

Aura of Shirdi Sai

25th Issue



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE

April 2024

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SaiAura
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A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

AUM SAI RAM

Greetings to all the readers, editorial members, and back-office staff of SAI AURA.

As we bring out the 25th issue in April 2024 our Editorial Board requested me to pen a few words as people around the world will celebrate Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, and the other customary celebrations welcoming the new season, the festival, to mark the admixture of happiness and grief, victory of good over evil, of light over darkness.

There exists another light studied by saints and mystics since time immemorial – the inner Light and that is Sainath Parabrahman. This inner Light can be experienced without the help of any technology or outer aids because Sai Maharaj resides within us.

Sai Maharaj lit many lamps in the mosque where he stayed. Many people follow the ritual of lighting candles and lamps. It illustrates the importance of lighting the lamp within us – and celebrating the festival of the light of the Soul. Experience of this inner Light helps us unravel the deepest mysteries of life.

As long as we are in a state of transience grief and countless other afflictions will always be waiting outside our door. Every time someone or something inside our orbit is snatched away from us, we grieve. It is an automatic response. The truth is, nothing can be lost because we are everything and we have everything, but the realization of this Oneness is a mighty task. So, we must look at ways of dealing with grief.

Grief doesn't need to be addressed in isolation. It is part of a complex tapestry of afflictions. According to Sai Maharaj, there can be a single approach to dealing with any movement arising inside. Once grief is overcome, every other human pattern will be simultaneously resolved too. There is a domino effect to inner transformation, but we cannot delude ourselves; the 'hard yards' must be done first. This work is a perfect path for sublime living as devotees of Sai Maharaj.

First, let us orient your awareness inside. Shift the focus. Step back from the surface. It requires constant remembrance of 'Aum Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' and effort. Try to locate your true base and center. Once you feel yourself getting closer to it, just remember to go further. Keep your poise and become the fire that burns inside. Tend to it always. This is your aspiration, and as it grows, the closer you move to your inner Truth.

You reorient your life around Sainath Parabrahman the soul. It takes time. It is an evolving state. The realignment is more spontaneous. Surrender has this effect. Through this connection, spontaneous knowledge and discernment emerge. Questions are automatically answered; patterns get changed.

The next time you get consumed with grief, try this process. You may have to repeat it. If practiced sincerely, you will notice a shift. Grief doesn't have to be the pretext; any affliction can be addressed by this practice. Just remember to keep the fire burning and maintain this poise.

So, how can we experience this inner Light of Sai Maharaj? Each of us is born with a spiritual eye, a gateway between and behind the two eyebrows that opens into the inner spiritual world. When, through the process of meditation, we withdraw our attention from the distractions of the outer world and focus it on this gateway, we can connect with inner Light Sai Maharaj.

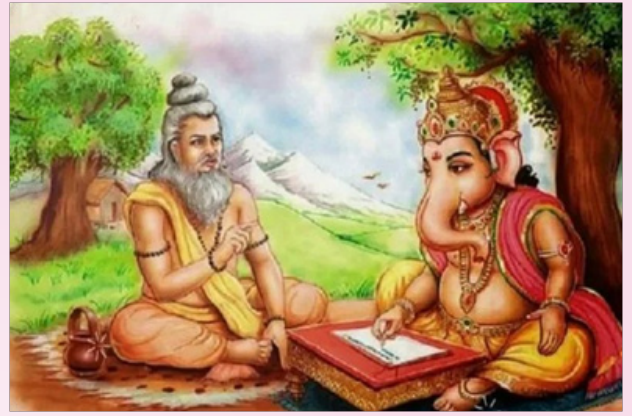
Living at the level of our physical senses, we take ourselves to be the body and we focus our attention on the attractions and distractions of the outer world – a world of impermanence, where lasting happiness and peace are unattainable. It is only when we take our attention away from the outer world and focus it on the spiritual eye, the gateway between the inner and outer worlds, that we can experience the light and love of the inner worlds. Love and light dispel all darkness and enlighten us. In this light, the clarity of our vision sets in, and we can find our way back to God.

The Divine is the source of all love, joy, and bliss, and when we connect with His love and Light, we bathe in this same joy and bliss. Like a fluorescent object that glows long after it has been exposed to light, we, too, glow with divine love and Light. Let us all carry this light within, experience it, and share it with others, truly celebrating the festival of Ugadi.

With all best wishes and regards

Yours Sai Babaly.

Prathibha



First Word

SAI BABA CAN TAKE YOU FROM MEDIOCRITY TO PERFECTION

Excellence is not a privilege of a few. It is accessible to everyone who has implicit faith in Sai Parabrahman. All it takes is a vision beyond your desires and a commitment to a higher goal, through total surrender to Lord Sainath. We are happy to present this twenty-fifth issue of Sai Aura commemorating the Ugadi festival in April 2024.

Do you want to excel in life? Or are you content with mediocrity? If you have the drive to achieve perfection, the Bhagavad Gita has the formula for success. Not everyone has a high IQ or is immensely talented. But every single person can be highly motivated. The focus must shift from external conquests to internal victory by the blessings of Sainath Parabrahman. Then, you discover the power of the mind. Conquer the mind, and you will conquer the world.



Excellence requires a serene mind. When the mind is calm, the intellect is sharp and actions brilliant. When the mind is agitated, you cannot access your knowledge, thinking gets deviated and actions are flawed.

We all suffer from mental agitation. What disturbs the mind? Thoughts of self. A singer sings the wrong note when thoughts of oneself get in the way. A job aspirant flounders at the interview when he's obsessed with getting the job. A chef makes mistakes when he wants to impress his guests.

Excellence is not the exclusive privilege of a select few. Everyone is privy to it — from the most talented to the least endowed. All it takes is a vision beyond your desires and a commitment to a higher goal. Desire is the greatest obstruction that stands between you and success. Break free from desire and you sail into the realm of perfection.

The law of life is that you get what you deserve, not what you desire. So set aside desire and focus on deserving. Work to gain merit. Hone your skills. Strive to be better at your job. Shift from grabbing to serving, from profiteering to offering. As Lord Sainath blesses you, the forces of nature will bow down to you.

You contemplate - do you feel deprived or blessed? Are you working to get a few things you do not have? Then you are unenthusiastic. You merely go through the motions of your job. This leads to failure and frustration.

You are aware of the abundance you have been gifted with - then you become grateful. You want to give, contribute, and add value to people. You become creative, inspired, and successful. Abundance is a state of mind unconnected with material



assets. You may have nothing and feel blessed. The richest man may feel deprived.

Identify your passion, talent, and gift. Fix a higher ideal in that field. Work in a spirit of service and sacrifice for the larger goal. Selfish action leads to mediocrity. All successful people worked for a nobler cause. Sri Narasimha Swamiji took upon himself the task of spreading information about Sai Baba from the remote village of Shirdi to the entire globe.

Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji initiated tens and thousands of Sai devotees into Vishnu Sahasranama for spiritual upliftment. Don Bradman did not play cricket for selfish ends. Ustad Bismillah Khan was dedicated to music. Einstein only thought of physics.

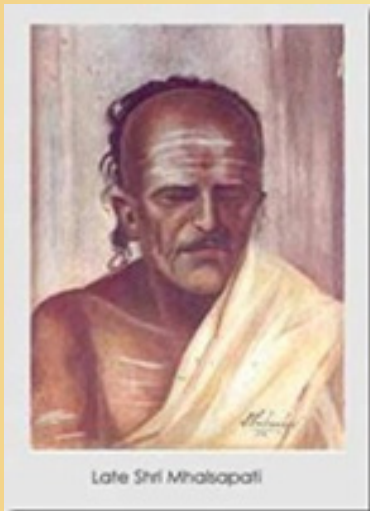
When your attention shifts from the world to the beyond, you perform selfless action. You work neither for a selfish end nor an unselfish goal. As a devotee of Sai Maharaj, you know your talent is a Sai Baba-given gift. You offer it as thanksgiving to Lord Sainath, our God Supreme. Then, perfection flows from you effortlessly. Athlete Eric Lidell, nicknamed the 'Flying Scotsman', was unbeatable and set Olympic records. He would say: "God made me to run, and I will run for God." With this motto, he won Olympic gold.

However talented you may be, you cannot achieve success by yourself. You would need to build strong teams. Feel one with your team members. View them as partners, not opponents, as collaborators, not competitors.

