab, instead of giving money, showed his worldly wisdom of keeping a reserve elsewhere. The lesson that was taught to all of them was that it was wrong on the part of anybody to think that



anyone could supply all that Baba might ask for. Thus, Baba made Rege understand how different people interpreted Baba's demand for Dakshina. The real purpose of Baba's demand of Dakshina was not what Shama, Dixit, or Nana felt it was, but the purpose was only to teach lessons of humility. Baba cared nothing for money nor presents. What he wanted was unwavering and wholehearted love towards Baba. Baba knew Rege's views but wanted Rege to understand the views of others in this regard.

Rege's father-in-law was also a devotee of Baba. In 1914 Rege's sister-in-law was to be married and an invitation was sent to Baba. Baba also sent a reply, saying that he would attend. As the marriage ceremony was going on, the postman delivered a letter from Baba along with a packet of Udi. The Udi was meant to be applied to the foreheads of the bride and bridegroom. Just about the same time, a fakir came and asked Rege's father-in-law for a Dakshina. As he was busy with the function he did not pay attention to the strange visitor. Later it occurred to him that the fakir might be Baba himself. After knowing, Rege said that if indeed the visitor was Baba himself, he should confirm it by appearing again. The very next day, the same fakir again appeared and asked for Dakshina which Rege gave happily. Such were the experiences Baba gave Rege.

Rege's view of Sai Baba was – "I look upon Sri Sai Baba as the Creator, Preserver, and the Destroyer. I did so before his Mahasamadhi in 1918 and I do so now. To me, he is not gone. To me, he had no limitations. I thought of him as a spiritual image in which the finite and the infinite blended very perfectly, and yet allowing the finite to appear before us at times. Rege's devotion towards Sai was blemishless and he was in a state of total surrender. Rege passed away in 1968.



Sai Baba's Blessings Through A Fig Tree

By: Seetha Vijayakumar

In 1986 when we moved over to Kil-Kotagiri in the Nilgiris, a hill station in Tamil Nadu we were excited at the big Bungalow we were allotted which was at the precipice of the area and we could see the Bhavani river in the foothills flowing into Bhavanisagar dam. My husband enjoyed from his study window contemplating for hours together as he had visions of Sri Narasimha Swamiji along the course of the river. On getting to our Bungalow, I'd planted a fig sapling, by way of replacing a full-grown fig tree that was cut down just before we got into the house by a relative. My mother took the initiative, as fig was her favorite fruit and she was excited at the prospect of eating fresh figs off the tree. Very soon, the sapling became a beautiful young tree, with large green and rust shaded leaves, facing east, glowing in the sunlight.

I learned from Sri R. Seshadri, President of Sri Sai Spiritual Centre, Bengaluru who visited us later in the year, that the fig tree's significance was much more than what I saw as a sentimental tribute by my mother. I was aware that the fig is a symbol of fertility, just as the pomegranate is, especially in eastern countries like China. Fig trees shaped our history, fed our imaginations, and can enrich our future, says Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his work 'Life of Sai Baba' -- narrating the many dimensions, stories, and insights related to this special fruit tree. Ravana lamented thus in the Ramayana: 'I have not cut down any fig tree... why then does calamity befall me?'



We had a grand old couple – Sri O.K. Varada Rao who was the first Secretary of All India Sai Samaj and Smt. Sarada who regarded me as their daughter and were addressing my husband as 'Alludu' surprised us when they landed at our place one fine morning. I learned from them that the root of the word 'tantalize' was to be found in a Greek mythological fig tree tale. Demigod Tantalus was serving his punishment in the Underworld, where he was constantly tempted to reach for a branch laden with sweet figs. Each time he thought the fruit would soon be in his grasp, the tree's bough would move out of reach, with the force of a sudden wind blowing. This inspired the formation of the verb, 'to tantalize'.

A forest officer who was our neighbor told us that in the natural world, in forests, the presence or absence of the fig tree would indicate the stable or fragile nature of the forest. Because the fig is an intrinsic part of the cycle of life, and its seeds are pollinated by wasps and other insects, any decline in insect populations would imply that the fig tree was becoming endangered – just as a decline in the number of bees indicates a serious disruption in nature – and thereby adversely impacting the natural cycle.

The fig fruit is a direct delivery; there are no intermediary flowers. Hence Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his book 'Life of Sai Baba' says ancient Buddhist and Hindu texts describe any futile search as being like 'looking for flowers in a fig tree'. The Buddha is also said to have talked of sensual pleasures trapping human beings in their strangling embrace much like the strangler species of fig trees that end up holding the host tree in a death-like embrace with their

complicated, entwined roots and twisted branches. As a tree species, the fig is believed to have pre-dated humans and perhaps even dinosaurs.

Interestingly, some Jewish Rabbis, according to Shanahan, believe that the forbidden fruit that Adam and Eve ate, disobeying God, was the fig fruit, and not the apple as portrayed in western accounts of the Book of Genesis. We do know that the first couple covered their private parts with fig leaves when they became aware of their nudity. Most Creation stories across cultures feature the fig tree, one way or other -- they are abodes of spirits and serve as bridges between earth and sky. And so, it seems that the fig is a vital part of all life.

What kind of lifestyle would facilitate achieving liberation? Should one progressively withdraw from the external world and its inconsequential activities and live in isolation? Or contemplate the Divine while being engaged in worldly affairs? Some advocate the path of rigorous asceticism, while Sai Baba assured 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 quotes, an anecdote from Mahabharata. A sage named Jajali stood motionless for many months while practicing extreme asceticism 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 asceticism, 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 exalted 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.



Consequently, the person remains balanced, always and under all circumstances. The individual is full of bliss having experienced the vision of absolute consciousness in Sai Baba. All the emotional, physical, and psychological problems that troubled him dissolve completely.

What is important is that the individual contemplates absolute consciousness constantly and uproots whatever it is that creates a 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 Radhakrishna 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 a busy shopping mall.

This is accomplished when one repeatedly tries to see the one absolute consciousness 'Sai Baba' 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 Satcharita – Chapter 14, Ovi 48)

Sai Baba as the Boatman

By: **Sushma S. Aradhya**

There was once a benevolent King, reigning supreme in his land. He was killed by some conspirators among his Ministers. And, his wife, who was pregnant at that time, had to escape to a forest. She took refuge in the house of a hunter where she delivered a boy and died. Raised by the hunters, the child also became a hunter.



Years later, when a loyal minister happened to pass through the forest and saw the hunter boy, he was struck by his charm. The Minister felt that there was a royal aura surrounding the boy. He then made discreet inquiries about his ancestors and found out that the boy was none other than the prince whose father, the King, was killed. The Minister then helped the boy in mobilizing an army and regaining his kingdom.

In this story, illustrated in a commentary on the Upanishads, the Prince symbolized the Jiva who lived in the world of delusion without knowing his real identity. The Minister came as a Guru and revealed his true identity, the Self.

With the guidance received, the Prince overpowered the conspirators, senses, and ascended the throne of Self-realization.

Everyone, born in this rich land of Bharat Varsha, is a Prince of a sort. This is the land that possesses the treasure of wisdom symbolized by the Vedas and Upanishads, the land which flourishes by following the tradition of venerating the Gurus, Lord Sainath is our Guru Supreme and Almighty God.

In a world where material-oriented life prevails, it may be difficult to find the right Guru, but for one who is on a real quest for knowledge, like Sri Narasimha Swamiji who had to struggle for eleven years from Mahatma to Mahatma from Sringeri Pontiff Chandrasekhara Bharati Jagadguru, Ramana Bhagavan, Siddharuda Swamiji, Bapu Mai, Narayan Maharaj, Jipruanna, Meher Baba, Upasani Maharaj and ultimately to Sai Maharaj's Samadhi at Shirdi on 29th August 1936, when the Guru granted him Self-Realization at last.

The guru does not come, as is normally perceived, to impart knowledge as everyone is blessed with knowledge. If one is not able to realize it, it is because, like the dark clouds that overshadow the sun, the individual's vision is obscured by the mind. For one who refrains from pursuing the path shown by the mind and seeks



real knowledge, the Guru as Sai Maharaj steps in at the right moment as in the case of Sri Narasimha Swamiji, and leads him as well as millions of others to the right path.

This life is like a vast river where there are strong undercurrents, pulls, and pressures and it is the Guru who escorts us, like the boatman taking the traveler ashore safely through the storm. 'Krishnashtakam' says: 'Krishnam Vande Jagatguru' -- I worship Krishna, the Lord who appeared as a teacher for the whole universe.

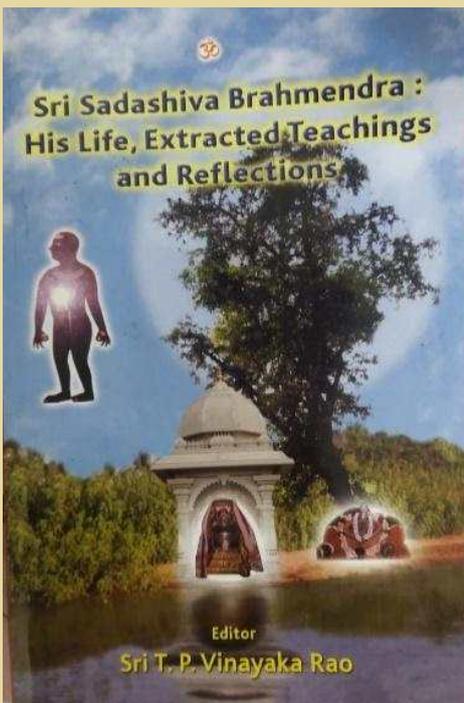
Anna Dabholkar came to see Sai Baba and said that there are different paths towards spiritual fulfillment and asked what path he could choose. Sai Baba replied: "When you speak of a path, first

find out where exactly you want to go? You are the Self and there is nothing to be reached. Though you are knowledge absolute, when you identify yourself with the mind and body, the delusion comes. What is needed is to receive the grace of a Guru that removes ignorance and 'Margadarshana'. Sai Baba called him 'Hemadpant' assigned him the task of writing Sai Satcharita. Sai Baba impressed upon Anna Dabholkar that the Guru is already shining as the Atman within.

