

Aura of Shirdi Sai



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE —

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SaiAura
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**SHUBH
NAVRATRI**



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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 27th issue in October 2024 our Editorial Board requested me to pen a few words as people around the world celebrate the 106th Maha Samadhi celebrations and Navaratri season, the festival, to mark the admixture of happiness and grief, victory of good over evil, of light over darkness, and above all to eternally remind us that Sainath Parabrahman is close behind our thoughts and guiding our steps.



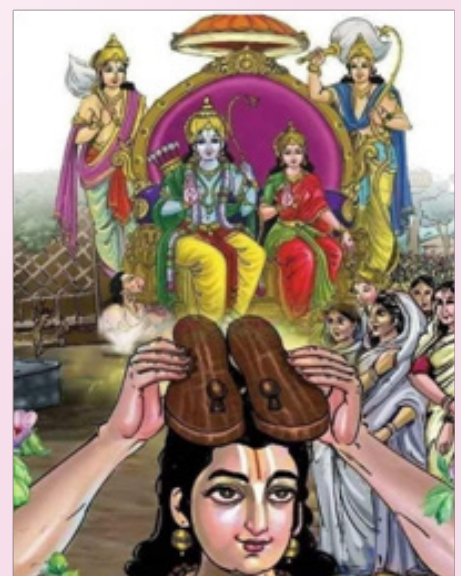
We have ventured a 'Do It Yourself' approach towards Self Realization-

Human beings generally tend to be swept off their feet in two situations – triumph and tragedy. The person who can look at both sides of this parabolic sweep with equanimity, acknowledging the ephemeral quality of life cloaked in Maya, has truly evolved. Indeed, attaining such an ideal state of self-control is the privilege of one who ironically has either lost one's mind or is so wrapped in divine thoughts that the ego, fountainhead of pride, arrogance, and misery, loses all potency.

The latter category is more challenging as it implies a state where one is in the world and yet straddling a cusp of attachment-detachment. It effectively translates to being both within and without, and in perfect harmony with this dichotomy. Those attuned to living in this state are well and truly on course to Self-realization.

The philosophy of Sainath Parabrahman is the connection between duty and devotion. According to Lord Sainath, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive but are the kind of inalienable realities that if conformed to in an egoless manner, offer a perfect blueprint for Self-realization and spiritual harmony. Regarding God as absolute Truth and one with the universe and all its subsets, he had observed that this Truth was within each individual and manifested as a name in one's consciousness. Lord Sainath said that we are all born with 'sparks of Divinity', but with time, it is forgotten and submerged in the business of life. It can be unearthed through deep meditative introspection on Sainath Parabrahman.

As Sainath Parabrahman, akin to 'Shabda Brahman' in the Vedas, flows from the Truth within the human being; it becomes a pristine expression of God. The Truth manifests equally in macrocosm and microcosm as the moving force of all creation. In essence, Sainath Parabrahman's philosophy was based on the premise that given the oneness of Truth, all that stemmed from it, such as mankind, religion, or language, were all expressions of this Truth.



Work undertaken in the reverberating aura of Sainath Parabrahman is elevated to an equivalent of worship. No rites, rituals, or dogmatic subservience are necessary in this do-it-yourself approach to Self-realization and spiritual harmony. Such work, per se, becomes an act of sublime dedication. It is a statement of surrender and an acknowledgment of oneness with God, where the human ego is redundant and has no place. This one step demolishes the ego and its associated desire. It paves the way for undertaking one's duty sieved through Sainath Parabrahman. By dedicating one's actions to God in the form of Sainath Parabrahman, one automatically insulates oneself from vanity, arrogance, and desire so that all actions are attributed to divine sanction.

Bharata, brother of Rama, is perhaps the best example of selfless service. He ruled Ayodhya on behalf of his elder brother during the latter's 14-year exile and was happy to relinquish his charge to Rama on his return home. In the process, Bharata epitomizes the concept of selfless duty without letting ego, attachment or desire come in the way of performing his Raja Dharma in Rama's name and service to the people.

Sainath Parabrahman, 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 happiness. Like a fluorescent object that glows long after it has been exposed to light, we, too, glow with divine love and Light. We all carry this light within, we can experience and share it with others, truly celebrating the 106th 'Punya Tithi of Sai Maharaj.