When you gain success, you do not want to get carried away with it. Remember, it is transient and temporary. It will go some day. Enjoy the fruit of your labor, but do not depend on it. Build inner reserves that will stand by you in times of calamity. When things go as they must, you will not be shattered or heartbroken.

We wish all our readers as they celebrate New Year's Day all with the blessings of Sai Baba and a message from Sri Narasimha Swamiji, "For him in vain the envious seasons roll, who bears SainathParabrahman in his soul."

* * *



Late Shri Mhalsapati

A Thought to Dwell on

Mhalsapati was a great devotee of Sai Maharaj but still, he had to face his wrath. In 1917 Baba had asked Abdul to stay at Chavadi but he crossed over to the Majid and Mhalsapati was aware of it. When Baba questioned Mhalsapati about this, he kept quiet. This infuriated Baba and his powerful glance made Mhalsapati blind. From then onwards till Mhalsapati passed away on 11th September 1922, one devotee by the name of Balaji Gurav Pillai used to carry Mhalsapati on his back, whenever he wanted to visit Sai Samadhi Mandir. Not even once Mhalsapati cribbed about his blindness.



A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama – 28: Sahasranama Leads you to 'Be a Karma Yogi.'

— by **Seetha Priya**

Karma is the prime mover and shaker in our lives. So how can one say, 'Why bother about karma, when everything is written?' Your destiny is tied to your karma — the Divine law of cause and effect. But how karma plays out in our lives is beyond our understanding. An integral truth remains, none can escape karma.

In our lifetime, we commit both good and bad deeds. Consequently, we must face the fruit of our actions.

Karma, past and present, collects in our consciousness. There it rests till it fructifies. This accumulated karma is called samskaras. In their flowering stage, mangoes are raw and green. When they ripen to a fulsome sweetness, the fruit is ready to be plucked. Likewise, karma that is ready to fructify is our Prarabdha Karma.

However, karmic timing is a big mystery. You never know when karma comes calling. Your karma may arrive swiftly without mercy at this precise moment; it may catch up with you a few years hence or many lifetimes later! Know that it is not in your hands. You cannot manipulate karmic law according to your whims.

You may want to only enjoy the good fruits and altogether evade bad karma. But that's wishful thinking. Vishnu Sahasranama molds you to be a 'Karma Yogi' wherein you do not look for an expected result.

In life, we will be visited by joy and sorrow in a continuum. So, retain your composure. Unbridled happiness makes one proud and arrogant. Untold sorrow breaks our spirit. Don't waste precious energy pondering over what lies ahead. Instead, be a karma yogi. The fruits of your actions will appear in their own time. Just focus on the quality of your karma.

The 28th shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama is –

**Vrishahi Vrishabhor Vishnur
Vrishaparva Vrishodara
Vardhano Vardhamanascha
Viviktah Shrutisagara**

Lord Vishnu is involved in sacrifice (Vrishahi) and is a showerer of Dharma (Vrishabha). He is all-pervading (Vishnu), having Dharma as steps to reach him (Vrishaparva) and filled with Dharma (Vrishodara). He is the evolver (Vardhana), still evolving and continues to evolve (Vardhamana). He is unattached (Vivikta) even though plenty and immense to be heard of him (Shrutisagara).

Sai Baba was a Karma Yogi. He used to beg in five houses and share food with pigs, dogs, crows, etc., "Give me Roti, mother!" was his familiar call for alms in style.



Baija was opposed to Baba's begging for food. She openly expressed her resentment. She told him – "Baba, you should not beg! I can feed you every day. You are God indeed in human form."

Baba just smiled at her words, even though he did not like the 'I' feeling she had while claiming that she could feed him. He did not listen to her. He would not compromise on his ideas.

One day, she arranged some sweets and savories nicely on a clean brass plate, covered it carefully, and asked her son Tatya to wait till she returned. She went to the mosque. Her son Tatya, though hungry, simply obeyed his mother.

Baba politely refused the food. He said, "Mother, what use is this rich food for me? I am after all a poor fakir. To beg for a roti or two and eat it when desired is my routine! Take this good food and offer it to an uninvited guest in whichever form he appears at your door. Believe me, He is God!"

"No, No!" Baija declined, "You are God yourself! Please eat this food instead of begging for it from door to door and it is already late. You must be hungry – I can see that."

Baba told her earnestly – "Mother, if you are so particular, feed those two pigs" pointing out two pigs opposite the mosque. He continued – "I am no different from them." Baba demonstrated himself as a Karma Yogi.





A great truth Baba tried to explain though it was beyond Baija's understanding. Baba told her – "Go home Mother, do not be unhappy. When I come to your door, do not give me more than one roti. Now go home and feed your son, Tatya. He is hungry and waiting for you. Instead of feeding him first, you came rushing to feed me. Remember God is not only in me. He is at your home, He is in Tatya, he is in you, in all living beings. Feeding a hungry soul brings God's blessings. Remember this forever!"

On his begging rounds, Baba expressed his happiness, "Allah will be kind to you" after putting the roti into his shoulder bag and pouring the curry into the tumbler.

"Then why do you beg for food in five houses every day?" Baija Ma asked.

"Mother, do I beg to fill up this small belly?" – Baba queried.

Baija Ma could not understand why he begged! She simply stared at him. Baba himself clarified – "Listen, Mother, by making you give charity, you are achieving merit which will be recorded with God! Uninvited guests, ascetics, sadhus, beggars – all those who come to your doorsteps should be given alms in whatever little measure you can afford. Thereby you achieve 'Punya' – merit! Charity reduces your misery and suffering. Bear this always in your mind!"

Baija Ma innocently asked Baba – "Then take full alms from me alone. Let me get full merit myself." Baba told her – "Mother, to me all are equal."

"But Baba, you took curry from that house in that tumbler. Now you want me to pour this chutney also into it. How can you enjoy their different tastes?" Baija Ma exclaimed.

"Why should a fakir bother about taste, Mother?" Baba asked. "All the food goes to the same place, gets

mixed up, and blood and dirt alike. Why should the palate be tended so much.....?"

Without further argument, Baija Ma poured chutney and vegetables into the tumbler and roti into the sack. Baba heartily blessed her.

Baba left for the next house. He visited five houses. That was his rule. Of course, women in all houses awaited his arrival on his begging round. Those mothers from whom Baba accepted charity were very fortunate.

While Baba was on his begging rounds, two or three dogs followed him wagging their tails. The mothers who happily offered food to Baba never even once bothered about these hungry dogs! Baba was aware of this!

On reaching the mosque, Baba would lovingly call the dogs, the birds, and the pigs that watched him from a distance. He would pour the contents of his sack and tumbler into a stone bowl kept at the entrance. The dogs and pigs rushed, and the birds swooped to feast on this free-for-all meal! Baba moved away to light up his 'chillum' while these creatures barked, growled, and clamored – but altogether their daily fare which they got without any effort. Baba watched it all as he smoked but never chased them away.



Satisfied with the feast, the animals would move away leaving only a little for Baba. Baba would then come near the bowl and eat the crumbles left for him! With that, he satisfied his hunger! As one recites Vishnu Sahasranama, he should visualize Baba begging for food from five houses and sharing with the crows, pigs, dogs, etc.,

Baba was 'God in human garb and practiced what he preached. He believed that divinity is present in all creatures. To show disrespect towards them is like disregarding the divinity that existed in each of them!



Kaka Dixit Diary

SITA'S SACRED DEFIANCE

Das Ganu, Dhumal, and Booty were away from Shirdi to make a pilgrimage to Prayag, Gaya, Ayodhya, and Varanasi. After their return, they shared their experiences.

Baba was delighted to learn they were paying homage to their ancestors. Suddenly when Dhumal was referring to Gaya, Baba referred to a little-known anecdote from the Anand Ramayan, Tirth Yatra Kanda. This is a story of Sita's curses and blessings at Gaya. Baba had a smile, but Das Ganu explained in detail.

During their forest exile, after the demise of King Dasharatha, Rama with Lakshmana, and Sita reached Gaya through the forest and wanted to perform the ritual known as 'Shraddha' for his father. While Rama and Lakshmana went to procure the ritual necessities, Sita waited on the banks of the Falguni River.