But since we are accustomed to having a 'Saguna Guru' in form, the Atman appears as an external Guru and pushes the Jnana inside the sadhaka, while the Atman inside pulls it from within.

"For a Sai Devotee, solitude is the best thing. Meditation on Sai Parabrahman in a solitary place enables him to realize God Sai Maharaj."

—Sri Narasimha Swamiji



Book Review

Title:	Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra: His Life, Extracted Teachings and Reflections (in two volumes)
Author:	Sri T. P. Vinayaka Rao
Publisher:	Sri Sadguru Sadashiva Brahmendral Seva Trust Nerur 639004, Karur District Tamil Nadu
Price:	Rupees 275.00

Sri T.P. Vinayaka Rao was a General Manager at ITI Bengaluru and a well-known Sai devotee and has authored three books on Sai Baba. Sri Rao has glorified Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra at par as Sai Parabrahman as a shining star on the zenith of Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga at their culmination. Just like Sai Baba, Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra was an Avadhootha of rare incarnation and he had all the siddhis at his command and disposal. His life works, and siddhis have messages. Impregnated with spiritual powers, this book draws earnest Sai devotees as seekers of truth towards the ultimate goal of life- Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra He is a guiding force even to the yogis and sannyasis.

Reviewed by: Shashidhar

An Insight into Dhuni Pooja

**Source – Sai Samartha Charitra
by Smt. Zarine Taraporevala**

In 1858 the moment Sai Baba settled down in a dilapidated mosque, he started a holy fire by striking his 'satka' in a corner of the mosque. He named it 'Dhuni'. He turned towards it, and he worshipped it daily as 'Yajna'.

Later Sri Sivanesan Swamiji, popularly called 'Chavadi Swamiji' from 1953 onwards till his Mahasamadhi in 1997 started daily worship of Dhuni and guided Sai devotees to perform Dhuni Pooja.

According to Sai Maharaj and the Bhagwad Gita, our entire life is a yajna, an offering, self-sacrifice. You pour out everything into Dhuni, so as to worship the Almighty – Sainath Parameshwara – Sainath Parambrahma. He in turn helps you in getting rid of the bondage of your Karmas, rebirth, and many lives of suffering. Dhuni Pooja is very sacred to Sai devotees as it was an ordained Yajna by Sai Maharaj as an enactment of sanskaras.



The bigger picture is that Sai Baba wants us to see Dhuni Pooja in our life as a huge yajna, offering, to the Supreme, which could be of several types. Lord Sainath draws the attention of Nana Saheb Chandorkar in quoting Gitacharya talk about

these in the fourth chapter of the Gita. He mentions tapo-yajna; jnana-yajna; svadhyaya-yajna; and pranapana-yajna – pranayam.

Virtually our entire life is a yajna and that alone brings one a higher quality of life and knowledge when we perform Dhuni Pooja.

Dhuni Pooja means to pour out, offer as ahuti all that you gain in life, and surrender to Sainath Maharaj. In the Gita, chapter 4, Krishna mentions that even breathing, the very manifestation of life, is a yajna. Breathing in is prana and breathing out is Apana. Krishna

says that a yogi should offer prana into Apana and, conversely, Apana into prana. One should practice it with a suitable holding of breath regularly which creates a cycle, the pranapana cycle. This is called yajna, an offering without any dravya, material, except your breath. In the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali has propounded pranayama as one of the eight parts of the yogic practice. It takes the sadhaka to the ultimate objective of samadhi.

Earlier in the Gita, the same is variously mentioned as siddhi, nirvana, and Brahma-nirvana or paramagati. To practice it for the entire life as an offering for Sai devotees doing Dhuni Pooja with 'Shradda' and 'Saburi' qualifies 'Anugraha' of Lord Sainath and we will be in total bliss and hence it is 'pranapana-yajna'.





The other types of yajna such as tapo-yajna, dravya-yajna, and svadhyaya-yajna are mentioned in the Gita and we include them in our Dhuni Pooja.

In dravya-yajnas, offerings are made through hawan ahutis to the deities in Dhuni Pooja as prescribed in the shastras. The practice of yoga is mentioned as daiva-yajna, also known as yoga-yajna. The yogi may or may not sacrifice any material. Even reading of 'Sthavan Manjari' 'Sundara Khanda' extracts from 'Life of Sai Baba' by Sri Narasimha Swamiji, recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama, enchanting Sai Bhajans, sharing of Devotees experiences, followed by Dhuni Pooja are described as svadhyaya-jnana-yajna. Svadhyaya-jnana-yajna is the purest of all.

Sivanesan Swamiji described that there is nothing as sacred as Dhuni Pooja. Of the three Gunas, qualities, namely, Satva, Rajas, and Tamas, it is the Satva-guna that yields Jnana, wisdom. Sai Baba further says that whichever Yajna is chosen, it is invariably received by him.

The Jnana-Yajna is essentially worshipping

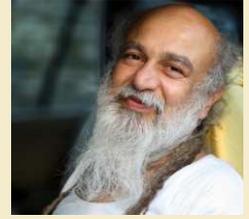
Sai Maharaj, which removes all illusion and, thereby, we all achieve the unpolluted vision of reality. we are saved from Moha, ignorance, or attachment of all kinds. As we offer Dhuni Pooja Lord Sainath is the Yajna Purush.

People who have no desire for rewards from a successful Dhuni Pooja and perform offering as an incumbent moral duty are said to be Saatvik-Yajna performers.

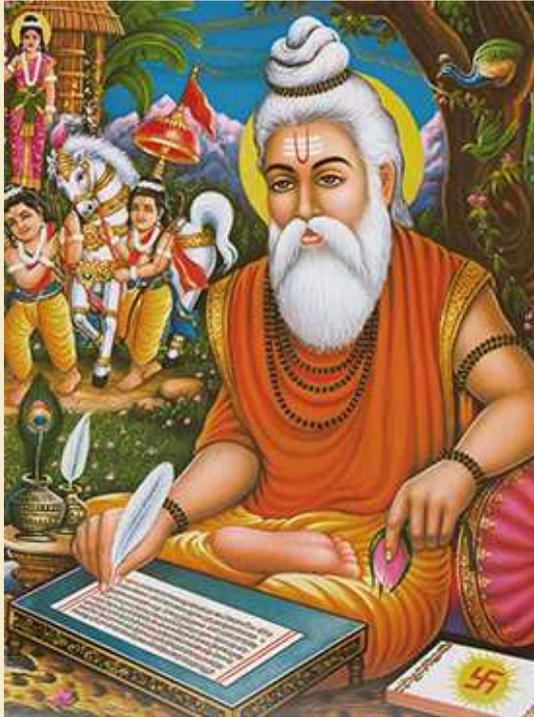
The above examples show that Dhuni Pooja Yajna is living nobly, in the spirit of 'Work is Worship'. It is about conducting oneself in such a way that it becomes an example for persons with enterprise, without desire for any reward, exerting themselves only for the sake of duty; and for persons heading for spiritual upliftment through knowledge or wisdom.

Thus, Lord Sainath and Krishna in the Gita have prescribed that we must steer clear of desires and offer ourselves for attaining maximum good for self and humanity. Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji has stated – 'A desireless person is a veritable Emperor.'

May Sai Baba Bless You All



By: Sri Baba Shivarudra Balayogi
(Shivabalayogi Ashram, Dehradun)



I invoke the blessings of Shirdi Sai Baba for all the readers of SAI AURA for a happy and prosperous new year 2022.

All of you should practice Shraddha and Saburi as advised by Sai Maharaj. Ramayana, Mahabharata generously use adjectives such as brave, courageous, beautiful, powerful, and so on to describe their characters. The small print, however, talks of what Lord Sainath stated in Sai Satcharita on determination, optimism, and perseverance, not falling prey to poor self-esteem and dejection. Only such people become legends. For instance, on the dawn of 2022, let us recall the 'Saburi' – perseverance of Vishwamitra, the fiery-tempered sage.

Vishwamitra was once a powerful king. While on a world tour with a large entourage, he met Sage Vasishtha. The sage welcomed him and wished to entertain him. Incredulous at the thought of a sage

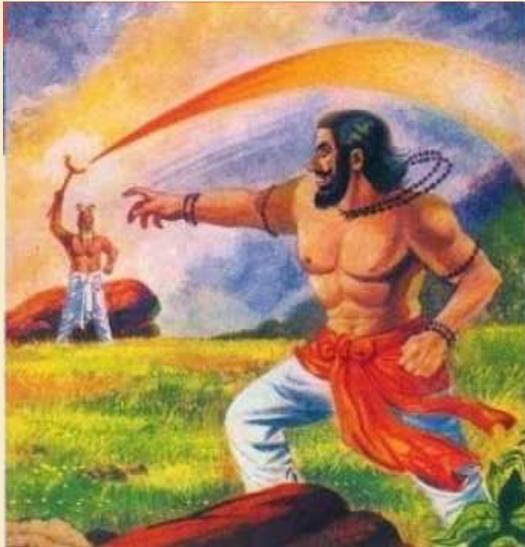
being able to feed his entire retinue, the king politely refused. But the sage insisted. And so, a life-changing event took place. The sage commanded his cow Sabala to lay a regal repast. As the astounded King watched, delicacies after delicacies were being placed before him and the entire army.

