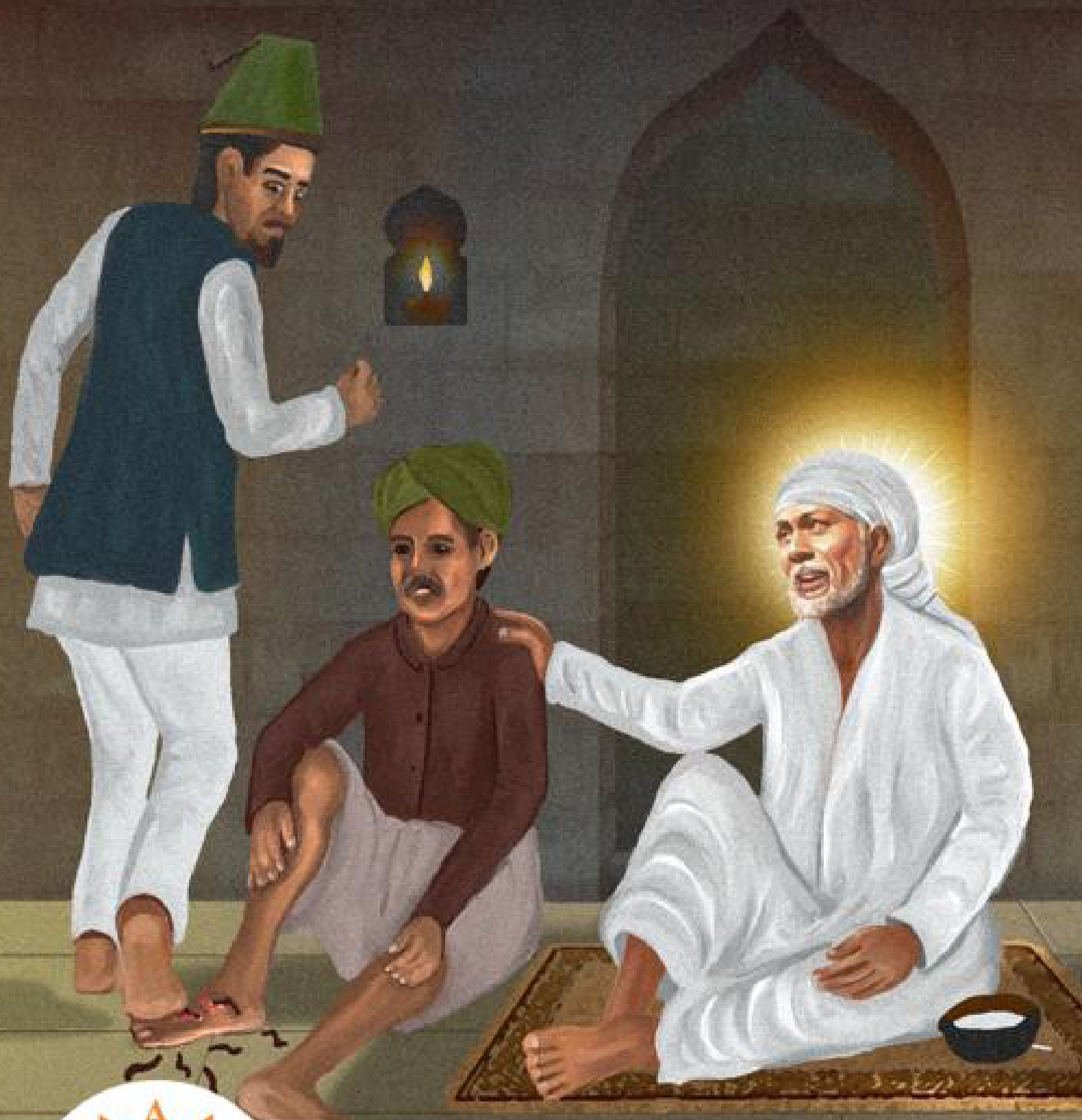


Aura of Shirdi Sai



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE —

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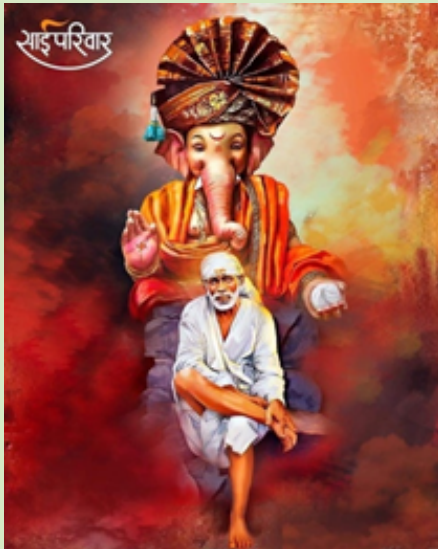
SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE



First Word	3
A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama: 23	
Sahasranama Leads to Living Life in The Present	4
Dr. Ranvir Singh's Pictorial Message	5
The Slippers of Sai's Feet	6
Kaka Dixit Diary	7
Dr. Ranvir Singh's Pictorial Message for Kids	8
At the Holy Shankaracharya's Cave	9
Jnana Yoga Helps Transcend Mind's Limited Vision	11
IshAvAsya Mantra # 15	12
Mystics and Saints	15
Book Review	15
In Moment of Ecstasy	16
A true master like Sai Baba focuses on your state of being	17
May All Creatures Everywhere Be Happy	18
Adoration to KUSHA BHAV	19
One Word Answers	29
NEUROLOGY of Compassion and EMPATHY	21
Have you ever wondered who you are?	22
A message of Sai Baba's blessings	23
How is Sadguru Different from Saints	24
Katha Upanishad on Nachiketas' tryst with death	25
Dr. CHIDAMBARAM PILLAY	26
Children's Corner	28

Contents

First Word



As stated by Hemadpant in Sai Satcharitra, Whatever the attachments for different objects, if all such love is collected and poured in a mold at the feet of the Lord, then it appears in the form of devotion. - Govind Raghunath Dabholkar alias Hemadpant (Chap. 10, Ovi 128)

In Sai Satcharitra, we come across B. V. Dev seeking opinion on Sai Baba. Baba calls him and chastises that while he wanted to give a silk cloth, Dev is looking for shreds. We should take this as a lesson to start the new year 2023.

Sai Aura wishes all its readers a happy and prosperous 2023.

The famous Higgs boson, discovered in 2012 at CERN, helped explain what gave matter its mass. The elusive 'God' particle paradoxically endeavored to render 'God' redundant as suggested by Lawrence Krauss, a renowned theoretical physicist. 'The quest for the Higgs boson, and its ultimate discovery, neither proves nor disproves God. Science isn't trying to disprove God. Rather, strive to offer an explanation for the universe that would make a divine creator

redundant,' he said.

Humans, with their remarkable tools and brains, may have succeeded at least partially in transforming metaphysical speculation with empirically verifiable knowledge. But can science really provide all the answers? A stubborn, relentless reductionist approach to investigate the constituents of matter leads only to the conundrum of an even more mysterious subatomic realm. The human intellect grapples with logic and reason to find answers. And just when science feels it is tantalisingly close to the truth, all it finds is just another Matryoshka doll in the belly of its predecessor. Just as mysterious and unfathomable.

Scientists have evolved quantum physics mathematical equations that have been ratified by successfully applying them in lasers and electronic devices. They, however, have no clue about how these calculations could throw light on the nature of reality. Most quantum physicists are unconcerned about the nature of reality. Their motto is 'Don't ask. Just calculate and carry on with the mathematical deliberations.' The Quantum Field Theory believes various fields, like the electromagnetic field and the Higgs Field, fill space. Particles are merely excitations in this field. A perturbation in this field corresponds to a particle of matter. But scientists are totally clueless about what a field is made of. Another theory postulated is the String Theory. Physicists who work on String Theory say that everything is made of vibrating 'strings'. All subatomic particles are incredibly tiny bits of energy. And yet, the dilemma of what are the strings made of remains.

'Matter and energy are the two sides of the same coin; they are not two distinct entities at the subtlest level,' opined Hans-Peter Duerr, emeritus president, Max Planck Institute, Munich, who succeeded Albert Einstein and Werner Heisenberg. Trying to look at matter at its subtlest level for the last 55 years, Duerr eventually concluded that there is no real matter. Quantum physics has largely replaced the 'gun to your head either-or' paradigm of classical Newtonian physics with the blasphemous heresy of simultaneity. The photon now exists simultaneously as a wave and a particle. And that's where the ever-seeking intellect will eventually have to surrender. A compromise that's a simultaneity of comprehensibility and incomprehensibility. A reality that's tangible as well as intangible. Einstein's famous quote aptly depicts this irony: 'The most incomprehensible part of the world is that it is comprehensible.' The stark polarity of 'either or: duality blurring imperceptibly into a non-polar simultaneity. The age-old Cartesian mind matter duality becoming a continuum, a singularity. Matter may after all be only in the mind. Just as beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, the universe might just be a projection on the screen of consciousness. The ultimate truth will be realizing that reality lies in the sentience of cognition of the virtual reality.

Let us remember what Sai Baba has stated, "That intellect which exists like a light, concentrate your mind on it, because all the activities of the sense organs, including the mind, are under the control of the intellect."

Sai Aura wishes you all the best in life.

A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama-23: Sahasranama Leads to Living Life in The Present

— by **Seetha Priya**



Vishnu is also known as Anant and Anant Chaturdashi is related to Samudra Manthan, churning of the milky ocean.

Samudra Manthan is a popular mythological story that is mentioned in the Mahabharat, Srimad Bhagavatam and the Vishnu Purana. Also known as Ksheersagar Manthan and Amrit Manthan, the Sagar Manthan offers profound lessons that are of relevance even today.

The key role in Samudra Manthan is played by Vishnu. The story goes that when Indra, the

king of Devas, lost all his powers due to a curse by Durvasa Rishi, his kingdom was captured by the Asura king, Bali. He then approached Vishnu for help. On Vishnu's advice, the Devas agreed to churn the ocean with the help of Asuras, to draw out the elixir of immortality. Collectively we can achieve significant goals.

Every name in Vishnu Sahasranama is an encyclopedia. In Samudra Manthan, we got precious material and Mahalakshmi.

In our life, we should have Samudra Manthan for every event so that we finally get Lord Vishnu's blessings.

The Manthan started with Mandrachal Parvat being used as the churning rod and Vasuki, the serpent, as the rope held by the Devas and Asuras on either side of the mountain. To prevent the mountain from sinking, Vishnu took Kurma avatar, tortoise form, and provided it the required base.

In the beginning of the churning emerged Halahal, the poison that was powerful enough to destroy the universe. To protect the cosmos, Shiv swallowed it and stored it in his throat, signifying courage, compassion, and detachment – all essential to withstand obstacles that emerge at the start of any project.