Since it was getting late and the sun was setting, King Dasharatha in spirit form, expressed his concern about the rapid passing of the auspicious hour, and demanded that she begin the ritual. Sita tried to defer, as traditionally, women don't perform shraddha, and suggested that they wait for his sons to do the needful, but Dasharatha insisted. Finally, Sita gave in and arranged for the 'Pinda Daan' herself. 'Pinda' is an offering of a rounded ball of rice, dotted with sesame seeds, considered as a way to salvation for the departed soul. Using a mound of sand, Sita invoked nature and creatures such as the Falguni river, a cow, a crow, a basil plant, a Brahmin, and a banyan tree as witnesses who would testify to her sincerity.

When Rama and Lakshmana returned and saw this, they were surprised and questioned Sita. She

explained her urgency and invoked her witnesses. But much to her surprise, all of them remained silent except for the banyan tree.

An angry Sita then issued her now famous curse, 'Sita Shraap' against the river, which was to remain dry, against the cow, crow, basil plant, and the Brahmin.



Late Shri nanasaheb Chandorkar

Das Ganu explained that this episode exemplifies Sita's unwavering commitment to her dharma and her determination to uphold her responsibilities, regardless of societal norms. It challenges gender norms and emphasizes Sita's pivotal role in shaping Ramayan's events.

To delve deeper into the notion of women's agency within the Indian sacred tradition, Das Ganu sought Baba's approval to turn to this episode from the Ananda Ramayana as a source. It serves as a poignant example of how women actively participate in rituals and decisions that may not be conventionally associated with their gender, highlighting their agency and contributions to India's spiritual space.

Nana Saheb Chandorkar augmented this discussion by stating that during 'Pitru Paksha',



women actively participate in the rituals and ceremonies associated with ancestral worship. They contribute to the preparation of offerings, engage in prayers, and observe traditions that underscore their pivotal role in maintaining the ancestral legacy. The practice of ancestor worship and reverence for folk gods are central to various regions of India and Southeast Asia. These traditions emphasize the connection between people and their heritage, highlighting cultural continuity and spiritual bonds with ancestors and deities.

Women's place in Indian history is a complex and nuanced subject, marked by their simultaneous presence and absence in historical narratives. One crucial aspect of rewriting history from a woman-inclusive standpoint is the recognition that historical sources are not limited to conventional historical documents. In the Indian context, a significant portion of historical sources comprises myths, religious texts, and various forms of literary productions such as the Ananda Ramayana.

When I was in deep slumber

— by **Sai Raghu**

When I was in deep slumber
Sai Maharaj comes stealthily,
Catching hold of my hand makes me scribble some words.
And when I wake up
And read what has been written,
I am lost in myself.
The thought that has been scribbled
Who is instrumental in generating it?
O my Baba:
Why do you keep on playing such games,
And make my ego boost?
Today I have understood this secret,
For a few moments, you and I become one,
And my 'Atma' gets awakened from its slumber,
My hand starts moving automatically.
You made me write but I got the credit for it,
High-sounding philosophies and deep secrets
Which have left their marks on the horizon of time,
Must have gotten scribbled in the same manner by you,
And the writer would have taken credit for it,
In his moments of weakness.
Do pity my ignorance, O My Sai
Make this hand of mine write some words,
Which may bring a complete change in the universe,
And turn the demon in man into a human.

Mystics and Saints

— by **Shreyas Devaraj**

Nawab Mohammed Yusuf Ali Khan



A Sai devotee who was regarded as a thinker, poet, and mystic with clairvoyance. He was employed as a Section Officer in the Poll Panel in the Andhra Pradesh Legislature and has contributed articles on Sai Baba in Urdu, English, and Telugu. He was actively involved in the publication of the 'Sai Prabha' monthly magazine from Hyderabad. He used to perform 'Namaz' five times a day and in his interactions profusely quoted Gita,



Ramayana, and other scriptures, apart from doling out charity on Fridays. He called his religion 'EKTA' symbolic of Baba's policy of 'Rama and Rahim are not different'. He regularly visited Shirdi. He lived for 80 years (1938-2018).

Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976)

Born in a poor family in Bangladesh he evolved to be a free thinker, poet, and revolutionary socialist and was influenced by Tagore and Shantiniketan. He lived in Dacca and Calcutta and his pious deeds earned him as a 'Sufi' saint. His songs and poems have influenced post-Samadhi devotees of Sai Maharaj. He organized mass songs by youth against social evils. His adoration for Sai Maharaj is expressed in several songs in Urdu and Bengali. His tomb in Dacca is vibratory and attracts people seeking solace.



Andavan Pichai Maragathavalli (1899-1990)

Born in a middle-class Brahmin family, Maragathavalli showed her divine nature even at the age of ten. Lord Murgha possessed her. Her musical compositions, melodious singing, and devout actions earned her the title 'Andavan Pichai' – mad for God. Her admirers have converted this title to 'Gift of God.'



She had visions of Sai Maharaj, Ramana Bhagawan, Swami Sivananda, and other great saints. In 1949 when she had given up her life, at the command of SadasivaBrahmendra, there was a transmigration of the Soul into her body by the Soul of another Saint Ramakrishna of Pinnavasal and there was a remarkable transformation in her. She spent a few years at Rishikesh visiting Shirdi, Dwaraka, Varanasi, and other pilgrim places and came back to her family house in Chennai in the late Eighties. She attained Maha Samadhi on 6th September 1990.

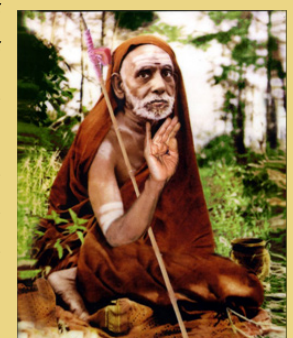


Dr Sangamedu Sadaslva Badrinath (1940-2023)

A famous Eye specialist who brought relief to patients of Diabetes with eye complications ending up in total blindness, Dr. Badrinath started 'Photo-coagulation treatment' at VHS Adyar Hospital in Chennai in the late Sixties. Earlier people had



to go abroad for this treatment. It was unique that this expensive treatment of Photocoagulation was cut shot to Rs.100/-. Somehow, Badrinath wanted to go abroad and settle down in America. When he met Kanchi Paramacharya Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati for his blessings, the Mahaswami asked Badrinath to stay back in India and serve our people. Badrinath agreed and thus 'Sankara Netralaya' was established which has grown into a world-class Eye Hospital. In this Hospital, rates are reasonable and 40% of the patients are treated free of cost. Badrinath was decorated with 'Padma Bhushan' as well as the 'Dhanvantri' Award among many honors and awards. His visits to Pune and Mumbai took him to pay his homage to Sai Baba.



LEAD ME FROM REALITY TO THE TRUTH

— by **Sri Narasimha Swamiji**

Sai Maharaj lived at Shirdi physically up to 1918 and from his 'samadhi' he is blessing all eternally. In his life, three short lines havepacked quite a punch, as in the Brihadaranyak Upanishad 1:3:28: 'Asatoma sadgamaya; Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya; Mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya' – Lead me from reality to the truth;/ Lead me from darkness to light;/ May I be led from death to immortality. Sai Baba always highlighted devotees on these three lines.

Asat, reality, in the first line, refers to all we perceive with our five senses. We may look at varied designs of jewelry. Still, without the underlying gold as their true essence, they are devoid of independent existence – this is a pure Vedantic view fully endorsed by Sai Maharaj. Therefore, we have two truths, one relative, contingent; the other, unconditional, independently existing and ultimate, called sat. Sai Baba called the relative truth, 'Maya' as the playhouse of infinite forms, which is deceptive as well as unreal.

The second line – 'Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya' asks for liberation from avidya, the darkness of tamas, unknowing of the Jyoti, the inner light. The enlightened, awakening state is a process where the opening of the jnana chakshu, eyes of wisdom, (the Third Eye) breaks through the veil of maya and perceives sat. The contrast between asat and sat is that the former is caught in the web of Maya's multiplicity, whereas 'sat' sees the underlying unity, oneness. While 'asat' is caught in the diversity of jewelry forms, 'sat' knows all is gold.

When you see through it, you can enjoy it without getting caught up in it. But this does not imply indifference or forsaking all that the world has to offer, rather, an invitation to a deeper and more meaningful engagement.