With all best wishes and Regards

Yours SAI BABALy

Prathibha

A Thought to Dwell on

Dada Kelkar was the custodian of Sathe Wada.
For all traditional ways, Sai Maharaj had scant respect
For rules and traditions.
When a devotee used onion at Sathe Wada
Dada Kelkar was furious and made it a big issue of it.
But Baba brought in harmony. By declaring
“Only the one who can digest onion can realize God”



First Word

WHOSE DREAM IS THIS ANYWAY?

We are happy to present the twenty-seventh issue of 'Sai Aura' commemorating the 106th MAHASAMADHI of Sainath Parabrahman.

Just before his Maha Samadhi, Baba narrated a story emphasizing that 'life is a dream'. Ganpat Kote Patil, a farmer at Shirdi was standing completely still amidst the wind-blown paddy field, lost in thought. His wife rushed to him, crying that a cobra killed their son. When her husband did not reply, she blurted out, "You are heartless!"

"Forgive me, but you don't understand," the farmer replied. "Last night I dreamt that I was a king with seven sons, who all were bitten by cobras and died. Now I am wondering whether I should grieve for my seven dead sons in that dream, or for my one son who has died in this dream we are in now."

Our life's experiences, with all their joys and sorrows, mesmerize us with a sense of undeniable reality. Yet, the truth is that everything is only a thought in the mind of the Divine.

Sai Maharaj, who related the story above, just before his Maha Samadhi in 1918, explains: "This world seems real to you only because God dreamed you into existence along with His cosmic dream. You are a part of His dream. If, at night, you dream that you bump your head against a wall, you may experience an imaginary pain. The moment you wake up, you realize that there is no pain. The pain you experienced was only in your mind; it was not physical. The same is true of this dream you are dreaming now. When you wake up to this reality, you will see that this earthly life is just a show; it is nothing but shadows and light."

In a small way, this reflects Sainath Parabrahman's teaching that all of life's experiences are for our 'education and entertainment'. The Supreme dreams a particular dream for each of us and arranges the events in life for our benefit. Though it's often hard to see amid suffering, it is meant for our welfare and growth.

When we get caught up in the pleasure or pain in life, it's good to remember that we're not really in charge of our circumstances. We're only playing our part in God's dream – be it one of success or failure; health or sickness; love or rejection. With compassion and wisdom, God gives us the roles we are to play, perfectly designed for what we need to learn in this lifetime.

Therefore, try to release the anxiety over what has happened in the past, what choices you must make now, and what the future holds. Let the Divine take charge of your life, for, in fact, He already has. Try to see the Dreamer behind every event and person in your dream throughout your life. There is only one reality behind the lights and shadows of life: God's joy.

In his lectures carrying Baba's message all over the length and breadth of the country, Sri Narasimha Swamiji used to quote a poem, 'When I Am Only a Dream', explained what it meant to be truly awake, as well as the story related by Sai Maharaj in 1918 before his Maha Samadhi:

I come to tell you all of Him - Sainath Mahaprabhu,
And the way to encase Him in your bosom,
And of the two paise 'Dakshina' discipline that brings His grace...
And yet when I am only a dream to you,
I will come to remind you that you too are naught
But a dream of my Beloved Lord Sainath.
And when you know you are a dream,
As I know now, we will be ever awake in Him.

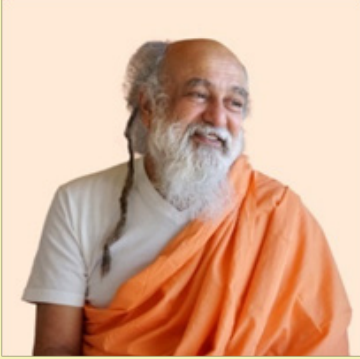
We wish all our contributors and readers happiness and prosperity with Baba's blessings.



Look To This Day!

Message for Baba's Maha Samadhi

— by **Baba Shivarudra Balayogi**
Shivabalayogi Trust, Dehradun



Sai Maharaj cast off his mortal coil on 15th October 1918 at the auspicious moment when Vijaya Dashami changed to Ekadashi. This is an occasion to celebrate Sai Baba, who was confined to three and a half cubic feet of physical body and is now merged with the universe. We will commemorate the 106th 'Maha Samadhi' in October 2024.