The 23rd shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama is –
Gurur Gurutamo Dhama Satyah
Satyaparakramaha
Nimisho Animishah Sragvi Vachaspatihi
Udaradhihi

Lord Vishnu is not just the Teacher (Guru), but the Supreme Teacher (Gurutama) in whom Truth (Satya) abides. He is of real valor (Satyaparakrama) and even though his eyes are closed (Nimisha), he is ever awake (Animisha), garlanded (Sragvi) by intelligence and wisdom (Vachaspatihi Udaradhi).

In the 'Life of Sai Baba' we come across an incident. Suddenly there came a day when the sleep of the entire Shirdi village was brought to an end by a mad person Rohilla, who had forced himself to Shirdi. Nobody knew from where he came, and no

one knew when he would leave! He was a nuisance as he would be reciting loudly the kalams from the Koran in the dead of the night and walking along the streets of the village, unmindful of what others felt! He did not sleep nor allowed anyone to sleep peacefully!

This went on every night. Baba listened to Rohilla's recitations peacefully. Tatya and Mhalsapathy could not even sleep for a minute and were feeling miserable. They could not do anything as Baba was enjoying it.

The hard-working villagers spent their nights cursing for want of sleep! Ultimately, they approached Baba for help. Baba calmly listened to them but supported Rohilla. Baba pacified the villagers – "Brothers, he is the only man who takes God's name day and night! I know it disturbs you. He is troubled by his wife. To avoid it, he is chanting Koran. How can I stop him? He will repeat them till he gets tired one day and will leave this place! Let us bear with him till such time and enjoy the bliss of the Divine name!"

The villagers could argue no more. Rohilla did not have any wife. What Baba meant was Rohilla's evil thoughts which would haunt him.

Soon, Rohilla too left Shirdi forever! That night everybody slept happily.

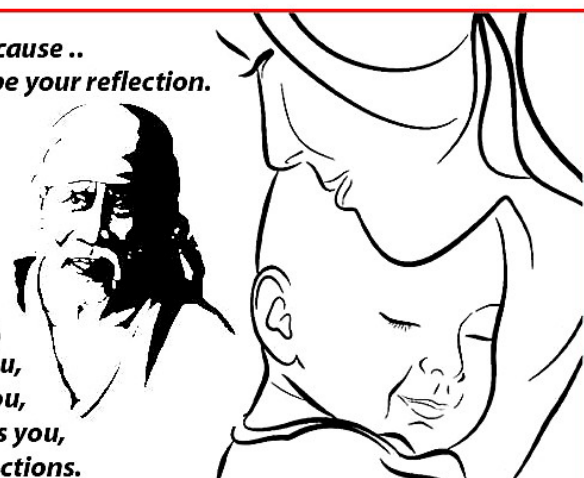
Dr. Ranvir Singh's
Pictorial
Message

*you love your son because ..
you consider him to be your reflection.*

IN FACT,

*The one who loves you,
The one who hates you,
The one who criticizes you,
All are your own reflections.*

*At one time, someone may be angry with you but later his anger,
May give way to love, as such people are carried away by vagaries,
Of the mind, thus being deluded by the names and forms, they are,
Unable to know the transient nature of the world. Truly speaking,
you have neither friends nor enemies as it is only your love or hatred,
That is reflected from outside as God does not give you happiness or,
Sorrow and they are of your own making as they originate from you.*



The Slippers of Sai's Feet

— by **Sai Raghu**

If I were the slippers of the feet of yours, O' Baba
How fortunate would have I been!
The slippers made from the skin of my body,
Would have provided comfort to your feet,
Protected them from pebbles, thorns, and stones lying scattered on the path,
And my coming into the world would have adequately been justified.

If my body could not serve you, while living on earth
Mattered little, if my skin had served you and provided you relief
My soul in heavens would have smiled on its good fortune.

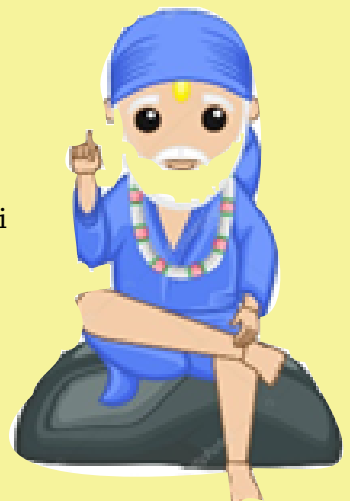
Lying on the steps of Dwarkamai the whole night
The slippers would have been gazing at you,
You're sleeping with Mahalsapati and Tatya,
You cutting jokes and you jesting with them
And I would have kept on watching, what all you did the whole night,

While going for begging, I would have provided splendor to your feet
Kept on assessing the depth of heart of those devotees
Who became blessed and immortal for all times to come,
By putting one or two chapatis in your Jholi.

Kept on watching day after day, your deeds,
Your leelas in the Dwarkamai for Sixty long years,
Cutting jokes with your devotees,
Sharing of food offered as bhiksha
With devotees along with dogs, cats, crows and birds,
And watched the hand raised for cutting the neck of the goat
By Kaka Saheb Dixit at your command
And carried the feeling of jealousy on his self-surrender

Would have been the spectator of all incidents
Which have formed part of Shri Sai Satcharitra
As also those which have remained unknown and unsung
And of which the spectators were illiterate villagers only.

May be these slippers had found a place in the museum at Shirdi
And on which innumerable devotees of yours
Would have yearned to place their heads on today.



Kaka Dixit Diary

It was October 1918. Baba knew that he has become quite old and wanted to meet his familiar devotees and the places where he begged his food. He asked me and Shama to accompany him on his rounds. Our first visit was Kulkarni physician, who after his wife's death had become a dedicated devotee of Sai Baba. Baba enquired his welfare and blessed him.

Right from the beginning, Kulkarni Physician was dead against Sai Baba and plotted many times to harm Sai Baba. Only when he lost his eyesight in a freak accident, his wife Parvati took him to Baba and requested to restore his eyesight so that he can at least have his darshan. Baba told her that he would give back his eyesight only in exchange for her life. Parvati wanted to die a 'Sumangali' and Baba consented and gave her a final vision of 'Vishwaroopa'. From that moment onwards, Kulkarni physician became a staunch devotee of Sai Baba and spent his remaining years of life in total devotion to Sai Baba.

When I remarked to Sai Baba about the earlier life of Kulkarni physician, Baba remarked that even Ravana's mother Nikasha became a staunch Rama Bhakta. By then Dasganu Maharaj was approaching us, and Baba directed him to tell us the story of how Ravana's mother became a devotee of Rama.

Dasganu Maharaj took us to Chavadi and narrated the interesting story from Ramayana.

When they brought Ravana's body home to the palace from the battlefield, a great wail went up in the women's quarters. In the commotion, nobody noticed that Nikasha, the old queen, slipped out of the palace and began to make her way to the hills outside the city.

"Halt!" A troop of Vanara soldiers suddenly blocked Nikasha's path. "Who are you and where are you running away to? Come with us to Rama," they said and marched Nikasha off to the battlefield where Rama and Lakshmana sat with Ravana's brother Vibhishana.



"Mother! What are you doing here?" exclaimed Vibhishana and went forward to bring her to Rama.

Lakshmana looked at Nikasha in surprise. Dropping his voice, he said to Rama, "Look at this old woman. She has lost her sons and grandsons, but she's running away because she wants to live longer even now."

"Lakshmana, be respectful. Let us hear what she has to say," said Rama. The brothers stood up to receive Nikasha. Rama looked at Nikasha silently. She was of medium height and slender build. Her silky white hair was elegantly arranged, and her clothes were in muted good taste. She had beautiful cheekbones and delicate hands and feet. So, this was Ravana's mother. Rama could not relate this proud, slim woman to bull-like Ravana and outsized Kumbhakarna. And then he looked at Nikasha's eyes. They burned black with an inner fire.

"Queen Mother, I apologize for my soldiers. Please do not be afraid. You are perfectly safe and so are your daughters-in-law and palace women. I entrust you to Vibhishana's care," said Rama gently.

Nikasha looked back at him and inclined her head regally.

"Queen Mother, what made you leave the palace and set off on your own?" asked Rama.

Nikasha hesitated at first but found her voice.

“Rama, I marvel at you. Your wife stayed loyal to you despite every threat and every temptation. I wanted to live longer to see what else you would do.”

Lakshmana could not help a snort of disbelief, but Rama flung up his hand to stop him. “Mother, we will stay in touch. Please return to the palace now and live peacefully in Vibhishana’s care.”

Nikasha almost hated herself for admiring Rama. But she could not deny that. Rama was the better person. Nikasha’s grief was made worse by shame that she had failed to bring up Ravana correctly.

Mindful of Rama’s words, Vibhishana entrusted the palace women’s quarters to Nikasha’s care. Queen Mother held morning meetings every day with her daughters-in-law. She gave each one a project to undertake for the welfare of Lanka’s battered subjects. She made field trips to the countryside so that Vibhishana could take appropriate action where needed.

Unknown to anyone, she dedicated everything

she did to Rama. This gave her charitable work an inner focus and a sense of reparation for the havoc wreaked by Ravana on his people. Years rolled by and Nikasha lived for the times when messengers would come to Lanka bearing greetings, news and gifts from faraway Ayodhya.

One day the shattering news arrived that Rama had taken jalasamadhi, death by drowning, in the river Sarayu. Nikasha went very quiet when told of it by a weeping Vibhishana. “O Rama, my life came out of its darkness because of you,” she mourned. “I have no wish to live now. Who will cure me of the grief of your death?”

Nikasha resolutely passed her remaining years in engagement, not seclusion, chanting Rama’s name daily. In this quiet way, she made peace with her existence and lived a life of dignity and service until she too died one day, taking Rama’s name with her last breath.