The third line – 'MrityormaAmritam Gamaya' differentiates mortality from immortality. Here Sai Maharaj wants us to get help from the Chandogya Upanishad, 7:24:1, where "verily the infinite is the same as the immortal, the finite is the same as the mortal." In other words, we must realize Sai Parabrahman.

Though they might seem the same, the difference between infinity or eternity, and everlasting lies in time. Everlasting means extended time, whereas eternity is beyond time, non-temporal. The aspirant here asks to



beby Sainath Prabhu, saved from death, which is the end of life in time, to a state of timelessness, where the spirit of Sai Maharaj resides all the time. Yet, infinity always exists also in each present moment.

This prayer asks for an opening to a window of 'Ananta', blessed eternity; for us to be led from 'ahamkara', the limited skin encapsulated ego that fears mortality, to the immortality that is by nature – spacious consciousness. The emphasis is on going beyond one's history and autobiography caught in death-dread, towards one's essential nature, the indestructible, ever-existing spirit.

This Upanishadic prayer is an appeal to devotees of Sai Baba, for transformation, a liberation from the entanglements in the web of time and space to one beyond these.

Our existence happens in two dimensions: 'samsaric', horizontal, relative to things, people, and events; and 'nirvanic', thevertical one. An enlightened state takes cognizance of both realities, which are not mutually exclusive but touch each other and are perceived by us in moments of awe.

Guided by Sai Baba, these lines of the Upanishad do not imply a pessimistic view but a holistic one: 'Be in the world but know that you are not of the world.'

The essence of the first and the third lines lies in the second one, the liberation from the misapprehension of the clouded tamasic 'Maya' to seeing through the unclouded lens of 'Jyoti', the inner light.

SAI BABA PINPOINTS 'MAYA' IN A DREAM VISION

— by **Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji**

I visited Baroda sometime in 1975 or so. My hosts took me to Baroda Zoo. Earlier on the previous day I had a dream, in which I saw a padlocked, wooden gate in the middle of a vast, open field. A standalone gate. It got me thinking. Are we not somewhat like that padlocked gate, living rooted in Maya, the illusory material world, in the vast expanse of a horizonless universe? As I went around the zoo, I was struck by a cage holding a lion and the lion attracted me I went near the caged door and affectionately fondled the lion. I told the lion that both of us are caged, while the lion has two cages and I have only one, that of the body. We try to find happiness in give-and-take relationships and temporary material gains, solace in rites and rituals, and seek guidance from spiritual guides. Though, all we must do is look within, our innermost soul.

Seers of Vedas and Upanishads tell us we are part of that which is 'Poorna', whole and complete. Isha Upanishad proclaims, "That is complete, this is



complete. From completeness has come completeness. When this completeness is taken from that completeness, completeness only remains."

The moment we start believing this completeness, the illusory 'Brama', is separated from our spirit-soul, the 'Atman', we limit ourselves, become victims of duality, and get stuck in preconceived, prejudiced notions and man-made religions.

To discover our true selves and our identity, we must find the path on our own. We are consciousness, beings of light, and to complement that completeness, we must emerge from the narrow bylanes of stagnant belief systems. 'Maya' keeps us confined to the constricted domain of self-identification with personal re-

lationships, positions in our social hierarchy, ego, and emotion. We stay like the padlocked gate, as in my dream, forgetting that the key to removing the fetters is also with us, and stay tangled in our role on the world stage, in the play called Life.



Awaking of the Self happens when there is awareness, and we are in sync with the universal vibration. According to the Kathopanishad, "This atman is hidden in all beings and does not shine forth, but it is seen by the subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect." Even here, the soul encounters the nights of doubts and dilemmas, of denials and devotions. To emerge from this whirlpool, we must move inwards to explore the transformative power within us. The passport to this mystic world is the stillness of mind. In the words of poet Rabindranath Tagore, "In the mountain, stillness surges up to explore its height; in the lake, movement stands still to contemplate its depth."

Elusive happiness, allure of pleasure, fear of pain, and humiliation of failure are but reflections of ego, shades of darkness limited mostly to the body parameter. Life is not to be lived in denial but with detachment, discipline, and dedication, as opposed to desires, demands, and doubts.

The mind makes us victims of circumstances and yet when it metamorphoses into silence and solitude, it transfers us to a realm of contentment and peace. The awakened soul neither owns nor owes anything. It enters a space of illuminated nothingness, where an eternal kinship is forged with Nature and the soul reverberates with the vibration of the universe, the state of anand.

On closer inspection, I recollected that the iron padlock had not rusted, and green branches were growing on the wooden gate.

IshAvAsya Mantra #19

— by **Jayakrishna Nelamangala**

The prayer that started in Mantra #15 continues. Following the prayer in the previous mantras, here Parabrahman that is in praṇava, is prayed to.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ।

ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ १९ ॥

om kratō smara kṛtaṁ smarai

om kratō smara kṛtaṁ smarai ॥ 19 ॥

The Omni-presence, Omni-potence, Omniscience etc as having such qualities Parabrahman is denoted by praṇava "ōm". kratō means One who is jñāna-rūpi. Addressing such a Parabrahman, the prayer is for His Blessing. The regular meaning of the word 'smara' is 'remember'. So, God of Veda has knowledge that is constant. His knowledge is not something that is generated from memory. Therefore, it would not be proper to give 'smara' the usual meaning of remembering from impressions on the mind, memory etc. Instead, the proper meaning that is inline with this upanishadic mantra, as anugraha i.e., 'grant me'. The upanishat repeating the mantra twice is for stressing on the importance of what is stated by the mantra.

These meanings of 'kratu' and 'smara' are actually given by śrī vēdavyāsa hinsekf elsewhere. Hence, associating any other meaning to these words would be not in accordance with Vedanta of śrī vēdavyāsa. Let us not forget that, śrī vēdavyāsa is the father of Vedanta.

Several points are to be noticed here:

1. To pray to God as "Be ready for granting", there is the sacrifice of kartrtva-abhimāna on the part of the adhikārin. That kartrtva-abhimāna is in the form that "I have done this sādhana". Its sacrifice is the implication of the knowledge of him being ever dependent on God.

2. The Brahma-svarūpa is jñāna which is nitya and pūrṇa. He is eka or there are no internal divisions in Brahman of Veda, even then there is the practice of considering Him as dharmi, and his jñāna as His property. The nature of identity is to include what is technically known as 'viśēṣa'.

3. The adhikārin who has familiarized himself this much from this upanishat, if he thinks that he has nothing more to understand then it is not accord-

ing to this upanishat. For mantrārtha, we need shāstra adhyayana. Without that shāstra-adhyayana, not a single idea that this upanishat talks about can be understood.

4. In every matter, there are several pratipaksha (opposing alternative positions) as given by several darshana thinkers. Without removing those pratipakshas, not a single item taught by this upanishat can be understood. The only tool available to remove all pratipakshas is the study of brahma-mīmāṃsā-shāstra.

5. That is the reason behind stressing the study of shāstra again and again in these mantras of ishāvāsya. When it kindles an interest in the study of shāstra, only then the purpose of writing these articles in this magazine is served. Thus, by what is established so far, understanding the meaning of upanishatic mantras should eventually end in a study of shāstra. This is the intent behind this particular mantra #19.

6. What is printed as "kritagum smara" is a form of "kritam smara". It is also said that "gum" is there to stress on the rule that the vastness of the implied meaning should be grasped. Thus, we find, "ishāvāsyamidagum sarvam", "kritagum" etc. Some also say that "gum" need not be pronounced. In fact, some books print the upanishat without it altogether.

With this background, we study mantra #19.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ।

ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ १९ ॥

om kratō smara kṛtaṁ smarai

om kratō smara kṛtaṁ smarai ॥ 19 ॥

As having attributes such as Omni-presence, Omni-potence, Omniscience etc., and therefore denoted by ōm (ॐ ōm), Oh! Parabrahman who is jñāna-svarūpi (क्रतो kratō) become ready to grant me (स्मर smara) the dhyāna, karma etc that have been performed by me (कृतं kṛtagum) become ready to grant them as to be sādhana. (स्मर smara).

Repeating this a second time indicates what is called "abhyāsa" in shāstra which is to bring out the fact that upanishat wants to stress that this is the meaning it wants to teach us.