Greed veered its head and the King desired to possess Sabala. Vasishtha refused to part with Sabala. Vishwamitra tried all means to convince the sage and finally resorted to violence. Vasishtha stopped all of Vishwamitra's arrows with his staff alone. Vishwamitra was jealous of the sage's prowess. He decided to harness that power. His goal was to attain the status equal to Vasishtha's, in terms of spiritual merit.

Giving up all riches, he undertook severe penance. When he attained some measure of success, Brahma appeared before him and granted him a boon. Vishwamitra desired all possible weapons that the divine could give him. Armed thus, he went back to attack Vasishtha. Again, Vasishtha's staff alone quelled all his attacks.

Vishwamitra returned to penance again. This time a King came to him with a request that he be transported to heaven with his body. Vasishtha had told the king that it was not possible. To prove one better than Vasishtha, Vishwamitra promised the King that he would do the needful. When he failed in doing so, he salvaged the situation by creating a new solar system midway where the King still rests, though upside down. It is called Trishanku Swarga. In the process, however, Vishwamitra spent all the spiritual merit he had earned thus far.

Relentless he began all over. Now an apsara by the name of Menaka came to lure him. Vishwamitra was infatuated. After years of enjoyment, he suddenly woke up to the fact that this was a ploy of



Gods to disturb his spiritual progress. He then overcame lust and went back to penance. Now, a nymph, Rambha, was sent to lure him. Vishwamitra could see through it this time, but alas he could not control his temper. He cursed her and again lost all

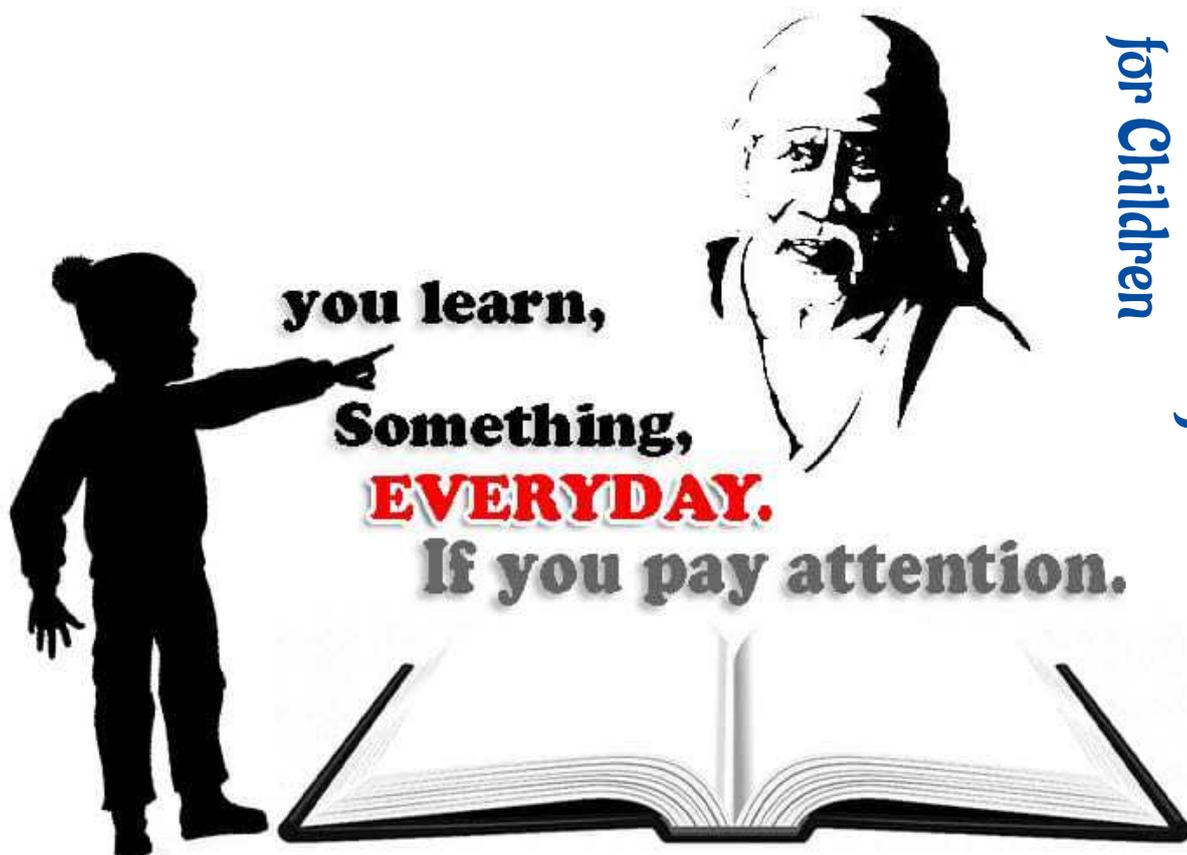
the merit he had gained. Vishwamitra realized that anger had to be overcome

Finally, having conquered greed, jealousy, arrogance, lust, and anger, Vishwamitra was on the road to real penance. Despite setbacks and conniving circumstances, he went back to attain his goals, each time correcting himself a little bit more. He did not give up, in spirit or form.

This time the Gods knew he deserved all the praise and so it was then that he earned the epithet of Brahmarishi.

So, don't lose heart. Setbacks happen. Problems arise. We must try to carry on despite them. When we give up our baggage like hatred, jealousy, greed, desire we become clear to receive Sai grace.

Somewhere, something good is waiting to happen. Remember Lord Sainath is close behind your thoughts and let us seek his blessings



Dr. Ranvir Singh's
Pictorial Message
for Children





To be a Sai Brother to Others

By: Dr. Devika Ravindra

My window overlooks a small children's playground in our apartment complex, and watching children interact – helping, bossing, bullying, comforting each other -- is often engaging. I also eavesdrop on conversations, and one that always touches me if it happens is a little one saying to another, 'Will you be my friend?'

There's a lot implied in that one question, including pacts like – 'Will you take my side in a fight?' 'Will you choose me for your team?' even 'Will you also stop talking to the one I'm mad with?' All you grown-ups know what I'm saying here because a lot of this continues as we grow up! They all address me 'Sai Ram aunty' for my devotion to Sai Maharaj.

But what captivates me is that first step; the courage it needs to ask to be friends, openly, directly. We, adults, don't do that, except maybe at a distance – say in Satsangs like Sai Bhajans, Sai Satsang, and some social functions is a strong possibility anyway, but finding real friendship is worth it which is common in Sai families.

While it's true that we often use the term 'Sai Brother or Sai Sister' very loosely even for newfound acquaintances or persons we don't know too well, these days offering a 'friendly' chat in the name of Sai Baba or hand is a gift we all can give.

This thought had me reflect on a call I recently made to someone I knew, to ask how she was doing in these crazy times. I was shocked when she burst into tears, imagining I'd hear about a loved one's illness or even death – after all, it is so common these days. But no, she was crying because I was the first person who recently called to ask after her. "No one has cared!" she wept.

Later in the chat, I asked if she had called on any of her friends and she said she hadn't. It was not important to go into the whys of it, so I gently suggested, when she said I had made her happy that she make some others happy this way too. My Guru Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji told a story to his devotees, a tale I find so insightful comes to mind:

A man went to see the Wise One, hoping for advice that would help him come out of what he saw as a bad time in his life. She listened patiently, and when he finished his narration, she directed him home through a particular path in the forest, saying, "The creatures you see will provide your future direction."



A short way ahead, he came upon a small red fox and thinking perhaps this was one of the creatures the Wise One had spoken of, stopped to watch it from a distance. He noticed that the fox had lost two of its legs, perhaps in a cruel trap laid out by poachers in the forest. The man stopped and stared, wondering how it ate and survived, and as he wondered, a tiger came along with fresh game he had killed. He ate his share, then dragged the rest towards the fox, who ate the rest.

Amazed by what he saw, the man exclaimed: "I have my answer! All I need to do is to sit quietly in a corner, and Lord Sainath will see to it that I am provided with whatever I need."

So he sat still doing nothing for a day, several days, several weeks, a whole month. Nothing happened. Nothing in his circumstances changed.

Angrily he approached the Wise One once more. She listened to his story, she smiled her gentle smile and simply asked him one question: "Did you ever for a moment pause to think that your lesson perhaps was to stop imitating the disabled fox and to follow the example of the tiger?"

Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji advised us to have Lord Sainath close behind our thoughts and He is our Guide.



IshAvAsya Mantra #11

By: Jayakrishna Nelamangala

One question may arise. If God is said to be without any gross body or subtle body, then, how can He be the Creator of this universe? If God has no limbs at all, then how can He create this universe? This question arises because, in this world, a potter who has no hands and has no legs simply can not create any pot.

In the previous two mantras, it was stated that true knowledge (vidyā,) is related to the recognition and rejection of wrong knowledge (avidyā). One goes hand-in-hand with the other. This is what makes true knowledge distinct and different from blind-belief. Previously, we have also briefly studied how the three great Acharyas have interpreted the words vidyā and avidyā. In three different ways.

The meaning of the two previous mantras is more clearly stated by the next mantra #11 which starts with the words 'vidyām cāvidyām ca'.

उपनिषत् - upaniṣat

विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।

अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ ११ ॥

vidyā cāvidyā ca

yastadvēdōbhayaṁ saha |

avidyāyā mṛtyu tīrtvā

vidyāyā'mṛtam aśnutē ||11||

Here, vidyā, stands for the knowledge of Vedic Parabrahman. avidyā stands for the recognition and rejection of false-knowledge.

'ca' means 'and'. In the English language, the conjunction 'and' is used to express the joining of two phrases. For example, the two ideas 'She is good at singing' and 'She is good at dancing' are combined into 'She is good at both singing and dancing'. Now look at the mantra. It has the expression 'vidyām ca avidyām ca' which when literally translated is 'vidya

and avidya and', it is like saying 'She is good at both singing and dancing and'. We don't have such expressions in the English Language. However, Veda uses such an expression to present the idea of what is technically known as 'itarerata-yōga', the idea that each is related to the other.