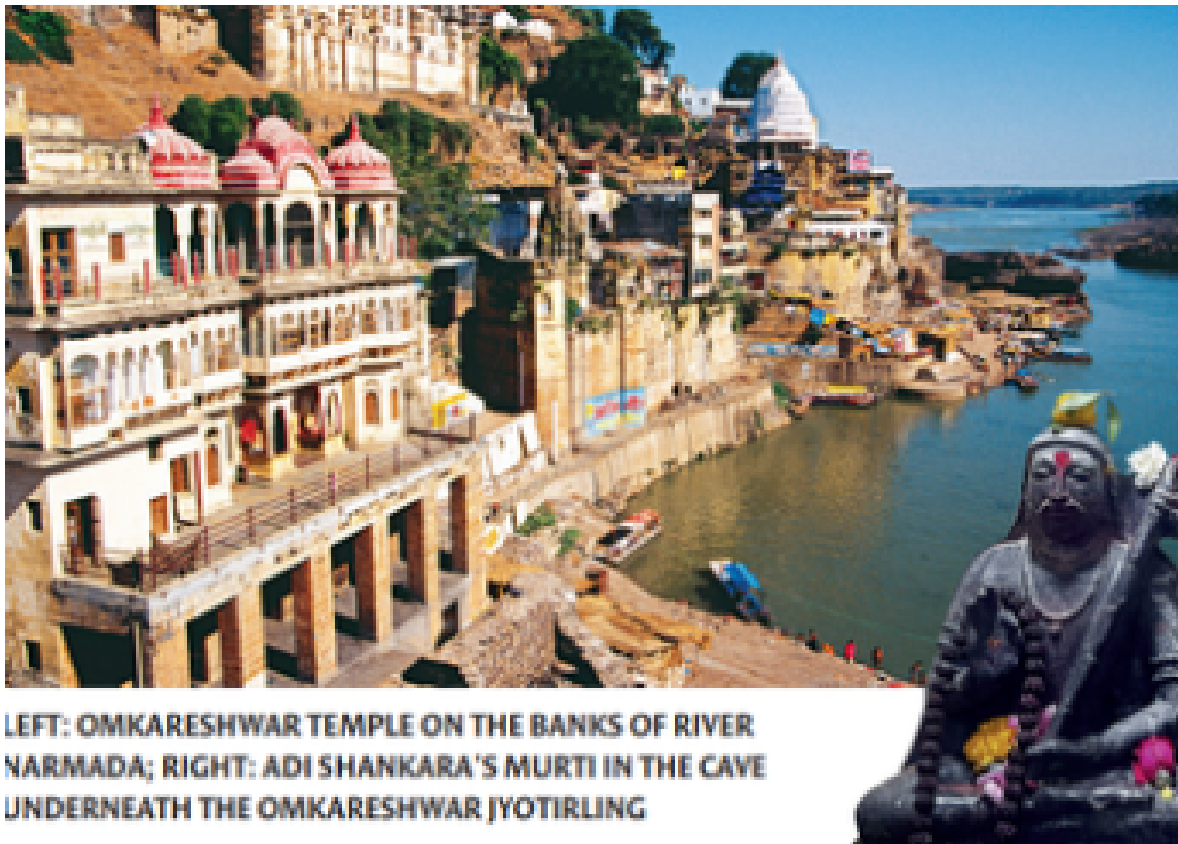
We thanked Sai Baba and Dasganu Maharaj for an interesting story from Ramayana.



Dr. Parvinder Singh's
Pictorial
Message
Kids

At the Holy Shankaracharya's Cave

— by **Smt. Seetha Vijayakumar**



LEFT: OMKARESHWAR TEMPLE ON THE BANKS OF RIVER NARMADA; RIGHT: ADI SHANKARA'S MURTI IN THE CAVE UNDERNEATH THE OMKARESHWAR JYOTIRLING

I attended Sai Leela contributors meet at Shirdi and learnt an important episode from Booty's life. It seems Booty wanted to marry again but was hesitant to ask Sai Baba's consent. Sai Baba advised him to recite Soundarya Lahari at Shankaracharya's Cave at Omkareshwar near Indore. Accordingly, I requested my husband to take me to Omkareshwar.

The very fact that Booty was asked to recite Soundarya Lahari was an indication of Sai Baba's approval for him to marry again. I got more information about this cave and Soundarya Lahari from other Sai devotees who attended the Sai Leela meet.

As one is led into the Adi Shankara gufa, the cave right underneath the Jyotirling at Omkareshwar, one is drawn into a meditative stillness in front of the Shankara Murti installed there. Tradition states that this is the cave where

Shankara, travelling from down south Kalady as a boy of nine, met his guru, Govindapada, on the banks of the Narmada. When asked by Govindapada, "Who are you?" Shankara bursts forth into the Dasashloki, an evocative ten-verse composition on the true Self, Brahman, which defines him. Shankara's prodigious reply, considered his earliest exposition of Advaita, startles Govindapada into realising that this was a rare intelligence, and he accepts Shankara as his disciple.

Shankara's dissection of the phenomenal world, and of his real nature, sets the tone for the formulation of the Advaita philosophy: "I am neither earth nor water, nor fire, nor air...neither mother nor father, neither gods nor scriptures...neither waking, nor dream, nor deep sleep...neither castes nor observance of duties...I am Turiya, Sivah kevala hum, Brahman alone am I." Applying Parishesya Nyaya, the rule of Residue, Shankara

states that reality is the residue after all phenomena of the world have been subsumed in the non-dual Self. The Self shines as pure awareness, it is auspicious thereby.

Tradition also attributes a major miracle by Shankara during his stay with Govindapada for around two years. During the monsoon season, River Narmada used to get flooded by rains, and its waters threatened to engulf this cave, where Govindapada used to meditate. While fellow-disciples got alarmed, Shankara is said to have placed a 'charmedmagical' pot at the mouth of the cave, which contained the torrential waters of the Narmada. This yogic miracle, attributed to Shankara, is part of the lore. It has been considered as part of the great scholastic Hegelian construct of Advaita, in which all actions are subsumed within the one Brahman.

In tracing his intellectual and spiritual lineage from Govindapada and his own Guru Gaudapada, Shankara conceives of the Self as consciousness, placing it beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. Crucially, he places it beyond the distinction of subject and object, since subject and object are both functions of the mind. The enquiry into the Self is looking at the Seer and not the seen, for what appears and disappears, as Ramana Maharshi used to say, is temporary. Only the Seer is constant, and Atma-vichara is a look at the origins of one's mind.

In reformulating Upanishadic truths, Shankara and his gurus ground their Advaita thought



in a phenomenological analysis of experience. Shankara believed that this self-critique of the mind would lead to spiritual illumination. The mind would lapse back into its original consciousness from which it arose. In contrast to the Buddhist emphasis on samskara and dukkha, as starting points of the search for the Self, Shankara focuses on the endpoints of spiritual fulfilment and bliss, and lays down a mode of spiritual seeking, which alone can calm the existential anxiety of man.

The thought may be abstruse to the common man, but Shankara revolutionised the way of looking at the world and oneself too. It is in the smaller poetic compositions, Prakarna texts, like the Atma-Bodha and Vivekachudamani that Shankara puts these abstruse Advaitic concepts within easy grasp of the common man.

As I come out of the Shankara cave, I am overwhelmed by the grandeur of Shankara's thought, best summed up as, Brahman Satyam Jagat Mithya Jivo Brahmaivah Napara — 'Brahman alone is real, the world is illusory, the individual and the universal soul are one'. Rebel and conformist rolled into one, he was a man consumed by his life-mission to establish the non-dual nature of Brahman but also ended up synthesising various schools of thought into his Brahman pyramid.

As in the case of Booty, Sai Baba gives us whatever we want.

Jnana Yoga Helps Transcend Mind's Limited Vision

— by **C. S. Dinesh**

Sai Baba gave a detailed exposition on Jnana Yoga to Nana Saheb Chandorkar and we read this in Sai Satcharitra.

‘Verily, there is no purifier in this world like knowledge,’ says the Bhagwad Gita, 4:38.

Sai baba says:

“One who concentrates on ME, for him nothing is difficult. But the moment he forgets ME, Maya will attack him.” – Shri Sai Baba (Chapter 3, Ovi 143-148)

While Hath Yoga strengthens the body through systematic physical activity and breathing exercises, Bhakti Yoga purifies the heart by unswerving devotion to God, and Karma Yoga renders nobility to actions, Jnana Yoga illuminates consciousness through self-enquiry, study of scriptures and meditation. Sai Baba says: ‘It is knowledge which knows knowledge through knowing knowledge.’

Jnana Yoga, also called Jnana Marg, path of knowledge, wisdom, Buddhi Yoga, discipline of intelligence, and Brahman Vidya, science of Brahman explains the difference between the Self and non-self, the knower and known, the permanent and transient. Adi Shankaracharya held that since Brahman is eternal, pure, of the nature of knowledge; and free, one should experience it.

Perception, inference, and scriptural testimony have been traditionally described as the sources of knowledge. Knowledge is both para -- infinite, and apara -- finite. The former relates to the higher dimension of being, the latter to the changing phenomena. Para liberates, apara binds one to the spatiotemporal world.

Jnana Yoga enlightens one about the true nature of existence, identity of Brahman and jivatma, individual

soul, the five koshas, layers of the soul -- physical, vital, mental, wisdom and bliss -- the chakras, whirling energy-centers of the subtle body, and the ultimate purpose of life. He who cultivates the virtues of vivek, discriminative wisdom; vairagya, detachment; and abhyas, practice; can control his senses with reins of the mind. He can perceive the cosmic self in individual self, cosmic mind in individual mind, and cosmic consciousness in individual consciousness.

Yet, Jnana Yoga is not merely an intellectual pursuit, since its goal is to transcend the mind which is ‘limited in its vision’ and ‘rigid in its conceptions’. Intellectual engagement with the Supreme Reality is not enough till one realises oneness with all life-forms and integrates the individual self with divine consciousness.

Jnana Yoga postulates three ways to grow in spirituality: shravana, listening about the ultimate truth from one who knows it; manana, reflecting about the truth heard, and nididhyasana, meditation on the truth. The spiritual practitioner undergoes four stages: seeking, knowing, becoming, and being. He offers his senses and life-energy as oblations ‘in the fire of the yog of self-control, kindled by knowledge’ Gita 4:27. He is then free from vices and liberated while living.

Birth and death relate to the corporeal being on its journey to the Infinite in endless cycles. According to Brihadaranyak Upanishad, when one realizes the Absolute Truth, one sees without seeing, smells without smelling, tastes without tasting, speaks without speaking, hears without hearing, touches without touching, thinks without thinking, and knows without knowing, for there is nothing separate from Him. Knowledge about Brahman in whom all polarities meet, is ‘the highest goal of life’, ‘the highest glory’, ‘the highest world’ and ‘the highest bliss’. As one progresses in knowledge, one moves from external to internal forms of worship, and finds the One Reality shining as the many.

The yogic paths of Jnana Bhakti and Karma are interconnected in a subtle way. Theistic schools, whether Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta, or Smarta, emphasize one path over the other, or synergize them, but their basic purpose is the same – to realize God in whatever form it is perceived.



IshAvAsya Mantra # 15

— by **Jayakrishna Nelamangala**

Let us first review what has been established so far. By the first two mantras (#1 and #2), it was established that fittedness is a pre-requisite for acquiring knowledge. To a student of shastra who has actually acquired fittedness for knowledge, the nature of Vedic Parabrahman was described with the mantra #4. In mantras #6, #7 and #8 the direct knowledge of such a Parabrahman was established as the means for getting moksha. The direct knowledge of Parabrahman does not occur by the mere study and contemplation of shastra. However, it occurs only by the Grace of God.