śrī kriṣṇārpaṇamastu

JAIN MONKS VISIT SHIRDI

— by **Paras Mal Jain**

A group of Jain monks from Ahmednagar on their way to Kopergaon visited Shirdi. They did not enter the mosque but offered their salutations to Sai Maharaj from outside. The monks were surprised when Sai Maharaj reciprocated their salutation with a line from Jain Agams/scared books, stating, 'Je egamjanai, se savvamjanai' – the one who knows his soul, knows everyone. This Self-realization is the biggest achievement of life. Kaka Dixit was sent by Baba to attend to these monks. They rested for a while at Hanuman Mandir and then left for Kopergaon.

At the mosque, Baba posed a question as to who can attain realization. Baba said that Self-realization is possible for the person whose mind, which is like water, does not have any ripples due to the mental waves of his likes and dislikes. Man wants to realize the Self, but until the emotions of attachment and aversion are overcome, this cannot happen.



Baba went on to say – 'Self-realization can be easy as well as tough. It is easy because it happens as soon as the feelings of attachment and aversion are relinquished. It is difficult because it is not so simple to separate oneself from attachment and aversion.

He exemplified the Jain monks. Self-realization calls for hard work, practicing austerity, and purifying of the mind to attain a state of thoughtless mind.

A curious disciple once asked his Guru, 'Master! How can I become free from attachment and aversion?' The Guru replied, 'You need to practice living in the natural state of consciousness.' Here being in the natural state of consciousness Sai Maharaj means to know and to observe only.

Kaka Dixit quoted a Jain scripture that says: 'There is one home in which one can stay forever, but difficult to stay. That home is our soul.' Sai Maharaj underscored this by saying, 'Stay inside, live outside.' Jain Agam states: 'Sampikkhae appagamappaenam' – see your 'self' through your 'self'. The natural function of the eyes is to perceive the physical world, but we need to practice seeing inside the self, meaning, perceive our

Self, and move towards Self-realization.

Based on Jain philosophy, Das Ganu Maharaj in his 'Pravachans on Sai Baba' has propounded a technique of meditation for Self-realization known as Preksha Meditation. Meditation brings a paradigm shift from instability to stability, from the external to the internal, from activity to non-activity. The person moves from unrestraint to self-control and from darkness to light. It is well known that many people overcome their problems through the practice of meditation and evolve spiritually.

There are two types of people: One who lives in the world outside of himself and uses material objects to achieve a false sense of personal fulfillment, and the second kind, who lives within oneself and consumes material objects only to fulfill basic needs.

Sai Baba begged for food from five houses, mixed and shared with dogs, pigs sparrows, etc. Sai Maharaj also has said it right, intoxicants make the mind or psyche delusional. People engrossed in sensory pleasures like taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell are constantly on the lookout for ways to fulfill these desires. They crave different foods, fragrances, and vistas. It is natural for people to be delighted when their sensual desires are realized, but such joy is temporary since the next craving may already be sprouting. Such pleasures cannot bring true happiness; they come only from the satisfaction of giving up or resisting things one typically yearns for. Curbing desires also imparts the strength needed to gain control over the mind and body.



In summing up the Jain monks' visit to Shirdi, Baba gave a blueprint for Self-realization. This slow yet steady process can lead to a state where one recognizes the true Self, despite the usual worldly distractions. We need to use worldly things with detachment, develop the state of an observer, purify the mind, and try to live a life free from attachment and aversion. If this is achieved, Self-realization becomes possible. Let's make the best use of our time – for, Self-realization is possible in human life only.

FROM PICKLE TO PERFECTION

— by **C V Srivalli**

Baba had great affection towards Laxmibai, the wife of Ganesh Srikrishna Khaparde, a famous lawyer from Amaravathy. He used to call her Mother Khaparde and told her how she was connected to him in different previous births.

Once Mother Khaparde brought curd-rice and a pickle to Baba and told him – “This is a freshly made pickle. Baba was delighted and gave her a short sermon about attaining perfection from the pickle.

A freshly made pickle – it’s sharp and intense. It has all the ingredients that a ready-to-eat pickle has but lacks the mellow taste. Baba said as it ages, it matures into something truly delicious. In the same way, when you gain knowledge, you may have the answers to many situations. But there are rough edges to your personality. You may speak words of wisdom. But you may not be living them.

Baba pointed out that at a younger age, you are taught by elders to be unselfish, but you get distracted by the allure of instant pleasure. This gap between what you know and what you should do is not insurmountable.

Baba told Mother Khaparde that becoming wise is a journey. It involves three phases. The first stage is Shravan, gaining information, like reading a book or reciting God’s name. The second phase is Manan, reflection, thinking, contemplating on the Scriptural Baba pointed ideas, and experimenting with them. Finally, the third phase is Nidhidhyasan, living and practicing them. This is when you truly transform into a better person. Intake of knowledge is easy, and reflection takes effort,



but applying it in life is the real challenge.

Baba pointed out that Khapardes have lived with the right attitude of living in proximity to God Almighty without focusing on fleeting pleasures. Consider always – the joy of giving, loving others, and rising to emotional thrills and intellectual delights. You will grow into a remarkable personality. The final plunge is to the spiritual realm. You will then see the futility of worldly pursuits, and not be carried away by the glitter of transitory joys. You will seek infinite happiness

and attain enlightenment.

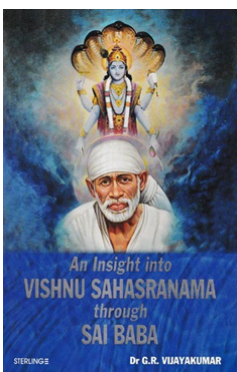
Long before you take on the world, you must win against your deadliest opponent – you! You have imposed limitations on yourself. You worry about failing and do not even consider the possibility of winning.

The world is a projection of your mind. Change your thoughts into ‘Raja Ram, Raja Ram’ and your world changes miraculously. The same world you felt insecure, vulnerable, and threatened, now becomes a secure, welcoming, and warm environment. All it requires is a change in attitude.

Everyone wants happiness. Baba pointed out that the ignorant seek and obtain trivial, finite ends.

Baba asked Mother Khaparde to visualize the transcendental and worship God. She was a Jnani and excelled. She was bound to get permanent happiness and attain enlightenment.

BOOK REVIEW



Title : **An Insight into Vishnu Sahasranama through Sai Baba**
Author : Dr G.R. Vijayakumar
Publisher : Sterling Publishers New Delhi
Pages : 390+viii
Price : Rs. 500/-

An Insight into Vishnu Sahasranama through Sai Baba is an innovative book that interconnects Sai Baba with one thousand names of Lord Vishnu. Sai Baba’s life is a journey of the atma, to transcend body consciousness – not for piecemeal happiness, but to attain infinite bliss, ananda; a journey to dismantle our worldly bonds and become free; freedom that can be attained much before death. The journey of life may continue for one or more lifetimes until the Infinite is attained. This book will give the reader a deeper insight into Lord Vishnu and Sai Baba’s life, His code of conduct, words of wisdom, and innumerable miracles.

Reviewed by : B.S. Krishna Murthy

ACCEPTING YOU CAN BE WRONG

— by **Ramaswamy Seshadri**

A fakir by the name of Javar Ali came to Shirdi and boasted himself as Sai Baba's preceptor; Baba knew his worth and pretended to be Javar Ali's disciple and served him. Sai Baba desired his devotees to follow one more lesson.

French Philosopher Albert Camus has stated – “the need to be right is the sign of a vulgar mind” – and this has profound relevance in all situations and circumstances in life. The morbid insistence on being right all the time makes one rigid, ossified, and monomaniac. The magnanimous acceptance that you can be wrong more than you can be right in your whole lifetime, makes you a thoughtful human. Life's so intricate and egalitarian in the sense that it also offers your opponents to be right at times. This is what Baba desired.

There was a debate between Devidas and Javar Ali to decide the Master-Pupil status. In the process, Shirdi residents were exposed to Hinduism and Islam in clear terms.

Our life is a saga of mixed emotions, paradoxes, upheavals, and all shades of colors. Urdu poetess Parveen Shakir put it succinctly, “Tumhara ye israarke main hi sahihoon/ Humarerishte ko talkhkargaya” – Your insistence that you're right/ Embittered our relationship. She further wrote, “Har baartoh koi sahi ho nahinsakta/ Kabhi agle ko bhimauga do sahi hone ka” – One cannot be right all the time/

Let other people be right sometimes. When we let others be right, we accept and validate different and new perspectives.