The person who understands both of them, (vidyā and avidyā) in this manner, what happens to that person? It is explained by the upaniṣat.

By avidyā i.e., by the recognition and rejection of wrong-knowledge, the person crosses over destruction, misery, ignorance and such other undesirables. By the correct-knowledge i.e., by the correct knowledge of Brahman as given by veda, the person attains eternity and bliss.

The upaniṣat teaches that emancipation is two-fold: removal of misery and obtainment of bliss. Accordingly, the means for mōksha is also two-fold: Rejection of wrong-knowledge and obtainment of right-knowledge of Vedic Brahman. By the rejection of wrong-knowledge, its effects which are misery and delusion get removed. This is what is termed as "removal of the undesirables". By the right-knowledge of Vedic Brahman, there will be bliss without any blemish and it occurs to that eligible soul that is in mōksha. These two factors must not be forgotten while understanding the notion of mōksha.

We should notice the importance of this itarerata-yōga between rejection of wrong-knowledge and establishing the right-knowledge. One goes hand-in-hand with the other. One must be hidden in the other. Then only it becomes knowledge. This is the significance of the upaniṣat using 'cha' (and) twice. 'विद्यां चाविद्यां च vidyām cha avidyām cha'. In normal usage, only one 'cha' would be sufficient. So, knowledge obtained in any other fashion, is सदोष sa-dōṣa, and is opposed to this upaniṣat.

Let us think for a second, what that anyathā-jñāna could be, according to this upanishat? Let us consider just one example. " इशावास्यं इदं सर्वं isāvāsyam idam sarvam" - has already established that this world of vividity that we all live in, is made out of prakriti. Prakriti and all its products are dependent on Isha. Any other thought opposed to this thought even in the slightest sense is anyathā-jñāna. Different people will give out different meanings for this upanishat. Some even may try to reconcile between these very different meanings and come up with a compromised hybrid meaning.

The question is, which one of those meanings is anyathā-jñāna and which one of those meanings is यथार्थज्ञान yathārthajñāna? When there are opposing ideas, can we hold both the ideas as यथार्थज्ञान yathārthajñāna? Can all ideas be considered यथार्थज्ञान yathārthajñāna? If so, what is the difference between यथार्थ yathārtha and अयथार्थ ayathārtha, then? If not, which one is yathārtha? and why? Which one is not यथार्थ yathārtha? and why not? This is how ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा brahmajijñāsā makes itself indispensable while one is in the path of knowledge. Only that jñāna which has enabled the adhikārin to recognize and reject ayathārtha as ayathārtha, leads to the highest good. It is not enough to assume that all of them are correct. In other words, in order to know what it is, it is not enough to merely know what it is, one must also know what it is not. This is also called "व्यवृत्ति व्यवृत्ति", in English it is called 'distinction'.

In this example, the dependence of prakriti and its products on isā is established by the upanishat. All other meanings regarding, prakriti, its products and Parabrahman, have to be examined against this yathārtha jñāna that "ishāvāsyamidam sarvam" taught by this upanishat. Some teach what results in teaching that "ईशं इदं सर्वं isām idam sarvam" (All of this world itself is God) whereas this upanishat was actually teaching "Ishāvāsyamidam sarvam". We should keep in mind all the above questions when we read various interpretations of this upanishat. One should always remember that, between faith and knowledge, it is only knowledge that enables a student to separate true and false knowledge and it is blind faith that disables the same student.

Those that are fit for knowledge and mōksha, lose their dukha-svabhāva by the recognition and

rejection of wrong-knowledge and the same people attain the form of सुख-ज्ञान sukha-jñāna by obtaining the right-knowledge of Vedic Brahman, and this is what gets to be termed as 'gaining sarūpa'. Those who understand this properly are the virtuous people.

This attainment of the nature of sukha and jñāna is also sometimes called attaining भगवत्सरूप bhagavat-sarūpa. (not svarūpa). In the state of mōksha, a mukta lives in his natural state of ज्ञानानन्दस्वरूप jñānānandasvarūpa. But one should not forget "ishāvāsyam idam sarvam" in any case. That 'sarvam' includes the state of mōksha as well. The jīvātman when in samsāra has svātantrya-bhrānti and that is the cause of his dukha. When that bhrānti is completely removed by jñāna, then he understands fully that he is a mere puppet in the hands of God.

Those who are of the nature of dukha, crossing over their dukha because of the rejection of wrong-knowledge, is one creative activity of the Lord. Similarly, a fit person becoming of the nature of knowledge and bliss, is another creative activity of the Lord. The same person, becoming similar to Vedic Brahman in terms of his blemishless sukha and knowledge, is another greatness of the creative activity of the Lord. So, to say that all these are with the jīvātman even without any sādhana, without depending on any creative activity of the Lord, is to simply deny the greatness of the creative activity of the Lord. When we say, a jeevātman becomes Paramātma-sarūpa, it does not mean he becomes the same as God. If we understood it like that it goes against the upanishadic teaching that the world in its entirety is Ishāvāsyā and there is no exception to it. 'sarūpa' and such other technical philosophical words have to be understood with a proper study of philosophy.

With this background, we may now make an attempt at studying the 11th mantra as follows:

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।

अविद्याया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतम् अश्नुते ॥ ११ ॥

vidyām cāvidyām ca

yastadvēdōbhayaṁ saha |

avidyāyā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā
vidyāyā'mṛtam aśnutē || 11 ||

One who understands that (यस्तद्वेद yastadvēda) the inter-related viṣṇuḥ yāthāthmya-jñāna (विद्यां च vidyām ca) and mithyā-jñāna-nindā (अविद्यां च avidyām ca) as both together causing mōksha (उभयं सह ubhayaṁ saha), such a person, by the rejection of mithyā-jñāna (अविद्या avidyāyā) after crossing over the undesirable dukha-ajñāna (मृत्युं तीर्त्वा mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā), and by the true-knowledge of Vedic Brahman as given by Veda (विद्या vidyāyā) attains the other part of mōksha which is of the form of jñāna and ānanda (अमृतमश्नुते amṛtam aśnutē).

For the sake of completeness, we will study a little bit of the three bhāṣyas coming from the three schools of Vedānta.

श्री शंकरभाष्यं - śrī śakarabhāṣya

यत एवमतो 'विद्यां च अविद्यां च' देवताज्ञानं कर्म च इत्यर्थः । "यस्तद्" एतद् "उभयं सह" एकेन पुरुषेण अनुष्ठेयं "वेद" तस्यैव समुच्चायकारिण एवैकपुरुषार्थसंबन्धः क्रमेण स्यात् इत्युच्यते - "अविद्या" कर्मणा अग्निहोत्रादिना 'मृत्युं' स्वाभाविकं कर्म ज्ञानं च मृत्युशब्दवाच्यं उभयं "तीर्त्वा" अतिक्रम्य "विद्या" देवताज्ञानेन "अमृतं" देवतात्मभावं "अश्नुते" प्राप्नोति । तद्धि अमृतमुच्यते यद्देवतात्मगमनं ।

yata ēvamatō 'vidyām ca avidyām ca' dēvatājñānaṁ karma ca ityārthaḥ | "yastad" ētad "ubhayaṁ saha" ēkēna puruṣēṇa anuṣṭhēyaṁ "vēda" tasyaiva samuccāyakāriṇa ēvaikapuruṣārthasambandhaḥ kramēṇa syāt ityucyatē - "avidyāyā" karmaṇā agnihōtrādīnā 'mṛtyuṁ' svābhāvikaṁ karma jñānaṁ ca mṛtyuśabdavācyaṁ ubhayaṁ "tīrtvā" tikramya "vidyāyā" dēvatājñānēna "amṛtam" dēvatātma bhāvaṁ "aśnutē" prāpnōti | taddhi amṛtamucyatē yaddēvatātmagamaṇaṁ |

śrī śankara has taken the word vidyā to mean देवता ज्ञान dēvatā jñāna and 'avidyā' to mean 'karma'. Both are to be practiced by the same individual. One who has this combined activity of devatā-jñāna and agni-hotra and other karma, gradually will get the final result. His natural karma and jñāna are denoted by 'mṛtyu', and both of them are overcome by performance of agnihotra and such other karma. Then, by the knowledge of devatā, he attains the nature of being a devatā. This becoming a devatā is indeed what is termed in the upanishat as "amrutam".

A few questions arise here. Why his natural karma and jñāna are called 'mṛtyu'? What does it mean to get over one's natural karma and jñāna by performance of agni-hotra etc? āgni-hotra is yet another karma. How can one karma get rid of another karma?