So, for the direct knowledge of God, study of Veda in the form of understanding-contemplation-application along with Grace of God, both are necessary. In fact, study of Veda itself is because of another Grace of God. The study provides the indirect knowledge that is necessary and the direct-knowledge brings it to a ripened state. This ripened state of knowledge is also known as sākshātkāra. Without an indirect knowledge, there is no question of direct knowledge. Without the direct experiential knowledge, doubts will linger. So, Indian philosophy insists on first getting the indirect knowledge then making it into a direct apprehension.

In order to obtain that anugraha or prasāda of Parabrahman, along with the study, the upanishat teaches the method of prayer in the next mantra #15.

Before we go further, firstly, observe that there are several words, prasāda, sākshātkāra, prārthanā, etc that have been used here, and each one of them must be understood only through a proper study of shāstra.

Secondly, notice that although study of shāstra is necessary, but it is not sufficient for sākshātkāra, the direct apprehension. Why so? It is so, because, if mere study of shāstra is said to bring about mōksha, then the ultimate cause of mōksha is jāna and not Parabrahman. For this reason, He is not Sarva-kartr. But such a position would be against this upanishat itself. Refer to “sambhōtim ca vināsham ca yastad vedō .” veda establishes that nothing happens without the will of God.

"na rite tvat kriyate kimchanāre maghavan mahāmarkam citramarca" - Rig veda

Thus, neither mōksha nor bandha nor jāna nor ajāna can happen without the Will of God.

The all-Doership or sarva-kartrtva of Parabrahman includes sṛṣṭi, sthiti, samhāra, niyamana, jāna, ajāna,

bandha and mōksha - as applicable to the world of cetana and jaḍa. If ‘absence of knowledge’ is taken to be ajāna, then, jaḍa has - sṛṣṭi, sthithi, laya, niyamana, ajāna whereas cetanas have all the eight. This is what is known as “aṣṭa kartrtva” of Parabrahman. The expression ‘sarva-kartrtva’ is to be understood as, ‘sarva-sarva-kartrtva’. God is the author of all that happens (sarva) to all the things of this world (sarva) of cetana and acetana.

Thus, bandha (bondage) and mōksha (liberation) - both happen by the will of God. Bondage happens because of ajāna, and mōksha happens because of jāna. Again, jāna and ajāna happen by the Will of God. The will of God that releases a man is called prasāda. avidyā, mahāmāyā, mōhinī, prakṛti, etc are the different names that shāstra uses for the Will of God that puts a soul in bondage. Parabrahman using triguṇātmaka prakṛti to bind a soul is His aiśvarya. His using a certain tool, is His Creative Power.

Thus, God is the all-doer or sarva-kartr for all the states of a jeeva, the state of bondage, during the state of bondage, after the state of bondage, and before the state of mōksha, and during the state of mōksha. This is why a jeeva is always dependent on God irrespective of his state, he is said to be nitya-paratantra. The truth that "Without God's Grace, there is no brahma-sākshātkāra" is mentioned in other upanishats such as "atharvaṇa" (also known as "muṇḍaka")

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवेषाम्वृणुते तेन लभ्यः तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूम् स्वाम्"

॥६.२॥ - मुण्डक

nāyamātmā pravacanēna labhyo na mēdhayā na bahunā śrutēna | yamaivēṣamvṛṇutē tēna labhyaḥ tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇutē tanūm svām" ||6.2|| - muṇḍaka

mundakōpanishat instructs us that, just because one can lecture on Parabrahman, it does not mean he will get the sākshātkāra of Parabrahman. muṇḍaka teaches us that just because a person can give a lecture on sākshātkāra, it does not mean he will actually get that sākshātkāra. Just because a person is very intelligent, it does not mean he will get it. Just because a person is very familiar with and can recite all the veda, upanishats, all the eighteen chapters of the geethā, it does not mean he will get the direct knowledge of

Parabrahman.

Then what more is needed for it? This is answered as "यमैवेषम्वृणुते तेन लभ्यः yamaivēṣamvṛṇutē tēna labhyaḥ" (the one who is chosen by God, only he gets it). What happens for such a "chosen" person is answered as "तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूम् स्वाम् tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇutē tanūm svām" Parabrahman shows His Form to that chosen person. This "choosing" is called prasāda. The Will of God that releases a man is called prasāda. Also remember that there is no distinction between one quality of God such as His will, and another quality of God such as "His knowledge" or "His creatorship". Therefore, when we say, He wills it, He creates it, He knows it, etc all mean the same. There is no svagata-bheda in God. "icchā mātram prabhō sṛṣṭiḥ"- Creation happens by the mere will of God. (māndūkya upanishat).

A doubt may arise. If prasāda is the cause for mōksha, then why do we need jāna from shāstra-adhyayana? Ishwara-prasāda is also Ishwara-icchā. We have learnt that everything is "Ishāvāsyā" it means Ishwara-icchā is the cause for everything, which also means, that adhyayana is also due to Ishwara-icchā. Adhyayana is Ishwara-prasāda. From this it follows that, direct knowledge or sākshātkāra means sākshātkāra from Ishwara-prasāda. So, when we say shāstra leads to sākshātkāra it means, shāstra leading to Ishwara-prasāda which leads to sākshātkāra.

Because there is no release unless there is the Grace of God, nor is there the highest point of prasāda without knowledge. Therefore, inquiry into Brahman is indispensable. That a jnyāni is the dearest to Parabrahman is mentioned in geetā at several places.

"प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनो अत्यर्थं अहं स च मम प्रियः priyō hi jñāninō atyartha aha sa ca mama priyaḥ" says śrī Kṛishṇa in the geetā. (I am intensely dear to the person who has knowledge, he too is dear to Me).

So, whenever jāna is mentioned as the cause of mōksha, what is really meant is prasāda of Parabrahman.

There are several important points that we need to notice here:

1) The cause for sūrya-maṇḍala to be luminous and hence called "pātra" is because Parabrahman is in it in that form. Parabrahman's body is jyōtirmāya. From this it follows that He is sarva-prakāśhaka. (Hence Śruti calls Him deva elsewhere) It finally means that He is sarva-sṛṣṭiḥ-kartr. earlier mantras make it clear that the knowledge of His sarva-samhāra-kartrtva should be along with the knowledge of His sarva-sṛṣṭiḥ-kartrtva.

2) Parabrahman is Independent. He 'drinks' sarva-rasa means, He is in sarva-vastu in ānanda-rūpa. By

being in sarva-vastu in this manner, He is sarva-raksha-ka, the protector of all that exists. Only Parabrahman is sarva-shakta. Jeevātman does not have the complete knowledge of dravya, and hence he does not have the bhōga of vishayas, in the primary sense. Therefore, in the primary sense, Parabrahman has the vishaya-bhōga.

Refer to chāndōgya bhāṣya (eighth chapter):

इदं पश्यामि जिघ्राणीत्यपि जीव न वै विदुः । द्रव्याणां अपरिज्ञानात् वेदासौ पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ इति च ॥

"idam pashyāmi jighrāṇētyapi jeevā na vai viduhu | dravyāṇām aparijnyānāt vedāsou purushōttamahā || iti ca ||

The jīvātman does not have the complete jāna of dravya. Therefore, "I see this", "I smell this" in all such experiences, the jīvātman does not have the complete jāna; primarily it is only Parabrahman, Purushōttama that has such jāna. So teaches śrī vēdavyāsa in the bhāgavata.

3) Parabrahman who is tejō-rūpa, by being in Sun, He is sūrya-pravartaka. Knowing such a prakāśha rūpa Parabrahman means to hold him in heart. The indication of this 'holding in heart' is dhyāna of the form shravaṇa-manana-nidhidhyāsana. Shāstra calls one who has such a dhyāna, as bhakta. To 'see' Parabrahman who is in sūrya-maṇḍala means to 'see' Parabrahman who is eka everywhere. Refer to taittareeya which explicitly teaches this truth as "स यश्चायं पुरुषे यश्चासावादित्ये स एकः sa yaścāya puruṣe yaścāsāvādityē sa ēkaḥ"

4) The darshana of Parabrahman who is in Hridaya means the darshana of Parabrahman who is sarva-pravartaka and jyōtirmāya. That itself is the darshana of Parabrahman who is in sūrya-maṇḍala.

5) For a bhakta to have darshana of Parabrahman, Parabrahman Himself has to show Himself to that bhakta. Refer to muṇḍaka which explicitly teaches this truth as: "यमैवेषम्वृणुते तेन लभ्यः तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूम् स्वाम् yamaivēṣa vṛṇutē tēna labhyaḥ tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇutē tanū svām". In shāstra, a jñānee is called a bhakta (devotee). This usage of this word is not applicable to anyone else. Outside of shāstra, a devotee need not be a jñānee, but not so in shāstra. A student of shāstra should be aware of this and should not get confused with the colloquial usage of the term devotion.

6) What we studied in mantras 1-14 is indicated as prārthanā or 'prayer' in this 15th mantra. From this it follows that a 'prayer' cannot come from outside of shāstra. If the nature of prayer is distinct and different

from knowledge, then there would have been no need for shāstra at all. In this mantra, as we have seen so far, the knowledge coming from entire shāstra is given the name 'prayer' or prārthanā.

With this background, we will study the mantra # 15 as:

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्य अपिहितं मुखम् ।

तत् त्वम् पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥ १५ ॥

hiraṇmayēna pātrēṇa satyasya apihita mukham

| tat tvam pūṣan apāvṛṇu satya dharmāya dṛṣṭayē || 15 ||

Your Form which is of the nature of light (हिरण्मयेन hiraṇmayēna) which by being in all things enjoying svarūpa-ānanda and by being T he protector of all (पात्रेण pātrēṇa) such a Form of Yours (मुखम् mukham) which is Defectless and guṇapūrṇa (सत्यस्य satyasya) is in the Sun and is covered by it always (अपिहितं apihita).

Oh! Paramātman who is pūrṇa! (पूषन् pūṣan). Having only You, the sadguṇa-pūrṇa in my mind (सत्यधर्माय satyadharmāya), for me who is your devotee, (सत्यधर्माय satyadharmāya) for me to have that direct vision (दृष्टये dṛṣṭayē) by which I can have your direct knowledge (दृष्टये dṛṣṭayē) You make it uncovered (अपावृणु apāvṛṇu).

Notes:

1. Without the fittedness, there is no knowledge of svarūpa of Vedic Brahman, i.e., when there is no fittedness, the mantras that teach the svarūpa of Vedic Brahman won't be understood. Those without adhikāra (fittedness) will have a certain notion of God and certain opinions as to what veda should teach them, and mantras get understood by them according to 'their' notions and opinions and they are quite contented what they got, inspite of the fact that it is not the actual meaning that is intended by Veda.