In a philosophical debate around 815 AD at Saharsa in present-day Bihar, Mandan Mishra was reluctant to concede



defeat at the hands of Adi Shankara, who was young enough to be Mandan's son. Mandan Mishra's wife Ubhaya Bharati, who was a mediator, politely told her husband that he lost the debate to Adi Shankara. She admonished her husband, the delusion that he could never be wrong had made him reluctant to accept that Shankara was right. The

right to be right doesn't make one upright and ethical. It fills you with arrogance.

Sai Baba's insistence on serving Javar Ali as not being right has a greater and deeper significance. In his book “The Life of Sai Baba” Sri Narasimha Swamiji, has written that a genuine Sai devotee cannot succeed in his rebellious ways unless he accepts his brother devotees' rights occasionally because then only could he fight with them on an even keel. “Giving equal opportunities to all is a sign of Sai brotherhood. He's a man of principles. So, he doesn't insist on being right every time.” wrote Sri Narasimha Swamiji.

He also believed that a Sai devotee is never judgmental. Only those who are judgmental, don't allow others to be right. Just like retreat is a strategy in warfare, accepting that one is not right at a specific time or moment is also a sign of evolution. It helps one rejig his strategies and assess the strengths and weaknesses of others. Acceptance of being wrong is symptomatic of a healthy mind and a broad outlook.

Vidura told Dhritarashtra that the battle of Kurukshetra broke out because not just Kauravas, but even Pandavas insisted on being right and were never ready to accept their weaknesses and wrongs. If either of them forfeited the 'right' to be right every time, such destruction could have been averted. Accepting that you can be wrong ennobles and enlightens you. Walt Whitman said, “I'm conscientious and not condescending because I'm least bothered about being right and infallible, for, I'm a human.”



BABA – I LOVE YOU WITH MY HEART

— by **Sai Priya**

O Sai Maharaj, I have loved you with all my heart,
Whether you love me or not, is your prerogative.
It is also a fact that you have given me abundantly,
Whether I accept this fact or not is my prerogative.
Love knows to give and take,
Scattering it all around
Makes it grow at a high speed,
Then why is this feeling of return lurking in my mind?
It is clear that my love is not pure and 'Satvik',
With no desire for return.
The bliss that is experienced in giving,
Is certainly not in taking.
The moment this difference is understood by me,
I and you shall become one.

Joy and sorrow are like two pots,
Carried by a man on a pole.
They are inseparable.
No one can tell ...
what the future has in store for any individual.
Just as apparently opposing conditions like ..
Heat and cold are of use to man in certain situations,
Similarly joy and sorrow,
loss and gain are also helpful to man.
If there be no sorrow,
How can man appreciate happiness ?
To realize the greatness of light,
darkness is required.



Dr. Ranvir Singh's
Pictorial
Message



PASSAGE TO IMMORTALITY WITH SAI BABA'S GRACE

— by **Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar**

Nana Saheb Chandorkar used his influence in the Government to get a posting to his orderly, Ganesh Rao Sahasrabudhe in the Police cadre. But Baba was against this move. He wanted Ganesh Rao to become a 'Kirtankar' with his sonorous voice and knowledge of Vedic scriptures.

For no fault of his, Ganesh Rao was caught in a misappropriation case and was dismissed from the Police force. He came running to Baba who assured him that he would bless him to be an extraordinary person.

Ganesh Rao wanted to become an Inspector of Police and serve the country. Now he was jobless with no money, no help and the only succor was Baba's blessings to his very survival. Yet he achieved the impossible and was immortalized as Saint Das Ganu Maharaj.

Are you like him, inspired by Sai Baba to accomplish greatness, or are you content with the mundane and ordinary lives of millions?

He had studied up to fifth class but the books he has written have been prescribed by all Universities today, his songs and poems are very popular. Through his 'Kirtans,' he acquired plenty of wealth which he gave away to the poor and needy. During his lifetime he was acclaimed as Saint Das Ganu Maharaj. The Memorial built at his 'Samadhisthal' attracts millions of devotees,

You were born mortal but destined for immortality. Small-minded people settle for trifles like wealth, power, fancy cars, and luxurious homes. The wise are unconcerned with mere playthings. They seek the permanent. For how long will you remain in the kindergarten of life? Move to higher, more fulfilling realms.

You have two wonderful gifts – choice of action and intellect. You make choices from the time you are born. Intellect needs to be developed. Everyone has talent. To translate this talent to excellence you need



intellect. Intellect is developed by thinking. Ponder, question, enquire. Gradually, your intellect sharpens, and you are better able to guide the urges of the senses and impulses of the mind. You transform from an immature, unsteady person to a mature, reliable leader.

A calm mind is the precursor to excellence. When the mind is calm, the intellect is clear, and actions brilliant. Rise above desire and you are content. Think of yourself, you are unhappy. Think of others, you are happy. Shift from the attitude of grabbing to giving, from profiteering to offering, and you will be content.

The Sai Satcharitra speaks of yajna, working in a spirit of service and sacrifice for a higher ideal. Selfishness leads to mediocrity and misery. Espouse a higher cause and you achieve amazing success. When a sportsperson surrenders to the team and plays for the country, he performs magnificently. He breaks records, his team wins, and the entire nation celebrates. Lower desires fade away. Yet

money, laurels, and accolades come his way and he becomes an icon. Fix 'Enlightenment' as the goal and all desires vanish. But you gain the whole world. As Christ would say, seek the kingdom of heaven and all else will be added unto you.

Do you feel competitive towards people? Are you consumed by a sense of otherness? Then you feel insecure and threatened. You imagine friends as enemies, and partners as opponents. There are no enemies in the world. All your foes are within. Nobody else can harm you except yourself. So, change your attitude towards people. View them as allies, not adversaries. Reach out to them and feel for them. And you create wonderful teams. They go beyond the call of duty and work dedicatedly for a common goal. You achieve outstanding success. Your happiness multiplies. When your neighbor gets a promotion, you get heartburn. But if you feel one with him, he does the hard work, and you celebrate.

When success comes your way, remember that everything in the world is transitory and fleeting. Enjoy the world. But do not depend on anything.



Then you become a towering personality, untouched by the vagaries of the world. You gain infinite happiness. Your transformation is not just a journey from ordinary to extraordinary but a passage to immortality.

Let us develop the ones cultivated by Das Ganu Maharaj and attain immortality.



Be A Sweet Child
Dr. Purnima Singh's
Pictorial Message for Kids

Just BE Happy

Happiness is your true nature..



Overcome Stress and Worry With The Gita

— by **C.S.Dinesh**

When Tilak's treatise on Gita reached Sai Maharaj, he reverentially kept it on his head and gave it to Shama to read it regularly as he was a habitual worrier. It was only when Shama started reading the Bhagavad Gita that he realized the truth in what Sai Baba had said: "The Gita is the universal mother... Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks." The Gita contains not only deep philosophical concepts but also principles and techniques that, if put into practice with full sincerity, are extremely effective in unimaginable physical, mental, and spiritual ways.

The verse (chapter 18:66) that appealed the most to me helps me get rid of the worry habit: "Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sins, do not grieve." Baba also has assured – "Cast all your burden on me and I shall surely carry on my shoulders."

The Gita is the quintessence of all shastras. In his book 'Life of Sai Baba' with a reference to the Gita, Sri Narasimha Swamiji writes of this verse: "This is the noblest of all the stanzas in the Divine Song and it is also the most effective one. There are, no doubt, a few other stanzas in the Gita wherein the Lord has almost directly commanded us to live a certain way of life and has promised that if we obey His instructions, He will directly take the responsibility of guiding us toward His Being. But nowhere has the Lord so directly and openly expressed His divine willingness to undertake the service of His devotee as in this stanza." He proceeds to explain the term 'dharma' and concludes that the context of this verse, 'renouncing all dharmas' means ending the ego completely.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji says that we should completely surrender to His will and take shelter in His love. "Surrendering is the easiest way to Self-transcendence." The finite soul alone cannot deliver itself from the trap in which it has been caught. He quotes Ruysbroeck, "He only is fit to contemplate the Divine light who is the slave to nothing, not even to his virtues."