श्री रङ्गरामानुज भाष्यं śrī raṅgarāmānuja bhāṣya

विद्यां ब्रह्मोपासनरूपां तदङ्गभूतकर्मरूपां अविद्यां चैतदुभयं सह वेद । अङ्गाङ्गिभावेन सहानुष्ठेयं वेद इत्यर्थः । अविद्याया विद्याङ्गतया चोदितेन कर्मणा मृत्युं विद्योपपत्तिप्रतिबन्धकीभूतं पुण्यपापरूपं प्राक्तनकर्म तीर्त्वा निर्विशेषं उल्लङ्घ्य । विद्याया परमात्म उपासनरूपया । अमृतं अश्नुते मोक्षं प्राप्नोति इत्यर्थः । तीर्त्वा इत्यत्र उपायविरोधितरणं उच्यते । अमृतमश्नुत इति उपेयब्रह्मप्राप्तिविरोधिभूतेभ्यः सर्वपापेभ्यः मोक्ष इति भेदः ।

vidyām brahmōpāsanarūpām tadaṅgabhūta-karmarūpām avidyām caitadubhayaṁ saha vēda | aṅgāṅgibhāvēna sahanuṣṭhēyaṁ vēda ityārthaḥ | avidyāyā vidyāṅgatayā cōditēna karmaṇā mṛtyuṁ vidyōpapattipratibandhakībhūtaṁ puṇyapāparūpam prāktanakarma tīrtvā nirviśēṣaṁ ullaṅghya | vidyāyā paramātma upāsanarūpayā | amṛtam aśnutē mōkṣaṁ prāpnōti ityārthaḥ | tīrtvā ityatra upāyavirōdhitarāṇaṁ ucyatē | amṛtamāśnuta iti upēyabrahmaprāptivirōdhībhūtēbhyaḥ sarvapāpēbhyaḥ mōkṣa iti bhēdaḥ |

'vidyā' is of the form of meditation on Brahman, and karma which is performed as part of it called 'avidyā' and one who knows that both of these should be performed together as part of each other. By avidyā means by karma that is enjoined as part of vidyā. 'mṛtyuṁ' means that which is an obstacle for gaining knowledge, which is in the form of sin and merit resulting from previous karma. tīrtvā means completely leaping over. By vidyā means by the meditation on Brahman. 'amrutam ashṇute' means 'attains mōksha'. This is the meaning. Where it says, 'teertvā' or 'leaping over' what is stated is, the obstacles to the means for reaching aim, those obstacles are leaped over, so that means become clean and clear. Where it says, 'अमृतमश्नुत amṛtamāśnuta' it means 'Brahman is the goal and obstacles are all the sins which block the attainment of reaching Brahman, and release from all such sins'. This is the difference between 'mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā' and 'amrutam ashṇute'. कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि kurvannēvēha karmāṇi teaches 'karma-yoga' which produces para-bhakti and this mantra teaches that daily

karma and special karma cleanse the sādḥaka and enhance the bhakti.

Note that in the previous mantra, avidyā was defined as 'vidyāvidhura karma' i.e., karma without knowledge. Here, 'avidyā' is said to be karma enjoined as part of vidyā. So, what is leaped over? The obstacles that are blocking the means for vidyā, are leaped over. 'mrutyum teertvā' makes the way for means for getting knowledge and 'vidyā' is said to be meditation on Brahman which is also another 'means'. Hence both avidyā and vidyā have been interpreted from the standpoint of the "means".

श्री मध्व भाष्यम् śrī madhva bhāṣya

तस्मात्प्रथा स्वरूपम्तु नारायणम्अनामयम् ।

अयथार्थस्य निन्दाम् च ।

अन्यथोपासका ये तु तमो अन्धम्यान्ति असंशयम् । ततो अधिकमिव व्यक्तं यान्ति तेषाम्अनिन्दकाः । ये विदुः सह सज्जनाः । ते निन्दया अयथार्थस्य दुःख अज्ञानदि रूपिणः । दुःख अज्ञानादि सन्तीर्णाः सुख ज्ञानदि रूपिणः । यथार्थस्य परिज्ञानात्सुखज्ञानदिरूपताम्यान्ति ॥

tasmāt yathā svarūpam tu nārāyaṇam anā-māyām| ayathārthasya nindām ca| anyathōpāsakā

yē tu tamō andham yānti asaṁśayam | tatō adhikamiva vyaktam yānti tēṣām anindākāḥ | yē viduḥ saha sajjanāḥ | tē nindāyā ayathārthasya duḥkha ajñānadi rūpiṇaḥ | duḥkha ajñānādi santīrṇāḥ sukha jñānadi rūpiṇaḥ | yathārthasya pariññānāt sukhajñānadirūpatām yānti||

Because of this reason that, only in the form of yathārtha svarūpa, or the svarūpa as it is, Parabrahman who is guṇa-pūrṇa and defectless, nirdōṣa (and having understood it this way), one need to also perform the rejection of ayathārtha (that which is not as it is). Those with fittedness for knowledge who know the two together ('what it is' along with 'what it is not') such virtuous people who may have dukha and ajñāna, by the rejection of wrong-knowledge having crossed over dukha and ajñāna, become of the nature of sukha and jñāna by knowing the yathārtha-svarūpa of Vedic Brahman, attain the nature of sukha and jñāna i.e., they attain mōksha.

***A man due to the insufficiency of cooking vessels in a marriage,
Borrow them from a rich and now after the function,
Can these dirty vessels be returned to the owner ? NO !!
The vessels must be cleaned inside and outside thoroughly,
and then be returned.***



***This is true also for the vessel, loaned by God - YOUR HEART.
you are pilgrims in the journey of life.***

***Just as you cannot misuse the borrowed vessel or return it unclean,
your heart too must be maintained and returned pure and clean.
Do not use the God-vessel to undertake unholy actions.***

**Dr. Ranvir Singh's
Pictorial Message**



Sai Baba's Royal Path

By: **Dinesh Chikkaballapur**

The one misunderstanding about the Bhagwad Gita that has turned away many sincere seekers is that it only promises enlightenment and asks us to give up the world and its enjoyments. Sai Satcharita grants us happiness and Moksha.

While the Gita speaks of Self-realization, it also enables you to enjoy life to the fullest, achieve remarkable success in the world as well as happiness. It confers mastery over yourself and the world. It enables you to live like a King, not like a beggar. Like a victor, not a victim.

Sai Baba enables you to free yourself from the persecution of the world and become master of the universe through 'Shradda' and 'Saburi'. Live like a king by discovering the royal secret -- knowledge of Sai Baba close behind your thoughts and as a sheet anchor in your power. The world will then transform into your playground. You will enjoy every moment of your life and gain inner strength and growth.

Sai Baba assures the diligent aspirant of both enlightenment as well as worldly success. The Sai Satcharita does not promise a vague, post-mortem happiness. The benefits can be reaped here and now to gain material prosperity, happiness as well as spiritual growth. The accent is on the constancy of thought and consistency of application. And Whatever action you perform, whatever you perceive, offer, give, or strive for, do it as an offering to Lord Sainath the God. Then every ordinary action becomes worship. You will be freed from the bondage of actions that yield good and bad results.

Ignorant of Sai Baba's blessings as their potential, a few deluded ignore the Sai Maharaj and get caught up with the world and fritter away their lives in the pursuit of petty, insignificant playthings. They condemn themselves to repeated birth and death which brings in its wake misery and suffering. The Mahatmas, great souls, like Sitharam Dixit anchored in the higher Goal, worship the Parabrahman single-pointedly. They dedicate all actions to a higher ideal - Karma Yoga. They cultivate a love for all beings like Mhalsapathy and Shama - Bhakti Yog. They are determined like Nana Saheb Chandorkar in their pursuit till the goal is attained - Jnana Yoga. They then attain total freedom from the pairs of opposites in the world. Thus, worship of Sai Baba is a constant effort at union with Atman, not

a casual, occasional prayer or ritual.

Spiritual evolution is not the exclusive privilege of the chosen few. Sai Baba accepts even the most wicked people, the Rajasic, passionate, and Tamasic, lethargic ones, and offers them liberation. Nobody is disqualified provided they choose the right path. Everyone has access to the supreme goal. The highly refined and spiritually evolved ones find it easier to get there. With a serene mind and sharp intellect, they understand the world as 'Anitya', impermanent, and 'Asukha', joyless. They know they are heir to true and abiding bliss.

Sai Baba ends by encapsulating the entire spiritual path in one statement just like Lord Krishna in the Gita. Fix your mind on me - Jnana Yoga. The intellect fixes realization as the goal and keeps the thoughts focused there. Be my devotee - Bhakti Yoga. Feel for the ideal, pour your heart out to God. Surrender helps calm the mind. It empowers you to go through the ordeals of the world with fortitude. Sacrifice to me - Karma Yoga. Act in a spirit of sacrifice and service for the welfare of humanity. Dedicate your actions to the goal. Prostrate to me - dissolve your ego. Place your head and heart at the feet of the Lord. Thus, with me as the supreme goal, you shall come to me.

The law is - 'as you think so you become'. People change their lifestyles, clothing, and food. They even relocate to an Ashram or the Himalayas. But pay scant regard to their thoughts which are still in the world. The only thing you need to change is your thoughts. Elevate your thoughts to the Parabrahman and the world will be at your feet. The fringe benefits of spiritual life are material success and happiness.



Sai Baba's Advice of No Zone of Grief

By: Dr. G R Vijayakumar

Worldly, materialistic people are weighed down by worry and anxiety. Take a look at the people going to work every day. Does anyone appear jovial or inspired? Most look glum. Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his masterpiece 'Life of Sai Baba' said, "Your only duty in life is to be happy." If you anchor to Sai Baba, happiness is infectious; it changes everyone it touches. The waiter bursting with a smile brings cheer to the people he waits on, the street sweeper who wishes morning walkers brightens their day, the child full of fun and laughter attracts everyone around. Joy is a driving force. The joy of our worship to Sai Maharaj exerts a powerful pull, drawing us towards our highest purpose.

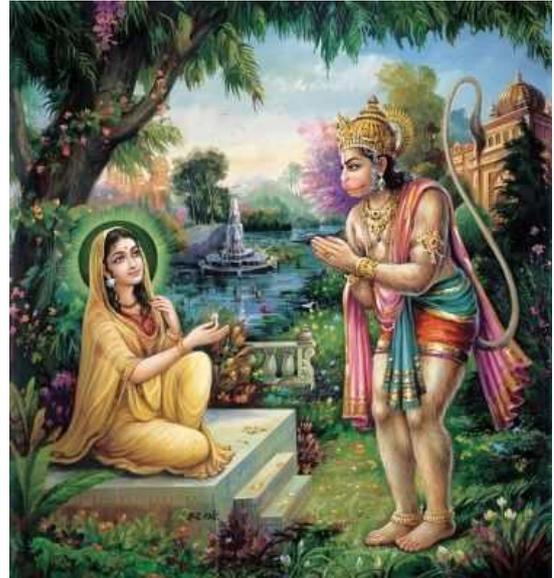
The Bhagwad Gita begins with Arjuna's grief. We are all like Arjuna. We have so much yet lacked the ability to enjoy what we have because we see only the one thing we do not have. Billionaires are depressed, talented people are stressed out; teenagers have issues. That is the reason Sai Baba tells us God is a friend of the poor and miserable and be happy with what we have.