2. The word 'पश्यति paśyati' is interpreted to mean 'knowledge'. It is that 'knowledge' that is called 'sākshātkāra'. From this, it is concluded that the ripened state of knowledge itself is sākshātkāra. This sākshātkāra should not be construed as the ordinary perception that does not demand knowledge behind it. When a pot is perceived by a man, he need not have the knowledge of the same pot. But the Paramātma sākshātkāra is ripened state of the knowledge of the Swarūpa of Parabrahman which is generated by a study of shāstra. This subtle point must be borne in mind, when we hear about someone who is supposed to have the direct knowledge of God, we need to first confirm if their

knowledge of God was the result of a study of shāstra and that the person in question has knowledge that is in a ripened state. Unless this is confirmed, we should not make them as governing 'our' knowledge. One who does not follow this rule, there won't be any guru-niyama at all for him and even when they appear to be familiar with shāstra, still what he has is what is called illegitimate study 'anyāya-adhyayna'.

3. sākshātkāra is not something that is going to occur by mere study. It occurs because of special Grace of God. There is a deeper meaning behind this statement. prasāda is not different from His icchā. Study of shāstra is also His icchā. Study is Ishwara prasāda. Thus, sākshātkāra is something that is the result of prasāda. Thus, when it is said, adhyayana leads to sākshātkāra what is meant is the prasāda caused by adhyayana causes mōksha. One should study जिज्ञासाधिकरण jījñāsādhikaraṇa of the brahma-sootras. One is released only by the prasāda of Parabrahman which is caused by the knowledge generated by inquiry.

4. If Ishwara-prasāda causes mōksha, then why insist on adhyayana? Such thinking is incorrect because, adhyayana is the language that teaches about Ishwara-svarūpa. Without adhyayana, Ishwara-svarūpa-sākshātkāra is simply not conceivable. Thus, Ishwara-prasāda itself is in the form of adhyayana. Thus, adhyayana is also Ishwara-prasāda. sākshātkāra is also Ishwara-prasāda. The cause-effect relationship between adhyayanā and sākshātkāra is also Ishwara-prasāda. Everything is Ishāvāsya. For the Grace of Parabrahman, prayer is essential. The proper understanding of this is the adhyayana which is in the form of shravaṇa-mānana-nidhidhyāsana.

5. This prayer is not the familiar laukika prayer. The study of veda that has been previously conducted is currently in this vaideeka prayer form. In other words, prayer is not different from study and study is not different from prayer. In this circumstance when study and prayer become one and the same, the fact that everything is given by īśā becomes explicitly clear. While understanding the fact that everything is Ishwara-prasāda, supporting that thought there is the conclusion i.e., the correct understanding that everything is ānanda-māyā, without any misery or delusion. The intent here is that all these ideas must be obtained as a result of a proper study of shāstra.

Mystics and Saints

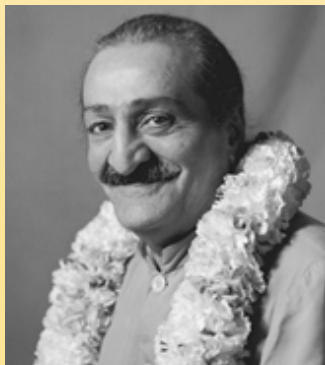
— by **Shreyas Devaraj**

Hazrat Baba Jan



A woman saint from Persia settled near Pune Cantonment had miraculous powers and worshipped by the military personnel. Her tomb is at the beginning of the Military Campus. She lived for 120 years and attained Samadhi in 1925.

Meher Baba



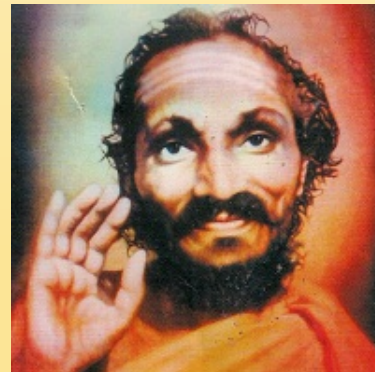
As a boy of 15, he went to Hazrat Baba Jan who directed him to meet Sai Baba at Shirdi. A great part of his life, he maintained silence and wrote on a slate several philosophical truths. He lived up to 1962 having travelled all over the globe.

Manik Prabhu



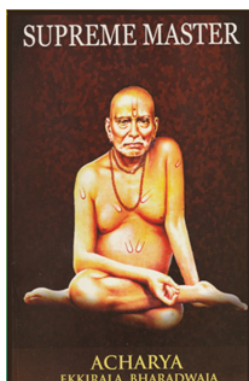
A Sai Baba contemporary, he lived near Gulbarga in Karnataka and attained Samadhi in 1867. He could not fill up the tumbler in which Baba sought alms. Even today, Manik Prabhu's Samadhi is a place where marriages are performed, and many civil disputes are resolved.

Sridhara Swami



He is considered to be a Datta incarnation and is Samadhi is in Vardahalli in Shivamoga district of Karnataka. He was a roaming saint having darshan of Samarth Ramdas. He never used to stay in any place for more than 20 hours.

BOOK REVIEW



Title : **Supreme Master**
Author : Acharya Ekkirala Bharadwaja
Publisher : Sree Gurupaduka Publications, C/o Sri Manga Bharadwaja Trust
 12-1-170/46P, "Bhakta Nivas", Hanuman Nagar, Jaipuri Colony, Nagole,
 Hyderabad - 500 068. Andhra Pradesh, India
 Phone: +91-40 20063300

Price : Rs. 60/-

This is a comprehensive biography of Akkalkot Maharaj by Acharya Ekkirala Bharadwaja. Akkalkot Maharaj lived in 19th century and is referred many a time in the Sai-Sat-Charithra by Sai baba and his devotees. Akkalkot Maharaj is a Datta incarnation and Sai baba himself has referred to him as one of his previous incarnations

Reviewed by : Lakshmi Narayana Sharma

In Moment of Ecstasy

O' Sai! When I have caught hold of your hand firmly
And surrendered to your heart and soul
How can the vessel within me remain empty?
It is another thing
The vessel is unaware of this fact
I am the Super Master,
I am the 'Truth' Incarnate,
I am the Pure Consciousness,
I am 'Bliss' Incarnate,
I am Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram,
Sat-Chita-Anand.

The Parbraham Parmeshwar am I,
The whole Existence is in me
And I am in Existence
I am the Yug Purush, Shuddha Chaitanya,
The currents of the joy flow from me
And my whole being emits the rays of Bliss.
Around me flows the ocean of Peace.

I am Love,
I am the Peace,
I am the Supreme Light,
I am Purna Purusha
The glory of the self am I
All are in me
The 'Punya' I am, the 'Paap' I am
I am 'Sadgati', I am 'Durgati'
Beyond me exists Nothing
I have recognized the Self in me
I am 'Sai – The Sat-Chita-Anand'.

I beseech you O' my Sai,
To come and occupy the seat
In the temple of my heart.
My eyes have hardened like stone
Awaiting your arrival.

— by **Sai Priya**

A true master like Sai Baba focuses on your state of being

— by **Sri Narasimha Swamiji**

One must understand the distinction between a master and a teacher. A teacher is interested in giving information, while a master works on one's transformation. A teacher is one whose knowledge dwells only in the intellect, whereas a master is one whose knowledge descends from the 'intellect' to 'feeling' to 'being'. A teacher is more interested in a tradition, but a master is more concerned about the truth irrespective of what tradition one belongs to.

In the Mahabharata, Krishna's communication with Arjun is more from being to being than intellect to intellect. The master is not focused on information but on one's state of 'being', so that existential ignorance can be destroyed. A master's device is like a window leading one to the sky. By surrendering to the master, one is led to God. The Hassidic saying goes, 'When God gives something, He does not give to you, but through you.' The role of a master is to awaken, and in that awakening, one becomes an absence but filled with Divine presence. This is a Divine art, to be absent and at the same time be present. This is one of the greatest paradoxes of spirituality. A true master like Sai Baba disturbs one's inner sleep and makes one see dreams as dreams, falsehood as falsehood, whereas a teacher leads one to dream and philosophizes one's sleep. Therefore, there is a distinction between a master and a teacher. A true master pushes you to your inner depth and does not make you depend on him. Thus, Adi Shankaracharya says, "You will come to experience the Divine that dwells in your own



heart." A student would always like to cling to a master. A teacher unconsciously or consciously exploits this inner state of a student.

In Buddhism, there is an expression that is said to students at the end of the entire teaching, 'If you come across a Buddha, kill him.' The teachings and meanings

do not depend on an external Buddha.

It is easy to worship someone, but the master like Sai Baba wants you to be in a 'state of a Buddhahood' and not just in the form of a Buddha. Hence, the emphasis is that all clinging should drop from students' lives. The path is one of sanyas, not in changing the dress but discovering true inner freedom in one's own being.

"Detach your mind from the object of the senses and concentrate on that All- pervading Power. Your meditation will be successful, and you will achieve the goal"

To discover this, one must have inner fitness. Only then one's inner apparatus will be able to receive this Divine wisdom. This inner preparatory is the 'discipline of the sense-organs and the mind'. The sense organs when not disciplined will bring unnecessary impressions from the outer world and fill the mind with garbage. Such a mind is a scattered mind. But an abiding and not a scattered mind is a spiritual necessity. One can discipline one's mind to be abiding in the here and now. Such an abiding mind is a pure mind in which one can see the Divine in one's heart. This is what Sai Baba wanted us to follow.

May All Creatures Everywhere Be Happy

— by **Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji**

From the most venomous cobras to harmless little water snakes, you find an entire array of snakes in India. Snakes play an important role in balancing the world's ecological system. Sanatan Dharma teaches us to see all creatures – snakes included – as part of the one Supreme Cosmic Power. Therefore, we even have temples for snakes, where they are worshipped.

Snakes are predators. Their presence controls the population of rats and rodents, which can spread diseases and destroy crops. At the same time, snakes are also part of the food chain. They are food for birds of prey, like eagles and herons. Thus, Nature ensures ecological balance in its own systematic way. All man must do is stop obstructing this divine system.

“Whoever frequently repeats My Name his sins will be burnt. I consider him more virtuous than the virtuous, who constantly hums My Name.” – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 27, Ovi 85-91)

It is in this context we should strive to understand the ancient truth voiced by our sages: Vasudhaiva kutumbakam – the world is one big family. A human body has many organs, each with its own specific role to play in maintaining the harmonious functioning of the whole. Just as all our individual organs are not separate from our body, similarly, all the sundry creatures in creation are not separate from the world. The world is one organic body; each species of plant and animal is a part of that body. From this perspective, where does man get the right to infringe upon the life of other creatures? They have the same rights to life on earth as we humans do. In fact, it is only when we understand and respect this truth and behave in alignment with it that we become worthy of calling ourselves ‘human’.