In understanding the central idea behind the verse, Sri Narasimha Swamiji's views are inspiring. According to him, "Learned men may please themselves and draw seemingly profound meaning from the shastras but only those who have experience in the practice of their truths can explain their real meaning. Any interpretation of a shastra that is opposed to truth cannot be right. The second rule to be followed in determining the meaning of a text in a shastra is that one should not stick to its letter, but try to understand its spirit, its meaning in total context."

The verse conveys that to get rid of all negative tendencies, unhealthy thoughts, anxiety, and worries, one should surrender to SainathParabrahman, the Higher Power which implies opening one's mind without any reservations and doubts, to the inflow of divine consciousness. The needed guidance will come spontaneously.

A question is likely to be asked as to why this verse is so powerful and effective in raising one to unprecedented spiritual levels. The answer lies in the depth of its meaning, its poetic beauty, practical and inspirational value for all, and the culmination of all philosophical concepts and life principles included in the Gita. It is the essence of the most delicious spiritual fruit and the fragrance in the most beautiful divine flower, that is the Bhagavad Gita.



BABA CONSOLES NOOLKAR'S CHILDREN

— by **Smt. Sunanda Ananth**



Justice Tatyasaheb Noolkar along with his children – one of them a doctor shifted to Shirdi to get treatment for his illness. He wanted to be under the protective umbrella of Sai Maharaj. Even though he was staying in Sathe Wada, Baba had given him a ‘Third

Eye’ so that he could see Baba all 24 hours and enjoy his ‘Ashirvad.’

Noolkar passed away on 11th March 1911 at midnight and his desire to have ‘Baba’s Pada Tirth’ was fulfilled by Shama.

Noolkar’s children came to Baba after their father’s funeral. Baba consoled them in his inimitable manner.

How one looks at death depends upon his spiritual upliftment. Noolkar’s children were spiritually advanced. He told them about an event in Mumbai where once there was a stampede at a circus. An elephant went berserk and started running towards the crowd. Seeing the elephant rushing towards them, people also started running to save their lives. The one who was ahead of everyone was a leper in an advanced stage, whose sight could horrify others. In a tizzy, an onlooker with a philosophical bent, thinks to himself – what is in his life, for which he is running to save himself from the clutches of death?

The truth that dawned on the onlooker was that given a choice, most of us might not like to embrace death even when life seems like a curse to us.

Then Baba’s gaze turned towards Anwar a young fisherman from Goa. To console Noolkar’s children, Baba started a conversation with Anwar, who would daily go to a particular spot on the seashore in Panjim to catch fish. Baba asked him out of curiosity, “Is your father also in the same profession?” “Of course

he was, but one big fish swallowed him when he ventured deep into the sea.” Baba then asked, “What about your brother and uncle?”

“They were swept away by the high tides of the sea.” Somewhat perplexed by the fisherman’s reply, Baba asked him about his grandfather. “I am told that he also met a watery grave in the same sea,” replied the fisherman.

Completely flummoxed, Baba kept on looking at the fisherman’s face, but it did not betray any emotions.

After a while, he said, “Young man, this sea has been the cause of all the deaths in your family and yet you continue to explore in the same sea. Why don’t you do something else, I can help you.”

Next to Anwar a devotee by the name Ramlal was sitting and Baba asked that man, “What is your father doing?”

“He is no more, he died of plague at a young age,” replied the Ramlal.

“Look, your father didn’t come to this sea, but still death had its way, and I can presume that none of your other kin, who are no more, died in this sea or because of this sea. What I want to say is that death is inevitable. When any person’s days in this world are over, death will not spare him, whether he is in the sea or on the earth or anywhere. So why to think of death? Keep doing your work,” Baba like a sage advised and consoled Noolkar’s children.

Nana Saheb Chandorkar added that in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna states certain things, which if understood, can take away the fear of death: It is the body that ceases to function, but the soul is immortal. After death, the soul is reborn in another body, and it is like throwing away worn-out clothes and wearing new ones. Life is a continuous stream of births and deaths until we, by Upasana, communion with God, achieve moksha.

Baba nodded with a smile.

Sai Baba Guides Us to a Divine Couple Who Share and Care

— by **Rajeshwari Somasekhar**

When I planned a pilgrimage to Kodumudi and Palani in Tamil Nadu, a Sai brother in Bengaluru advised me to meet a divine couple at Palani who practiced Baba's philosophy to share and care. Sai Baba begged for food from five houses and shared it with dogs, pigs, sparrows, and other animals. Baba called a person a thief if he didn't share his food with another. At Palani, I was assured of a divine couple who looked after plants likewise.

The divine couple are Vira Raghavan and Girija. Girija is a granddaughter of India's former philosopher-president, Dr S Radhakrishnan. They are now famous as 'rose pilgrims' and have dedicated themselves to breeding and growing roses for the last forty years in the Palani Hills. They share their "journey in a heartfelt narration with interesting anecdotes, in a book 'Roses in the Fire of Spring,' to record the story of their romance with roses.

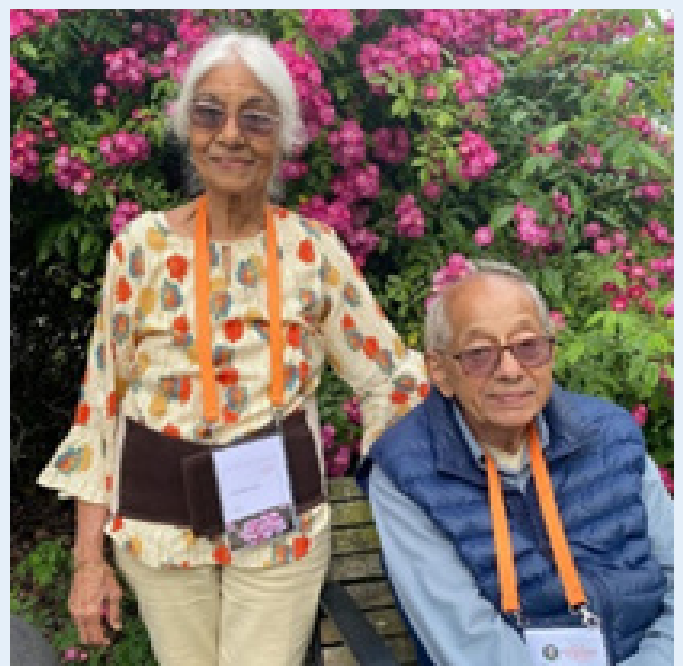
In a garden full of shrubs, trees, and plants, the sturdy, large *Rosa Gigantea* plants 'climb' trees, bursting with white and cream rose blooms; they could be mistaken for rose trees. The couple begins their narrative with Omar Khayyam's lines from the Rubaiyat:

"Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring,
Your Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way.
To fly – and lo! The Bird is on the Wing."



Girija says, "We cannot help going back to Omar Khayyam – who says a thousand roses of today may flower in your garden, but where are the roses of yesterday? Yesterday's roses – the roses your grandmother grew – are the favorites of the determined rosarians of warm climates."

As Girija reels off the botanical names of all the flowers, trees, and shrubs I point to, I wonder aloud how she remembers those difficult Latin names, and she says, "My dear, it is all a matter of interest!" Among the new breed of roses created by the couple is Priyamvada, a 'painted' rose that appears to blush different shades of pink, dedicated to his beloved Girija, who smiles shyly as she explains its creation. An off-white rose that is thorn-free, is aptly named 'Ahimsa' and the hybrid bloom named





after famous Geneticist Janaki Ammal, is pink and yellow.

The couples share their hybrid creations with friends and rose lovers, shying away from commercializing their passionate interest in what is perhaps the world’s most popular and romanticized flower.

I was introduced to over one hundred varieties of roses, all trademarked but not patented as the couple believe in sharing. Sometimes, when they lose a certain rose, they re-discover it elsewhere.

In a typical Sai Baba way says Girija, “Always share plant material, is our policy; you never know when you lose a variety and can get it back again. You love and get backloved one hundred times. It is our experience. Once we had lost a variety and got it back from a Garden in Japan.”

The couple’s rose resources and associations span the world, and the rose named Naga Belle was born after their trip to Nagaland. Naga Belle is blatantly pink, grows upright, and is strikingly beautiful.

Misfortunes are blessings if we handle them well. They are like the knives, Which hurt or help as we hold them by the blade or handle.