Krishna is the epitome of joy and happiness. His life inspires people even now. He was born in a prison, was separated from his natural mother at birth, and was brought up by adoptive parents. As a child, Krishna was hounded by his wicked uncle who wanted to kill him.

Yet he was always full of fun, laughter, cheer, and mischief. His magnetic personality drew everyone to him. The Gopis, infuriated by his pranks, forgot their anger when they saw his enchanting smile!

In the Gita, Krishna says grief comes from wrong identification and attachment. This, in turn, comes from ignorance. Sai Baba points to Nana Saheb Chandorkar that just a little knowledge removes sorrow and paves the way to infinite bliss, the very purpose of our existence.

When Swami Vijayananda seeks Baba's permission to go to his native place he tells him about Sita Ma that he is chasing after a mirage. You see objects out there and believe that happiness lies in the world. In the Ramayana, Sita represents the individual. Sita was perfectly happy, whether she was enjoying luxuries in the palace at Ayodhya, or going through forest life, as long as her attention was on Rama, the Spirit within. If you look inward, you are happy, irrespective of what the world offers.



Sita's problems began when she looked out. She saw the golden, fleeting deer and wanted it. That one outward pursuit brought her misery. The deer represents sense objects, attractive and tantalizing, but passing. Sense contact gives instant pleasure but leads to sorrow in the end. You get enslaved by the senses, portrayed by the abduction of Sita by Ravana, the ten-headed monster; each head represents each of the ten organs of perception and action.

Sita soon learns her lesson. She refuses the pleasures of Ravana's palace and chooses to remain in the Ashoka Vana, the abode of no pain. When you turn inward you are in the zone of no grief.

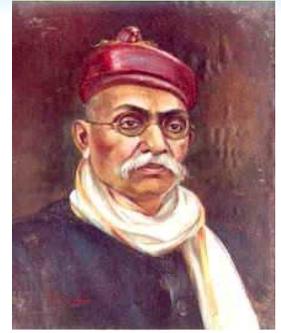
Hanuman then appears with Rama's ring. This assures Sita that Rama is on his way to rescue her. When you pursue the higher, you are often alone. But before long you get the 'ring' of confidence. Something happens to assure you that you are on the right path and that your redemption is near.

Finally, Rama wins the battle against Ravana and Sita unites with Rama. You overcome your lower tendencies and gain union with the Self, Atman. You enjoy unbroken, infinite bliss that is not dependent on the world.

As per Baba's advice, Swami Vijayananda stayed at Shirdi and soon passed away. Baba had foreseen his death and did not allow him to travel.

Kaka Dixit Diary

Eid Festival Indicates Modesty and Selflessness



Sai Baba encouraged his Muslim devotees to celebrate the Eid festival at his masjid. It means 'Eid of sacrifice', as Muslims symbolically sacrifice an animal as an act of 'qurbani'. It is a symbolic rehearsal of high values of faith, and it is required that these values be translated into practical life all year-round.

On that day a Muslim family came to see Baba. Bade Baba and Prof. Narke were also present. As I had hosted both Hindus and Muslims at Dixit Wada, Sai Baba asked me to arrange for their food at Dixit Wada. With a twinkle in his eyes, Baba asked me to record the 'significance of Eid festival' in my diary.

As we proceeded to Dixit Wada, I noted two practices of Eid festival one was congregational prayer in the masjid and the then sacrificing of an animal. These two practices reflect the basic spirit of this festival, which is a combination of

two important states of mind, modesty through prayer and selflessness through sacrifice.

The Muslim brother explained "Prayer inculcates modesty in a person. A Muslim offers two units of namaz in the mosque. Besides the other prayers, the namaz of Eid includes the 'Takbir which is recited more than once. Takbir means 'God is great.' The true significance of this Takbir is that 'God is great, and I am not great.' So, its essence is modesty. In prayer as in all aspects of our lives, we should relate to God through humility and modesty, as God's servants." We had seen Baba offering these prayers

God is Great, and we are not great. God is the Giver, and we are recipients. In this sense, the only appropriate way to relate with God is through modesty. Even the word 'Islam' has the connotation of modesty. I was told that 'Islam'



means 'submission' or 'surrender', indicating modesty. This means that Islam is a religion of modesty.

Our guest further emphasized – 'Modesty is, in fact, the culture of the universe. All the planets and stars, including our earth, are moving in a completely controlled and orderly way. They modestly follow the command of God. None of them ever rebels or goes against the law of nature. They all willfully submit to the law of nature. The whole universe presents a picture of modesty.' Following the dictates of nature and Islam, man must also remain modest, both in front of God and his fellow human beings.

The second is an animal sacrifice. Bade Baba had planned this later in the evening. This is an annual re-enactment of Prophet Abraham's actions. Prophet Abraham dedicated his entire life to the cause of God. The full extent of Abraham's dedication was demonstrated by his readiness to sacrifice his son for God. Referring to sacrifice, the 'Quran' states: "Their flesh and blood do not reach God: it is your piety that reaches Him." (22:37)

Going beyond this connotation, Eid has a universal message that humans need to sacrifice individual and collective egos to empathize with those who are not so privileged. Every festival has a socio-psychological message in its womb. We're required to go deeper to ascertain that. Just the way Allah ordered Abraham to sacrifice his dearest son, humans must abnegate their collective selves and an individual, we can reach

the most sublime heights of the self and collective goodness.

Prof. Narke quoted Mirza Ghalib who has stated so tellingly, 'The ultimate objective of a drop is to finally merge in the vastness of the river, this should be the very objective of every individual, irrespective of one's caste, class or creed.'

After lunch, we all went back to Masjid and Sai Baba just quipped, 'Drop your ego and live. This is the most exalted state of human existence.'

The process of sacrificing the seemingly invincible ego begins with the individual. Once an individual rises above his ego by sacrificing it, the egoless entity permeates all beings. We should remember, the fragrance of the highest form of nobility spreads faster than the best of perfumes of Arabia. Likewise, an egoless being touches other lives as well, and soon the world becomes a place for all selfless individuals.

I recalled the words of Emerson, 'To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.' This encapsulates the crux of the Eid festival by helping others selflessly, not just on the day of Eid, but always.

Finally, we learned that Eid also disseminates the message of equality among all humans without differentiating between the Hindus and Muslims. That is why Baba asked us to share meals at Dixit Wada.

"God is not an individual who sits alone on a golden throne. Sai Baba our God is pure Consciousness that dwells within everything."

—Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji

Learn to Settle Karma



On one evening in 1932, as Sri Narasimha Swamiji walked into a Darmashala at Chalisgaon, in Maharashtra, he had a pleasant surprise to meet a young ascetic Krishna who was his associate at Siddharudha Ashram at Hubballi in Karnataka in 1929. Both were happy to meet each other and happily discussed spiritual matters. Krishna adored the scholarship of Sri Narasimha Swamiji and by then had sufficient grounding of renunciation and was looking forward to initiation from Swami Nityananda of Vajreshwari.



Krishna did not think that education is simply restricted to a school or an academic environment, and if we did then we perhaps have not understood the whole process of life. The fact is that life is where the process of understanding and becoming as well as learning and unlearning never ends. His opinion was that every aspect of life triggers a set of events, relationships, incidents, and experiences, which end up teaching us something or the other. Every aspect makes us individually understand something more about life as well as about the self.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji questioned him – “What about Karma?” As we learn, we become

better equipped to settle our karma which is the reason why we all are born. So, simply put, we are here to perform our karma, settle old karma, understand the nature of karma, and eventually become karma-free. This precisely is the reason according to Krishna, why we are all on this material plane. The very Karma has brought Sri Narasimha Swamiji and Krishna to meet in a Dharmashala at Chalisgaon!

Krishna told Sri Narasimha Swamiji – ‘Yet if we do not learn from life – its experiences, its events, and its people – we would not know how to deal with karma. And this way life would just keep happening to us in the most futile way and we would most likely end up merely suffering life and not living it. For we would remain ever caught up in the cycle of cause and effect, without it making any difference to our sensibility as a soul. And with such ignorance, we would aimlessly move through the cycle of birth and death and keep coming back to similar lessons and lifetimes, till we learn to become self-aware. Aware of who we are, what we are here to do, and how to become better souls’.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji remembered Ramana

“A man of devotion to Sai Baba reduces himself to zero. Not until then can we conquer the evil in us. And when a Sai Bhakta thus loses himself, he finds himself in the service of all. He is a new man never weary of spending himself in the service of God's creation.”

—Dada J. P. Vaswani

Bhagawan's instructions to him to contemplate 'who am I' in a cave at Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai, which he did during 1925-28.

Krishna told him – 'The whole purpose of karma is to teach us something. And without it, we would not be on this journey. The fact that we are here means that we have karma; karma to live out, to settle, to perform, and to dissolve. The important thing to remember is that till the time we begin to live a little consciously and understand the value of learning from life and expanding our consciousness, we will keep adding more karma – perhaps negative karma – to our old set of karmic debts that we are here to settle on this mortal journey. Therefore, learning is very integral for karma cleansing'.