Once when a sage was meditating, a king approached him to ask for water. Being in deep meditation, the sage didn't hear the king. The king became angry and rested a dead snake around the sage's shoulders. When the sage's son returned and saw this, he was enraged. He cursed him, “Whoever did this will die in seven days from the bite of Takshak, the king of serpents.”

After this curse bore fruit and the king died, his son decided to take revenge by conducting a sacrifice wherein all snakes of the world were to be offered into the fire. But during the sacrifice,

another sage told the king's son that what he was doing was wrong. The sage imparted spiritual wisdom to him. Happy to have received the gyan, the king's son asked the sage what he wanted in return. The sage asked him to stop the sacrifice. This day came to be celebrated as Nag Panchami. Such celebrations are a reminder to love all living creatures and to never destroy them out of hatred or in the name of taking revenge.

In olden days, every home would have a sacred grove with a small temple and pond. Trees there would have medicinal qualities, and the breeze blowing through their leaves would rejuvenate the body and mind. Insects and reptiles populated these groves, and termites would make their mounds there. Snakes made their home in holes underneath those termite mounds. To dilute the toxicity of the snake's venom, people would make offerings of milk mixed with turmeric. On special days, snake-charmers were hired to lure snakes out with their pipe music. Snakes would then be bathed with milk. This was said to curb the potency of their venom. In those days, people regarded all creatures with reverence and awe. It is love that eventually turns into worship.

“If you recite ‘Sai, Sai’, always, I will take you beyond the seven seas. If you believe in these words; you will certainly be benefited.” – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 13, Ovi 12)

Today, even when throwing food out, most people do not think of offering a ball of rice to the crow. Our forests are being destroyed, and our homes do not have any temples in their yards.

Snakes are being deprived of their natural habitats – termite mounds and wooded areas. As a result, they enter our living spaces. When we step on them, they bite us out of fear and pain. If we are careful, neither will we get bitten nor will we have to hurt and kill snakes.

Nothing is to be rejected, everything has a proper place in this cosmos. May grace protect snakes and save them from being endangered. May we all also develop the right mentality to facilitate this. Let us remember the primary prayer of Sanatan Dharma: ‘Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu’ – May all creatures everywhere be happy.

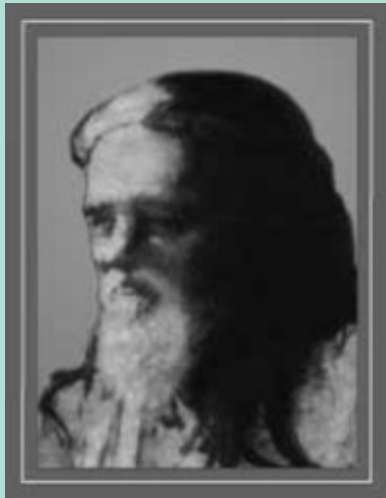


Adoration to KUSHA BHAV

— by **D Sankaraiah**

Kusha Bhav alias Krishnaji Kasinath Joshi was the son of Kashinath Padmakar Joshi from Mirajgaon, Maharashtra. He belonged to a poor family and studied in local elementary school in vernacular and became a schoolteacher with an income of Rupees 5 to 7 per month. He was also trained in the hereditary duties of the village priest. However, he did not have a liking for these avocations. But he had a flair for bhakti and started searching for a Guru. His Guru was Datta Maharaj. Under the guidance of his Guru, he learnt yoga and various Asanas. He also learnt Pranayama and the rousing of the Kundalini Shakti. In spite of all these practices, he was not satisfied with his achievement, and he still wanted to know and practice some other mantras which would give him worldly powers. This was due to his peculiar thinking. He was aware that his Guru knew such Mantras and approached his Guru through his persistent solicitations. Seeing his stubbornness in his approach, his Guru most unwillingly imparted to him such Mantras. He went through the necessary Japa and sadhana and practiced them as prescribed for the required number of times and became an adept in these Mantras. He also wore an iron bangle and succeeded in acquiring the required powers. Based on these powers acquired, he could simply utter a mantra and order the production of sweetmeats, pedas and the like and the articles ordered would at once appear in his hands. He would thus produce certain things and show to others and the items so produced were distributed among the admiring public. Such items produced through the Mantras should be distributed to others and should not at all be used by oneself. He was also capable of destroying by exorcising the evil spirits of others. Of course, he was able to produce these items through his power of Mantras and there was no role of any evil spirits.

All these things had happened within his



twenty-two years. When he was about twenty-two years old, he was thus fully armed with these magical powers. His Guru decided to move to the Himalayas and wanted to live there alone and spend his remaining lifetime at the Himalayas. He moved with Kusha up to Delhi and from there his Guru wanted to proceed further alone. His Guru also told Kusha that there was one Sai Baba in Shirdi, whom he referred to as his elder brother and that Kusha should go to him and do whatever Sai Baba would direct him to do. With these words, his Guru went away and disappeared from him. Subsequently, Kusha had not seen or heard anything further about that Guru since then.

In 1908, Kusha went to Shirdi and had darshan of Sai Baba. But Baba was against Kusha exercising his powers through Mantras and production of pedas etc., and also his wearing of the iron bangle. Baba asked him to break his iron bangle, stop exercising powers and production of pedas. Baba also ordered him to sit in a corner of the masjid and go on reading Dasabodha of Ramdas Swami. As Baba's orders were strict, Kusha complied with them and broke and threw away his iron bangle and stopped production of pedas etc., through his powers of Mantras.

He stopped the practice of those worldly powerful mantras that produced things and started his life afresh by begging food in Shirdi village and was not having any specific shelter. He obeyed Baba's order to sit in a corner of the masjid and read Dasabodha during the day time. During nights, he used to sleep wherever he could find some place to lie down. Baba did not give him any mantra upadesh. Baba advised him not to use his powers of Mantras and Kusha sincerely followed Baba's directions.

During 1908, there were only few visitors to Shirdi from Bombay but only the local people from Shirdi village used to go to Baba now and then and ask Baba for remedies to their illness. At that time



Baba was giving Udi to them from his ever-burning Dhuni for curing their illness. Baba was also not asking for dakshina from all the visitors but was asking dakshina only from a selected few for buying fuel for the Dhuni or some other items of necessity. At that time, Nanasaheb Nimonkar was often seen with Baba. Whoever was visiting Baba, Baba used to

advise them to follow their own God, their religion but have faith in God. Baba would also give darshan to each visitor in the form of the God whom the visitor was devoted to (ishta daiva).

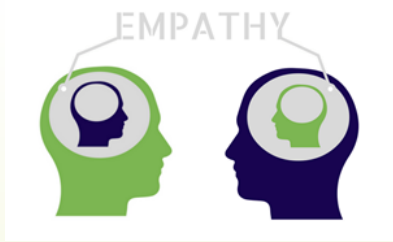
Kusha stayed in Shirdi for three years at a stretch with Baba. During the next nine years, he frequently visited Shirdi. On one occasion, Baba told him to visit and have darshan of a person with three heads. Based on Baba's expression, he took it that Baba wanted him to visit and have darshan of Datta at Gangapur. Every year he was visiting Gangapur twice and had darshan of Datta, once on Guru Poornima Day and again on Magha Poornima Day. During another one of Kusha's visit, Baba asked him to do 108 parayans of Guru Charitra, taking three days to finish each parayan. Accordingly, Kusha completed 108 parayans in Gangapur by staying there for about 11 months.

After completing Guru Charitra parayan, Kusha visited Shirdi and at that time, Baba told him that it was not necessary for him to come to Shirdi several times, traveling all the way to Shirdi for his darshan. Baba said that He was there in his (native) place also and told him about the specific location in Mirajgaon where He was there. Then Kusha went to the specific place in Mirajgaon and got the area cleared and found a Samadhi.

Kusha then spent his remaining life totally devoted to propagating about Baba and spreading information of Baba's miracles and powers. Thus, he did lot of service to the public in the name of Baba while he propagated Baba's mission and miracles to the public.

Give ONE Word Answer

1. When did Dasganu pass away?
2. When did Upasani Maharaj attain samadhi?
3. Where is the memorial for Manik Prabhu situated?
4. Where is Gangir Maharaj's samadhi situated?
5. Where is the Samadhi of Narayan Maharaj?
6. When did Tatya Patil pass away?
7. Who sculpted Baba's marble idol?
8. When did Kanu Baba attain Maha Samadhi?
9. In who's name University is established in Amaravati?
10. From where does Nimonkar hail?
11. Who is Booty's son in law?
12. What is the name of Nana Saheb's daughter?



NEUROLOGY of Compassion and EMPATHY

— by **Dr. G. R. Vijayakumar**

“**M**editate always on my formless nature, which is Knowledge Incarnate, Consciousness and Bliss”

The human brain is programmed for and capable of subtlety, nobility, and benevolence. It has a center that bestows a unique and divine attribute to man. A neural substrate that generates and regulates compassion and empathy. Extensive neuroimaging research has associated activation of a core salience network, involved in the processing of affective, painful stimuli. Comprising two key regions, the anterior insula and anterior cingulate, activation of this network has been implicated in effecting compassion and empathy.

Empathy and compassion are the need of the hour, and humans perched atop the apex of the evolutionary pyramid, can surely use its power of discretion to inculcate and imbibe these virtues.

Mechanisms that mediate compassion involve using the sense of self as a reference point to perceive the world and gain information about other people's mental states. However, applying these self-referential projection mechanisms in situations where it is inappropriate can result in egocentrically biased judgments.

Understanding how egocentrism arises has become increasingly important and relevant. Egocentrism and narcissism have been steadily increasing over the last decades, with some scholars even talking about a 'narcissism epidemic'.

Egocentrism and narcissism arise out of a false sense of identification of the self. A self that regales in sensory gratification. A self that is utterly hedonistic and in relentless pursuit of power, gratification, and domination.

The quest for gratification is boundless and insatiable. Satiety based on extrinsic agents is inherently flawed. Satiety that requires constant stimulation mutates to lust, and eventually is doomed.

A mouse experiment, where an electrode was placed in the pleasure center bears testimony to this. The mouse was placed in a box that had a lever. On pressing the lever, the electrode delivered a micro current to its pleasure center. Once the mouse realized that pressing the lever resulted in pleasure, it kept on pressing the lever repeatedly.

There is an intrinsic pathway that does not rely on any external stimulation to reach a state of bliss and contentment. Activation of these pathways is what spirituality is all about.

Egocentrism and egocentric behavior have the inherent potential to unleash large scale destruction and devastation, if they fester in the psyche of political and religious leaders.

Political or religious ideology is quickly degenerating into an all-consuming obsessive narcissism that reeks of intolerance. An intolerance that will not hesitate to effect destruction in an attempt to subjugate.