—Dada J. P. Vaswani

Give
ONE
Word
Answer

1. Whose Son-in-law was Rao Saheb Yeshwant Janardhan Galwankar?
2. Who influenced Radhakrishna Mai to sing Bengali songs?
3. When did Toser assume Sanyas from?
4. To whom did Baba prescribe a concoction of Almonds to control diarrhea?
5. To whom did Baba ask to record the pulse of Upasani Maharaj in 1914 and what it was?
6. Who else apart from Pillay assisted Upasani to leave Shirdi in 1914?
7. What was the malady Pillay was suffering which Baba cured?
8. Who did Das Ganu Maharaj get his initiation for Sanyas?
9. What did Rao Saheb Yeshwant Janardhan Galwankar ask from Baba?
10. When did Rasane visit Baba for the first time?
11. Baba had earmarked four mangoes for Savalram and how many did Savalram receive?
12. Who did Baba appear in a dream vision to console his child’s death?

ANSWERS: 1. Hemadpant 2. Nasrul Islam 3. Pillay 4. Bapu Saheb Booty 5. Ganapat Rao Shinde 6. Nimonkar 1895 7. Guinea worm abscess 8. Islam Purkar 9. Prem 10. 10.1895 11. Two 12. Rasane



Pragmatic Mysticism of Radhakrishna Mayi's Music and Poetry

— by **D. Sankaraiah**

While writing on Mother Radhakrishna Mayi or for that matter on any poet of repute, a natural query that pops up is: Are all poets basically and habitually mystic in their physical and mental make-up? It's not easy to answer this, but one thing seems common to all creators of imaginative texts – they look deep into the metaphysical essence underlying the physical world they usually encounter.

Be it Das Ganu Maharaj, Rabindranath Tagore, Walt Whitman or Robert Frost; Greek poetess Sappho or Pindar; Latin poets Virgil or Ovid; Hindi poets Pant or Nirala; or Urdu poets Muhammad Iqbal or Altaf Hussain 'Hali' Panipati, the elements of mysticism or a touch of cosmic consciousness, awareness – concerning mankind – in their poetry cannot be denied.

And what's mysticism? Mysticism is a gossamer refinement of spirituality. In other words, it's the poetic or metaphorical manifestation of an ethereal world. Mysticism is an attempt to transcend the mundane and go beyond what's obvious. It's not conventional spirituality. Nor does it always dwell on God and esoteric phenomena. It's a sublimation of humanity and the epitome of all human concerns, creations, and cries.

A mystic empathizes with the world. Mother Radhakrishna Mayi was a rebel poet, 'Bidrohī Kōbi' in Bangla. A rebel poet or writer has the essence of truth. She comprehends it. Just like the rebel existentialist Albert Camus, who could empathize with humanity and establish a universal Idiom of Truth. This truth blossoms into a universal axiom and becomes a mystical reality. Mother Radhakrishna Mayi's poem 'Daridrya', Devotion to Sai Maharaj as Hey Daridrya, Tumi more korechomohan/Tumi more daniyacho Christer somman – O Sainath, you have made me great, you have given me the honor of your 'Anugraha'. Here, Iqbal is not glorifying poverty but universalizing its spirit. It's not the possessions but the poverty of passion and the spirit Mother Radhakrishna Mayi is concerned about.

In another poem, Mother Radhakrishna



Mayisays: 'Let's forget today who friend or foe is and hold each other in caring for each other. Let your love be the magnet to bring humanity to Sai Maharaj's grace.' Mother Radhakrishna Mayi's Sai Maharaj is not confined to Shirdi It's Rabbul-Aalameen – God of the Universe. 'Ishwar aamar jonno ek nichak bhabdhara, jaar roop, protiroop, gun, nirgun kichhu nei' – God is just an idea to me sans any form, image or even attributes. This is the god of mystics. Tagore, an unadulterated mystic, said the same when he wrote to the Argentina writer Victoria Ocampo, "The mystery of the Universe is my God.

The universality of emotions and the large-heartedness of Mother Radhakrishna Mayi's horizon is visible when he says, 'O heart, with the very stones or bricks that some people hurled at you all along, but a wonderful mosque -Dwarkamai of love with foundation, solid and strong,' preaching 'Shraddha and Saburi'.

A mystic binds the world with universal love. Whether it's Mother Radhakrishna Mayi's 'Chhatrodoler Gaan', 'Sab Ka Malik Ek', 'Foriyad' or 'Hindu-Muslim Juddho', readers can discern a broader canvas of concerns, a universal knitting of togetherness. The Pragmatic Mysticism of Mother Radhakrishna Mayi's oeuvre sees the world as one family and articulates the eastern concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the whole world is a family.

Children's Corner



Beloved Children,

Om Namō Sainathaya

A Group of young children who had come to Shirdi requested the SAI AURA team to take them to the 'Samadhi Sthal of Sivanesan Swamiji at Zarine's farm 5 km from Shirdi off Pimpalwadi Road. We hired a van, and it was a blissful trip.

On reaching the Samadhi Sthal and the Ashram we were received by a monk Swami Sankara who took care of our needs and showed us the Ashram.

Sivanesan Swamiji Maharaj was 26 years old in 1953 and he was offered a small job as a housekeeping staff. He did not stir out of Shirdi and attained



Maha Samadhi on 12th February 1996.

As we went around the Ashram, we saw many rat holes and the children started a discussion about the rescue of forty-one workers, trapped for 17 days in November 2023. in an under-construction tunnel that collapsed due to a landslide in Uttarakhand's Silkyara tunnel. The SAI AURA team felt that the



children could at this point pick some wisdom that the incident inspires all.

The children knew that the best team, drawn from multiple agencies and globally reputed domain experts, brainstormed and planned the rescue operation. The fact that the operation involved not just rocks and debris, but human lives, made it sensitive and challenging. The best technology and the best equip-

ment available were deployed. The US-made auger machine considered a state-of-the-art driller, was tasked to needle through the debris of a pipeline to improvise an escape way. The machine did as well as it could and went as far as it could. But the last mile, the last pipe, posed problems. Technology and machinery failed and bowed out. The rescuers were at their wit's end. At last, who did they turn to? Rat-hole miners – the poorly paid, manual workers who are skilled in burrowing in narrow spaces and rocks, using handheld tools.

And what a feat these rat-hole miners accomplished!

This brings to mind what the Hindi poet, Rahim, said. In a popular Doha, Rahim cautions that things grand should not blind us to shun things small and lowly. To drive home his point, he posits a rhetorical question: where a needle is needed, he asks, can a sword serve instead? The sword



may have its brave use, but so does the tiny needle. The sword is not superior to the needle; nor is the needle inferior. Each is unique.

The terms superior and inferior are not absolute. They are relative; related to the need of the moment and their ability to serve that specific need. This truth extends to all worldly assets and all social positions. To miss this point, to get embroiled in false notions of importance, leads us to a muddled value system and consequent miseries, on personal and social planes.

From the mightiest emperor down to the tiniest blade of grass, everyone and everything has a specific function in life and is in-

vested with a caliber tailored to this end. Emerson has a poem titled *The Mountain and the Squirrel*. The two quarreled. The mountain, in pride, called the squirrel, 'Little Prig'. The squirrel coolly retorted: "True, I am not so large as you, but nor are you so small as I."

The squirrel elaborated on its point: "Talents differ; all is well and wisely put; If I cannot carry forests on my back, neither can you crack a nut." The auger machine could do big deeds, but not what the rat-hole miners did. The rat-hole miners, again, could not have done what the machine did. The poem states: "All sorts of things and weather/ Must be taken in together/ To make up a year/ And a sphere." Hence, a

thousand names for God!

Vishnu, the name, connotes The All. Two other names relevant to our context that appear one after the other in *Vishnu Sahasranama*, are Anu, 835, connoting the smallest and subtlest; and Brhat, 836, connoting the immeasurably large. Both are on a par. And wherever you are between these two extremes, that too is perfectly fine. As the squirrel declares: "I think it is no disgrace/ To occupy my place."

The 'Satsang' at the 'Samadhi Sthal' of Sivanesan Swamiji Maharaj was blissful and we returned with happy memories.

Yours Sai Babaly

Sai Aura Team

"To be a devotee of Sai Maharaj, examine your faults, correct them by surrendering to him, and breathe out love, peace, and joy to all."

—**Sri Narasimha Swamiji**

"With Recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama daily
You will control your tongue, eyes, ears, and nose."

—**Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji**



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