He continued – 'As they say, life is the best teacher. And karma is the tool, the technique, the method, and the curriculum as well as the book it uses to teach us what we must learn as souls. But till the time we value this learning and adopt this learning as the purpose of life, karma will seem as suffering or something that will forever remain a complex mystery'.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji narrated as to how he suffered from people and police but was stubborn in his 'Quest of a Guru'. He was

beaten up and harassed as a spy. Many days he had to go without food. He slept in burial grounds. If someone offered food, he would have it or go hungry otherwise. Sometimes he filtered fine sand and drank that juice!

Krishna's advice to Sri Narasimha Swamiji is to learn something new when we suffer in our lives and if we do not learn, we will likely suffer again. Though, if we choose to turn inwards and reflect on the fact that our karma plays out as a reaction to how we are, we shall pick the pieces of the puzzle and understand the mystery of life much better. We will be better equipped to settle our karma this way because when we understand the very purpose of life as learning and go through it with sincerity, there comes a point after which we no longer need any lessons. Therefore, it is critical that every time we learn, we learn with joy. Only then do we excel and evolve and mature as a soul.

From Chalisgaon, Krishna went on to become Swami Muktananda Maharaj, as the worthy disciple of Swami Nityananda. It took another three years (1936) for Sri Narasimha Swamiji to realize Lord Sainath.

(Source -Memoirs of Muktananda – 'Sai Sudha' January 1951)



Increase My Shadsamapthi

By: Maheshwari S Kumar

When I was staying with my Grandmother Sarojini Devarajulu in Calcutta South in the Seventies, we had a delightful neighbor called Hemendranath Banerjee. He was a large-hearted host and wondrous company for friends of all ages who loved to drop in on him. Hemendra Da would often pray, 'Ae Khuda, kharche badhaa', Hey God! Increase my spending!'



We needed him by saying, "Hemen Da, you are a Bengal-born Hindu Sai devotee and you call out to 'Khuda' as Sai Baba did? Why can't you say 'Allah Malik' as Sai Baba did?" He would reply, "Why do you fools

draw this linguistic line between me, Khuda, and Sai Bhagwan? Beyond your narrow conditioning, it is all the same. It is all about being a good human being. That is what I am trying to be."

Someone would quip, "But at 70, isn't it a bit too late?" He would laugh and say, "There is always hope. I spend it freely. You guys are miserable. So stingy. Clinging on to all your wealth. You don't even spend your full quota of hope!" Hemen Da was married but had no children and his wife Lathika was a nice lady. Extremely well-read. What he had, he had given away with joy. Yet he kept telling Sai Baba, "Ae Khuda, kharche badhaa!"

One day Hemen Da decided to shift to an old-age home run by Port Trust Welfare Board and we missed the couple very bad, but his catchphrase echoes with deeper meaning. We are like Arjuna. We are so scared to spend our resources. Even when the moment is opportune. Like Arjuna was scared to spend his valor and duty at the start of the battle of Kurukshetra. In Sanskrit, 'rajju' means rope. We are all born 'a-rajju', without ropes. We are born free. To live without fear. But we believe, 'life is full of struggle', 'it is so unpredictable', 'save for rainy days', 'don't trust wholeheartedly', 'play it safe.'

In holding on to fears, in holding back on dreams, in not spending our confidence, our potential we have roped ourselves with 'rajjus' of so many fears. We have added 'Na' or 'No' to our a-rajju birth. We have roped children to create human beings programmed to believe

that they are 'Not-Arajju' of the Kurukshetra of everyday life. People who do not spend selflessly; who do not have faith without doubting; who do not love without expectations; who do not forgive others for their mistakes; who do not know the merciful Sai Baba our Almighty God -- the 'arajju' super force that holds together all that one sees — replenishes only that space, that life, that potential, which empties itself joyously.

Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth thrives as chanchalaa, the ever-moving one. She enriches only the 'dynamic'. At one end of her spectrum is material wealth. Money that lies 'roped', that does not move, never grows. At the other end is the wealth of knowledge. Only that knowledge has a value that is spent in productive action to benefit someone. Otherwise, the most profound knowledge is just a burden. So, it is not about what one has or how much one needs. Spend this misconception. It is all about how joyously, intelligently, and fearlessly one spends what one has.



No one has little. We are born with Shad-sampatti, six types of wealth: Shamah, control of the mind; Damah, control of the senses; Upareti, withdrawal of the mind; Titiksha, forbearance; Shraddha, unwavering faith; and Samadhan, single-pointed concentration. These six types of wealth are self-replenishing. Success and happiness come to those who spend them lavishly. And, so the prayer... 'Ae Khuda, kharche badhaa!'

It is a mad, mad, mad, World

By: Sri Narasimha Swamiji

A disgraced minister in the princely state of Nanded in Maharashtra who was treated disrespectfully by the king decided to leave the king's court and join the group of Kirthankars led by Dasganu Maharaj. In his new life of associating with a Saintly Soul like Dasganu Maharaj and devoting to Lord Sainath away from the rat race, he found peace of mind and fell in love with the kind of person he had now become. His name was Nanaji Deshmukh, and he joined us during 1936-39 while we undertook an extensive tour across Maharashtra creating devotion to Lord Sainath.

One fine day in 1937, the Nanded king realized that he missed his good minister, who he had disgraced at a whim. He decided to invite him back to join his court. To the king's surprise, the minister-turned-Kirthankar declined to go back to his old life, and he explained to the flustered king that rather than serve once again in an uncertain career and be humiliated by the king, he likes to live a quiet life as a Kirthankar of Sai Maharaj away from politics. He added that he was no longer trapped by attachment to power and pelf, and so felt liberated, content, and at peace in Bhakti-Marg.

“But...but...” the king protested. “I need a wise and competent man to help me conduct affairs of Nanded state. Come back.” To which the ex-minister replied that the sign of a true man of wisdom is to not be lured by power and wealth, but to live a life of contentment, dignity, and peace. Staying and working closely with the king would mean having to put up with all kinds of humiliation and suffer his bouts of anger. Fire is good if one keeps one's distance from it; it could provide warmth and fuel, but the moment you get too close to it, you will either get burnt or fall into the fire and die. “I am done with playing politics and gauging your moods, your Majesty,” said the ex-minister. “Having realized my worth, I would rather stay away from you and your court.”

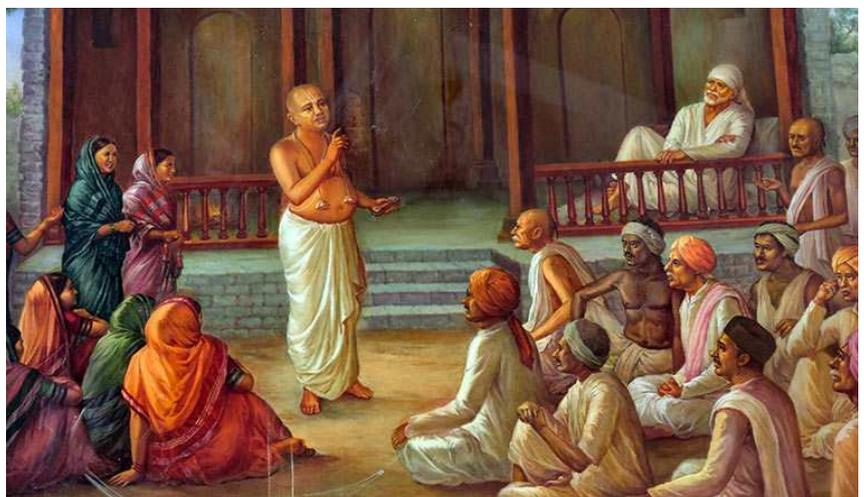
Dasganu Maharaj used the story of Nanaji Deshmukh in his Kirtan and stated that Lord Sainath, however, offers another solution in the Sai Satcharita wherein you can become wiser, content, dignified, maintain your

career and self-respect and so on without having to abandon action and become a renunciate.

Lord Sainath says that no one can give up action; all of us are compelled to act while we live. But the value of renunciation — giving up the fruits of action — is hailed as the sure path to salvation. Sai Maharaj has revealed to Kaka Dixit the finer shades of difference between the terms sanyas and tyaga. Tyaga is renunciation of the fruit of action, while sanyas is renunciation of the desire in action. If the former is the cause, the latter is the effect. By practicing tyaga you become a sanyasi.

When Dixit became an ascetic in 1916, Sainath pointed out that these ordained duties are of two kinds — daily routine ones and occasional special duties. These must be done by all, but it is the attitude behind the acts that matter. One does not long for the fruit of action and acts with no habitual likes or dislikes. Also, the feeling that it is he who is doing it should be absent. This can be achieved by giving up ownership, that is, getting rid of ego-sense.

In the Gita (chapter two, verse 47), Lord Krishna says that the right is to work only; never to its fruits, that we should exercise our right to work and do what needs to be done, without getting attached to action or its fruits.





Purushottam Rao Avaste or P.R. Avaste was born in February 1870 in an orthodox family and had a very good grounding in religious and holy matters right from his childhood.

He was an atheist for nearly eight years from 1890 to 1898. However, his atheistic journey did not move ahead smoothly and had many hurdles in moving further. Once he went to listen to the devotional songs of a lady singer about Mira Bai, Mukta Bai, Jnana Bai, and others, and these devotional songs had left an indelible impression on him and was then caught up by the advantage of Bhakti.

He had completed B.A. and L.L.B. and then became a Judicial Officer of Indore. He later became a Judge of Indore High and was a close friend of Justice Rege, an ardent devotee of Baba. He was devoted to Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji, and every year used to send him a pair of Kolhapur Chappals.

Avaste was planning to visit Pandharpur for the darshan of Lord Vittal. Rege suggested to Avaste that as Shirdi was on the way to Pandharpur, Avaste could accompany Rege who was visiting Shirdi, and both could go to Shirdi.