“Wherever you are, and whatever you may be doing, always bear it in mind that I shall continue to be informed of the minutest details of your deeds.” – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 3, Ovi 143-148)

Temperance, compassion, empathy, tolerance are the benchmarks of evolution of the human brain. The brain is capable of not just intellectual evolution but more importantly of emotional evolution. There has never been a greater need to affect a paradigm shift. A shift from the segregated, hegemony of ritualistic religion, to a far more holistic and inclusive spiritual harmony. Spirituality, that's universal and reveals a path to knowledge of the Self. Knowledge of the Self that transcends the physical form. Knowledge that liberates from the ego and all egocentrism. Knowledge that will unite mankind to a cohesive, collective consciousness and usher in an era of peace and bliss. An understanding that all duality and diversity is merely a manifestation of a fundamental non-duality. A non-duality that's forever in a state of blissful awareness.



Have you ever wondered who you are?

— by **Maheshwari S Kumar**

Seeing the world around you fall apart, and all endearing bonds wither away like blossoms hitting their age of senescence in the autumn's fall, you have witnessed the brutality of death. You never knew how fragile life is until the pandemic swung you like a pendulum, compelling you to oscillate between life and death. This must have certainly raised questions like: 'Does God even exist?' 'Who am I?' 'What is beyond life and death and if at all will I be liberated from this vicious loop?'

The Bhagwad Gita gives insight into our personality. The various aspects of our inner working are knowledge, action, actor, intellect, consistency, and happiness. Each of these can be sattvic - pure; rajasic - passionate; or tamasic - indolent. This analysis helps identify our strengths and weaknesses. With a little effort you can knock off tamas, refine rajas and improve your performance.

"Those devotees who have become one with me with heart and soul, they will, naturally, be bound to be happy by listening to the story of my life." – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 3, Ovi 17-18)

With sattvic knowledge you see the One behind the varied. You focus on the Spirit, not the changing aspects of life. You harmonize with the entire world and do not feel insecure, threatened, or competitive. You build teams and are successful and happy.

When you are body-conscious, you see maximum separateness. Identify with the mind, you emote with the family. Move to the intellect and you feel one with the nation. Finally, identify with the Spirit and all differences dissolves. You see yourself in all beings. You celebrate their achievements and share in their grief.

Rajasic knowledge creates differences where there is oneness. You see distinctions and demarcations. Petty politics takes over at the cost of larger interests. Tamasic knowledge is no knowledge at all. It is dogmatism and fanaticism.

You perform the best action when you fulfil obligations without attachment or craving the fruit. You do what needs to be done. Rajasic action is driven by desire and craving for the result. Tamasic action springs from delusion, with no regard to loss or injury to yourself or others.

A sattvic actor is enthusiastic, cheerful, and efficient. Free from attachment and ego and unaffected by success or failure. The focus is on the higher ideal. The rajasic actor is selfish, desirous, greedy, impure, hurtful to others and affected by success and failure. A tamasic actor is crude, stubborn, deceitful, malicious, lazy, and procrastinating.

That intellect which knows clearly – what to do and what not to do, fear and fearlessness, bondage and



liberation – is sattvic. You are never confused. A rajasic intellect has an incorrect understanding of right and wrong. It drives you down the materialistic and sensual path, and to sorrow. Tamasic intellect is no intellect at all, seeing right as wrong and vice versa.

If you are agitated and disturbed, something is amiss within. Yet, you yell and blame others.

Sattvic consistency is when every breath, thought, emotion and action is directed to the goal of spiritual evolution. Rajasic firmness comes from attachment, which is selfishness. Attachment spells suffering. Tamasic firmness clings to negativities like fear, despair, and arrogance.

"I tell you, whoever takes my name with love, I will fulfil his wishes and increase his devotion." – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 3, Ovi 11)

True happiness is painful in the beginning but leads to everlasting happiness in the end. False happiness gives instant pleasure but soon becomes sorrow. Ignorant of this you choose instant gratification, signing up for a life of misery. Tamasic happiness comes from sloth, indifference, and sleep.

Sattvic renunciation is performance of obligatory duty giving up attachment and anxiety for the fruit. False renunciation is giving up things when they are painful and wanting them back once the pain is removed. Tamasic renunciation is giving up obligatory duty because of delusion.

With concerted effort your personality gets a lift. And you cruise on the path to happiness and growth.

"Abandoning all the million clever and cunning ways, recall always 'Sai, Sai'. You will be able to cross the worldly ocean. Have no doubts." – Shri Sai Baba (Chapter 10, Ovi 135-136)

A message of Sai Baba's blessings

— by **Swami Shantananda Puri**

“You may ask where I am now and how I can meet you now. But I am within your heart, and we can meet without any effort”.
– Shri Sai Baba (Chapter 44, Ovi 162)

The science of aesthetics is a special characteristic expression of all microcosms. This inner spirit of aesthetic science leads all microcosms to seek a congenial environment for their psychic expression, for all unit minds are searching a totally congenial environment for their development. This development leads to a state of psychic balance, attained as a result of all our actions and reactions. While seeking to attain this state of psychic balance, we have invented the science of aesthetics.

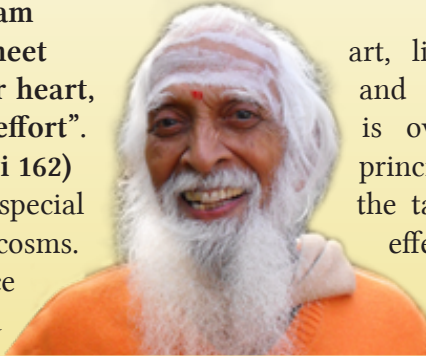
Everything in this universe and this entire universe also is moving around the Macrocosmic Nucleus. This movement is from imperfection to perfection, and this element of dynamism is the essence of aesthetics.

The realization of aesthetic feeling is not a science, rather it is a high-grade art. When we say that human beings have attained peace in life, this subtle feeling of joy in aesthetic science is psycho-physical.

Now the question is, is this joy only psycho-physical? No, it is not; it is both psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual. When the mind seeks a subtle feeling of joy without expecting the fruits of its action, this is certainly psycho-physical, but when this experience of joy moves in a well-defined way towards a goal, then it is certainly psycho-spiritual.

Whether it is psycho-physical or psycho-spiritual, clash is inevitable, and this clash occurs amongst the static, mutative and sentient principles. This clash goes on and on. Due to this clash, when the movement is towards the sentient force, that is, when the mutative force overpowers the static force and the sentient force overpowers the mutative force, in that case the psychic movement is called psycho-spiritual. This type of movement gives birth to true art and science; whereas that knowledge which creates numerous obstacles and problems for society is merely an expression of mean propensities of the mind.

When nothing great is created, then cheap



sentiments emerge for low-grade art, literature, architecture and sculpture; and when the sattva, sentient principle, is overpowered by the rajas, mutative principle, and the mutative principle by the tamas, static principle, the cumulative effect is complete chaos. That is why this clash goes on and on, and it occurs not only within the human mind but also within all the unit and collective minds of the entire universe.

The duty of all educated and talented people of society is to arrive at a firm conclusion as to what they should do, how they will lead society along the righteous path, and how ultimately they will establish society in the subtle realm of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram – truth, consciousness and beauty. This clash amongst the three binding principles will continue eternally, but it can certainly be channelled along a particular direction so that the mutative force cannot defeat the sentient force, and the static force cannot defeat the mutative force.

Now, within the realm of these three binding principles, society will have to find the path for true progress through proper planning and struggle. Without this, the future of humanity is dark. But you should bear in mind that pessimism or the complex of hopelessness is not the essence of this universe; optimism is the goal of Universal Humanity.



“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)

How is Sadguru Different from Saints

— by **Sunanda Ananth**



Guru Purnima is a festival traditionally observed to honor one's preceptor, spiritual guru in particular, from whom the disciple has received mantra-initiation. According to the Hindu calendar, it is observed on Purnima, full moon day, in the lunar month of Ashadh, June-July. On this day, the disciple remembers his guru with deep feelings of devotion and resolves to follow the path shown by him with utmost tenacity.

Though there have been countless sages and saints who rose to great spiritual heights, yet it is important to distinguish them from a sadguru, a perfect master, who has attained the exalted state of Self-realization -- oneness with the Supreme Being.

"Such pious persons have become my followers whose sins have been destroyed and they have understood me." – (Chap 13, Ovi 11-13)

In Sri Guru Gita, Shiv, in response to a question raised by his consort, Parvati, says that the Supreme Brahman is none other than the Sadguru who is regarded as the grace-bestowing power of the Divine like Sai Baba. Such a realized Being takes shelter in the body like a traveller who takes abode in a guest house on a purely temporary basis. He is devoid of all attachment to the objects of the world and harbours no trace of duality. On the basis of his realization, he recognises the Conscious Self everywhere — both in animate and inanimate objects — and draws no

distinction among his devotees on the basis of caste, class, gender, and religious affiliation. Just as the prana, despite operating within the body, remains different from it, an enlightened sadguru lives in the body while inwardly remaining completely absorbed in the bliss of the Supreme Self.

The first syllable, 'gu', in the word 'guru' represents maya, the power that deludes, which poses as a big impediment to the seeker's effort to attain God-realization. The second syllable, 'ru', represents the Supreme Light of Consciousness. The word 'guru' thus indicates the rise of the Sun in the form of knowledge of the Self. When the grace of a sadguru descends upon the disciple, the dark clouds of maya get dispersed and the Light of Pure Consciousness shines forth in all its glory.

According to yogic scriptures, the greatest quality of a sadguru is his power and authority to awaken the dormant Kundalini within the seeker. Swami Muktananda says that it is only when, by sadguru's grace, the Kundalini within the seeker is stirred awake that his inner eye of knowledge opens.

The Kundalini, when awakened, begins to move up the central channel of the seeker, purging him of all impurities. She ultimately unites with Shiv in sahasrar, the highest spiritual center in the brain. When this happens, the seeker experiences in deep meditation the Blue Rays of Consciousness enveloping the entire universe. This sublime experience bestows upon the seeker spiritual enlightenment, liberating him in the process from the unending process of transmigration.

"The whole universe is my home. I am myself Vasudev and all pervading God. I am myself the Parabrahma." – (Chapter 9, Ovi 47)

The sadguru thus leads the seeker from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, and elevates him to the level of a siddha, a perfect being. We may conclude with Verse 33 of Sri Guru Gita which says: "Salutations to the sadguru who is Shiv, the first cause of the universe, the bridge to cross the ocean of worldliness, the source of all knowledge."

Katha Upanishad on Nachiketas' tryst with death

— by **Usha Ranganathan**

The dialogue between Nachiketas and Yama in the 'Katha Upanishad' takes one directly into an awareness of the mystery of life and death, and the compelling need to search for the inner Self while we are alive in this body. The reality of death awaits us all and we have to prioritize our choices quickly. The Upanishad states that our failure to realize our essential nature now may result in a long cycle of rebirths. The dialogue is amongst the earliest expositions of the theory of transmigration and rebirth.

The reflections of the Upanishad are woven into the story of a ten-year-old boy, Nachiketas, who is wished away to Yama, God of death, in a fit of rage by his father Gautam, while in the middle of a sacrificial ceremony.

"I am in bondage to him who does not eat or drink anything without offering it to me first and who constantly meditates upon me. I act according to his wishes." – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 44, Ovi 151-154)

Nachiketas gets determined to go meet death itself. He waits for Yama for three days and three nights at his abode. On his return, Yama apologizes for having kept him waiting and decides to grant him three boons.

Nachiketas thinks of his father and asks Yama to relieve his father of his emotional distress at having had to lose his son in his fit of anger. Nachiketas then asks Yama to impart him knowledge of the lokas -- heavenly worlds, where life is free from all the sorrows of the Earth. Yama is happy to grant him both these boons.

Nachiketas then startles Yama with his third boon, asking him the secret of death, is there life after death? Is there an eternal Spirit behind the body? Yama is taken aback at these questions and tells Nachiketas not to ask for this boon, as Gods themselves have not grasped this secret fully. Yama tries hard to distract the young boy by offering him the boon of heavenly and material powers and temptations. But Nachiketas is adamant.

Yama finally relents and maps the path to



understand this secret, stating how each human has to first choose between the path of Preyas, which is pleasurable, and the path of Shreyas, the path of reflection, which is constantly challenging us. And we all are the outcome of our choices. The Upanishad exhorts us to follow the Shreyas path, even though it is 'like a sharp edge of a razor, difficult to pass over'.

Yama tells Nachiketas how our karma, deeds and our knowledge, experience, get imprinted in our Consciousness, the witness of all our actions and thoughts, and how both these values will decide which womb or body we will take, to continue on the unfinished journey towards the Self.

"I constantly care for him who only longs for me and for him no one is equal to me. I act according to his wishes." – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 44, Ovi 151-154)

The Katha Upanishad asks us to reflect whether we are using this present body for this uplifting purpose it was meant for or are we using this body-machine to entertain ourselves with the world of senses and the mind.

Freedom from suffering, from the cycle of birth and death is possible, in this birth now, if we are willing. If we choose to postpone the decision, we will remain entangled in the workings of karma. 'Uttishta, Jagrata' – Arise, Awake – is the clarion call of the Katha, to choose wisely and come home to the Self in this rare human birth itself.

Dr. CHIDAMBARAM PILLAY

— by **Ramaswamy Sheshadri**

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

"Though I am bodily present at this place and you may be beyond the seven seas, and doing anything there, I am aware of it immediately." – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 15, Ovi 67-73)

Baba used to take on himself much suffering on behalf of his devotees who were passing through inevitable karma due to their actions in earlier lives. This Pillay suffered once very badly from guinea-worms. He said to Kakasaheb Dixit, "The pain is most excruciating and unbearable. I prefer death to it. This pain, I know, is for repaying past Karma, but go to Baba and tell Him to stop the pain and transfer the working of my past Karma to ten future births of mine." Mr. Dixit went to Baba and told him Pillay's request. Then Baba, being moved by his request, said to Dixit, "Tell him to be fearless. Why should he suffer for ten births? In ten days, he can work out the sufferings and consequences of his past Karma. While I am here to give him temporal



and spiritual welfare, why should he pray for death? Bring him here on somebody's back and let us work and finish his sufferings once for all." The doctor was brought in that condition and was seated on Baba's right side, where Fakir Baba always sat. Baba gave him his bolster and said, "Lie calmly here and be at ease. The true remedy is, that the result of past actions has to be suffered and got over. Our Karma is the cause of our happiness and sorrow; therefore, put

up with whatever comes to you. Allah (God) is the sole Dispenser and Protector, always think of Him. He will take care of you. Surrender to His feet with body, mind, wealth and speech, i.e., completely and then see what He does." Dr. Pillay said in return that Nanasaheb had put a bandage over the leg, but Dr. Pillay found no relief. "Nana is a fool," replied Baba. "Take off that bandage or else you will die. Now a crow will come and peck you, and then you will recover." While this conversation was going on, one Abdul, who always cleaned the masjid and trimmed the lamps, turned up in the masjid. While Abdul was attending to his work of trimming, his foot accidentally fell upon the stretched leg of Dr. Pillay. The leg was already swollen and when Abdul's foot fell upon it and pressed it, all the seven guinea-worms were squeezed out at once. The pain became quite unbearable, and Dr. Pillay bawled out loudly. After some time, he calmed down and began to sing and cry alternately. Then Pillay enquired when the crow was coming for pecking. Baba said, "Did you not see the crow? He won't come again. Abdul was the crow. Now go and rest yourself in the Wada and you will be soon all right." By application of the Udi externally and by its intake with water, and without taking any other

treatment or medicine, the disease was completely cured in ten days as promised by Baba.

Baba's life was replete with several instances where Baba Himself took over the illness/suffering of the devotees and reduced or eliminated the karma of the devotees and in the process Baba Himself underwent the suffering instead of by the devotee. Baba would also spread over the severity of the karma of the devotees in such a way that the devotees could be in a position to bear easily the spread-over karma. All these steps would result in the happiness of the devotees.

Baba always said that one should see him in all creations of almighty, be it a dog, cat, a pig or a bird or any other creature. He displayed his generosity and magnanimity by protecting a small white dog which was rabid and was causing fear amongst the residents of Shirdi. When being chased by the villagers, Baba reprimanded them for being so cruel with a helpless creature. He cured the rabid and protected it from the villagers who were chasing it to be done with it. Dr. Pillay and Jayker were witness to this act of mercy of Baba as they were present in Dwarakamai then. This incident happened during May 1917. The rabid dog took shelter in Dwarakamai hiding behind Baba. Pillay and Jayker understood that even animals and creatures knew that Baba would protect them as he was God.

Upasani Baba, while forgetting the glorious future promised by Baba, felt that he would soon die in 1912-13 in Shirdi and with this feeling he told Dr. Pillay that he was being tortured like a dumb brute. Dr. Pillay was close to Upasani Baba who used to vent his feelings to the doctor. On another occasion, when Upasani Baba was in Shirdi, he was starving without food almost for about a year during 1913-

14. His body was sturdy and even when he was starving, his bodily frame did not shrink but he lost considerable weight. And even at that time also, he was capable of drawing stone rollers on the road. Dr. Pillay used to examine his pulse rate at that time and found it at 40 per minute in April 1913 before starving and at 20 per minute in July 1913 during the course of starving. Even during that time also, he was capable of doing any hard labor work. Such was his energy that was provided by Baba's Grace. Baba also indicated that Upasani Baba was reaching the highest point in the spiritual path during July-August 1913. However, Upasani Baba decided to leave Shirdi stealthily with the help from Dr Pillay and Ganapat Rao of Shinde even without completing the 4-year novitiate period in Shirdi under the direction of Baba. Having left Shirdi, Upasani Baba visited Shinde, Nagpur, Kharagpur, and several other places of pilgrimage.

Thus Dr. Pillay was treating the devotees and other general public by giving medicines and at that time the general public was moving as a team under the Divine Leadership of Baba. Dr. Pillay, being a doctor himself, was cured for his buboes by the Doctor of Doctors- Sai Baba. Pillay reposed total faith in Baba and followed his directions. He also secured a very special position in Baba's darbar and lived close to Baba. He was a truly blessed soul.

You should always bow down to that ME who thus resides in your heart. I am also the same ME who resides in the heart of all beings. Therefore, whomsoever you come across, at home, outside or anywhere in the course of life, I am within them, and I am myself present in them." – Shri Sai Baba (Chap 15, Ovi 67-73)

Children's Corner

Beloved Children,
Om Namō Sainathaya

Sai Baba says –
“If you recite ‘Sai, Sai’,
always, I will take you be-
yond the seven seas. If you
believe in these words; you
will certainly be benefit-
ed.”

– Shri Sai Baba
(Chap 13, Ovi 12)



Weakening one's weakness and strengthening one's strength is an art, and perfecting this art, is wise living. Every corporate executive should be alert to identify one's weakness and strength. Only then can one capitalise on one's strength and checkmate or weaken one's weakness.

So often, one's strength goes unnoticed, and hence, one does not reach the peak of accomplishment. There is a psychological laziness, which makes one not to see what lies inside.

I have heard an incident involving an old man. He was selling helium filled balloons for a living. His business, like any other, had its ups and downs. Whenever his business was dull, he would release a few balloons of different colours to catch the attention of children.

Likewise, to bolster his business, he released a few balloons on one occasion. A boy, noticing balloons of different colours up in the sky, asked, “If a black balloon is released, will it also go up?” The old man with love told him, “It is not what is outside which makes the balloon go up but what is inside.”

This is true for everyone. Our internal attitudes, positivity and alert-

ness make us go up.

Don't let anyone stop you. One can stop you only temporarily by making negative comments. One can, with inner alertness, peak one's strength and soar higher.

An elephant, from the days it was a calf, was tied to a pillar with a chain. When it grew up, although it had the strength to lift even a one-ton load, it continued to feel that it couldn't free itself of its chain. This was due to its conditioning. Many adults behave like circus elephants. What ties them down is their mind. Our biggest weakness is not being inwardly alert, and we are lost in doing things mechanically. Our relationships, expectations, disappointments, and anger are mechanical. Let us recollect the teaching of the wise. Self-remembering is a powerful practice. Ask always, ‘Am I mechanical or a conscious being?’ On and off, ask this question and look within. Also ask, ‘Am I in proper communication with others and the self? Is there real affection? Am I listening genuinely?’ Be in the domain of the question and look within.

In order to listen, we need to keep our prejudices, conclusions, likes and dislikes aside and then listen. Are we not listening with all our conclusions, prejudices, likes and dislikes? In that process, is there pure listen-

ing? Most of us listen in the backdrop of hurts, regrets, and resentments. Hence, there is resistance. Our daily worries, fears and greed prevent us from factual listening.

Is it not true that one's mind is so noisy with one's inner disorder? In such a

state, when a boss or colleague is saying something, how can factual listening be possible? Since the mind is crowded, there is always a distortion. And because of this, one translates what is said to what one knows. Hence, one's listening is not factual but fractured. When listening is at fault, one's relationship in office is in disorder. Can one be extremely alert to all this? Awake and arise to the world of inner alertness.

Baba say's “Wherever you are, and whatever you may be doing, always bear it in mind that I shall continue to be informed of the minutest details of your deeds”.

(Sai Sat Charita Chap 3,
Ovi 143-148)

Yours Sai Babaly
Sai Aura Team





Complimentary copy. Not for sale.