In 1914 during summer vacation with his wife and son, he came to Shirdi. He was on his way to perform his son's marriage and kept Rupees. 400.00 with his son and Rupees 300.00 with his wife. When he came to Baba,

Baba said to P.R. Avaste: "Will you give me Dakshina?"

P.R. Avaste: "How much?"

Baba said: "Rupees 30"

Baba said to Avaste's son: "Will you give me Rupees 40" and he gave. Thus, again and again, Baba asked for Dakshina and took away the entire fund available with Avaste's wife and son, leaving a balance of Rupees 30.00 with her.

Baba again said to Avaste: "Will you give me Rupees 30"

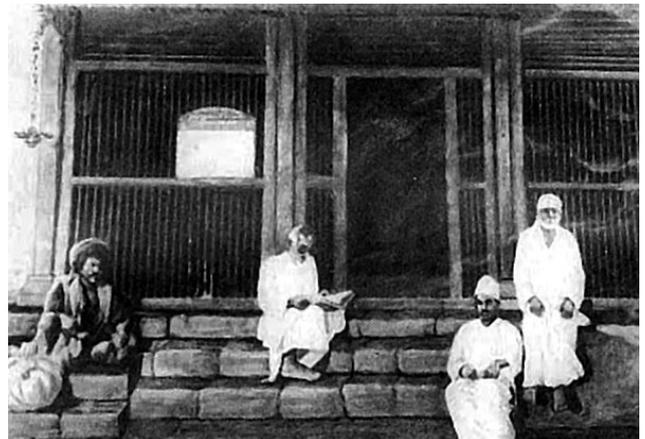
Avaste said: "Shall I give it, Baba?"

Baba said "Yes." Then Avaste unhappily took the balance amount of Rupees 30 from his wife and gave it to Baba. Baba did not ask for any further amount from Avaste.

Sai Baba and Justice P.R. Avaste

By: Ramaswamy Seshadri

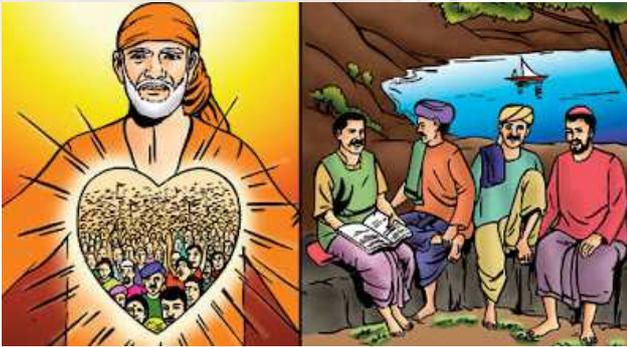
Avaste was in a disturbed mind at that time and was returning from Baba. Bapusaheb Jog, a staunch devotee of Baba, who observed all these happenings, appreciated him and patted him on his back. Jog felt very much happy as Baba asked repeatedly Dakshina from him and took away the entire money available with them. Jog then told Avaste that he was lucky as Baba would never take the entire money as Dakshina except to give back to him tenfold. But Avaste told him that he did not know anything about that but that he knew very well his position that he did not have a single pie with them and that he was in a quandary as to how to go to the place of marriage of his son. Then Jog enquired how much he required. Then Avaste replied that he wanted Rupees 100.00 Jog then said that a Bombay merchant who prayed to Baba and vowed that he would pay 25% of his profits, if the news of the loss of his goods which he heard, proved false and luckily it was later actually proved false. And the Bombay merchant gave accordingly a sum of Rupees 6000 as a gift to Baba. Out of that amount, Baba had already spent Rupees 3000 in three days. Jog further said that if he could give Rupees 100 to Avaste from that balance amount, Baba would neither object nor call back the amount. Jog gave Rupees 100 and further told Avaste that as Baba had taken away from them the entire money available with them, he predicted and said with certainty that Avaste would be getting a promotion with an increase in salary by Rupees 50 per month. To Jog's statement, Avaste immediately replied, saying that he did not have any godfather in the department for getting a promotion. But as predicted by Jog, he got the promotion with an increase in salary by Rupees 50 and Avaste came to know about this after the court vacation was over.



Sai Baba Gives Us Infinite Happiness

By: Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji

Every living being strives to attain happiness and avoid sorrow. And this quest has taught many of us that mundane pleasures, such as good food, comfortable accommodation, never last long. A person who loves Jilebi may get some pleasure when a Jilebi is first placed in the mouth but will get nothing once it is swallowed.



So, what is the source of permanent happiness? When someone came to Lord Sainath seeking 'Brahma Jnana' he was advised only that object which is itself unlimited can provide unlimited and permanent happiness. How can a finite object give infinite happiness? Today it exists; tomorrow it disappears. Only, when you come in contact with a Parabrahman - Sai Maharaj will you continue to enjoy eternal happiness even though you are a finite entity. Sai Satcharita imparts the knowledge of the infinite entity, Brahma Jnana, called vijn ana, spiritual science. The branches of science from which mundane knowledge is obtained are termed as 'avidya' in Sanskrit.

Unless people acquire the knowledge of the infinite entity by surrendering to the lotus feet of Lord Sainath, attain the infinite entity, they will never be able to attain permanent happiness.

In their search for happiness, human beings formulated the concept of dharma. With the help of their limited intellect, they realized that to run after finite objects is foolish. Wise people will never do this but will rather move along the path of dharma sadhana in quest of the infinite entity. Dharma sadhana is mandatory for everyone. Some of those who are young today may never see old age. If they postpone the practice of dharma sadhana until their old age, they will miss their chance to practice it in this life.

The practice of dharma is mandatory for all -- young and old, rich and poor, men and women.

There was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu called Dhruva, who started intense meditation at the age of five. Seeing such a young boy absorbed in deep meditation, the older devotees felt threatened – their hearts missed a beat at the thought that this young devotee, having started his meditation so early, would surpass them spiritually, would make more progress than them by the time he grows up. So, Lord Vishnu asked Narada Muni, “Can you go and test the boy and find out how ardent a devotee he is?” Narada went to where Dhruva was meditating and said, “Why do you bother doing such deep meditation? Why don't you wait until you're older?”

Dhruva replied, “First, some boys die when they are still very young. It would, therefore, be unwise for me to wait until I have grown up. Second, it is rare to attain a human body. Though worms, insects, flies, birds, and animals are all expressions of Parama Purusha, the problem with them, however, is that due to their small intellects, they do not feel the necessity of practicing spirituality. But I, having attained a human body, strongly feel the need to follow dharma. Why should I waste my time? O Mahan Naradaji, your words are incorrect. Being a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, why do you misguide me? You shouldn't do that.” Those who are intelligent, need to realize that spiritual practice should be started from this very moment.

Remember these words from Sai Satcharita -

“If you recite 'Sai, Sai,' always, I will take you beyond the seven seas. If you believe in these words, you will be certainly benefited”. – (Chap 13, Ovi 11-13)



Childrens' Corner

Om Namo Sainathaya

How Lord Sainath Guides us!

DEAR CHILDREN

There was a farmer who was a devotee of Sai Baba, who grew excellent quality corn. Every year he won the award for the best-grown corn. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer as advised by Sai Baba in Sai Satcharita shared his corn seeds with his neighbors. "How can you afford to share some of your best corn seeds with your neighbors when they are entering corn in the competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked. "Why sir," said the farmer, "Didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, as per Sai Baba's dictum, I must help my neighbors grow good corn." So is it with our lives. Those who want to live meaningfully and well must help enrich the lives of others, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. Those who choose to be happy must help others find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all. Call it Sai Baba's blessing, call it a principle of success. Call it a

law of life! The fact is, none of us truly wins until we all win!!

An interesting law, discovered by the SAI AURA team popular in Southeast Asia, called Koi's Law, says that just as a koi – a kind of carp (fish) – grows small in size or big depending on the environment in which it is placed, so too, our ability to grow and evolve would also depend on our environment and experiences. In other words, if you confine yourself to a small space, physically and metaphorically, you will grow or evolve only as much as that space will permit you to grow or evolve. The more you widen your area of experience and the more varied your interactions, learning, and outlook, the more likely you are to become a better person with wider understanding, compassion, and knowledge.

The koi fish is also viewed as a symbol of unity, and the way you love and care for nature. In Japanese tradition, the koi fish is a symbol of good fortune, perseverance, and abundance. In Buddhism, it represents courage and advancement.

Let us widen our scope, spread our wings, and grow to become better, more evolved humans.

Yours SAI BABALy

THE SAI AURA TEAM

Give one-word answers:

1. Which was the incurable disease suffered by Bhagoji Sindhe?
2. In Chavadi Procession who held the umbrella?
3. What is Sai Baba's familiar name to Kaka Dixit?
4. Where did Gangir Bua establish his Ashram?
5. What was the popular name of the Datta Saint Vasudevananda Saraswati at Rajamundry?
6. Where did Kaka Dixit pass away on the train on 5th July 1926?
7. From where did Somadeva Swami visit Sai Baba at Shirdi?
8. What was the name of the Hotel started by Narayana Rao Jani at Shirdi?
9. Where did Nana Saheb Chandorkar live in Mumbai?
10. In which place Dasganu Maharaj was cremated?
11. After Radhakrishna Mai's death who was cleaning the path Baba used to walk to Lendi Baug at Shirdi?
12. Who was given the title – 'Adhunik Mahipati' as a Kirthankar?

1. Leprosy; 2. Nana Nimonkar; 3. Langda Kaka; 4. Punatambe; 5. Teymbe Swami; 6. Dadar; 7. Uttar Kashi; 8. Anandashram; 9. Bandra; 10. Nanded; 11. Balaji Patil; 12. Dasganu Maharaj

Answers:



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