Baba's Maha Samadhi is a matter of 'ANAND'. Anand or bliss is an unlimited, everlasting inner joy undisturbed by external circumstances. It is not a synonym for happiness or pleasure, which are derived from sense objects, from things outside the self, which are temporary. In bliss, no event makes you sad or ecstatic. When you are in the company of friends, for example, you enjoy that thoroughly; when not, that silence makes you dejected.

With Baba's 'Ashirvad' as you observe his 'Punya Tithi', you are not numb; instead, you are so centered and in the present moment that you are perpetually high on life. Worry, anxiety, guilt, fear — none of these demons catch you. You will be happy.

Anxiety and worry snap at you only when you go off the present grid of Baba's 'Ashirvad'. As Das Ganu Maharaj puts it, Sai Maharaj can carry your burden, when you fully surrender to him however hard. Things get difficult when we pile up yesterday's sorrows and tomorrow's anxieties. Baba has taken Samadhi to take care of you. So, surrendering to Sai Maharaj is the key.

According to Anna Saheb Dabholkar, the author of Sai Satcharitra, "Sai Ashirvad from Baba's Maha Samadhi is the energy that helps us recognize the conditions of happiness that are already present in our lives".

The most significant part of Sai Baba's Maha Samadhi is to develop total surrender to him. It is achieved through refining attention and awareness toward Sai Parabrahman. Have no complaints or regrets and stay in the present in the deep contemplation of Sai Maharaj. Living in this moment fully is essential. One moment lived and experienced fully, and perfectly, gives birth to another perfect moment, and all such moments add up to a wonderful day. Look to this day of Baba's Maha Samadhi! 'For it is life, the very life of life, for yesterday is but a dream, And tomorrow only a vision, But today well lived remembering Baba's Maha Samadhi makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, And every tomorrow a vision of Sai Maharaj hope...?'

When you focus on the most mundane activity and experience it as Sai-will, it can create bliss.

With blessings from
Shivabalayogi Maharaj
and
Sai Maharaj.



FINDING JOY IN LIFE

— by **Sai Raghu**

Life can be tough.
It throws challenges at us,
But even in the darkest of times,
Sai Maharaj is always the hope.
Joy isn't reserved for
Monumental occasions.
It's constantly present in Baba's aura.
We must recognize it
In our everyday lives.
A smile from a stranger,
a beautiful sunrise,
the laughter of children,
and scores of other little things bring joy to life.
The essential prerequisite
to finding joy is a calm mind.
The mind is preoccupied with
worry and anxiety about the future.
You miss the beauty and grandeur
that the present moment offers.
Nana Saheb Chandorkar
Quoting the Gita says that
people cook but eat sin.
You work hard and put in long hours
to earn wealth.
In the end, you only get mental agitation.
Who enjoys the world?
Sai Maharaj indicates it is the persona
who eats the remnants of sacrifice.
You gain prosperity and happiness
When you work in a spirit of service
and sacrifice for a higher cause.
Your mind is calm, and
you can enjoy even the simplest things –
the chirping of a bird, a gorgeous sunset,



a simple meal or the gentle breeze.
Even when you get what you seek,
you are not happy.
Your mind shifts to something else you lack.
Thus, you are unhappy, agitated, and miserable.
When your happiness is pegged
on a future achievement,
you do not enjoy what Baba has blessed you,
When you get from Baba what you want,
your mind immediately shifts to something else.
This goes on endlessly.
Das Ganu Maharaj in Santa Kathamrita said,
“If you are not happy as you are,
where you are,
you will never be happy.”
It is a myth to believe
that you need to possess a thing to enjoy it.
A calm mind thinks of higher,
more fulfilling avenues.
As you get anchored in the higher goal of spirituality,
you become free from lower desires.
You evolve spiritually.



Mystics and Saints

— by **Shreyas Devaraj**

Dr. Sushila Nayar(1914-2001)



This Gujarat-born doctor joined Mahatma Gandhi as his Physician from 1936 soon after she graduated from Lady Hardinge Medical College. She Was a true Gandhian like her brother Pyarelal. Her selfless service at Sevagram is legendary. After Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, she left for the USA to join Johns Hopkins University for specialization in Public Health. She entered politics and was India's Minister for Health for eleven years from 1955 to 1967. She was associated with three Prime Ministers – Jawaharlal



Nehru, Lal Bahadur Sastry, and Indira Gandhi. As Union Health Minister she laid a firm foundation for 'Rural Health Care' and her favourite project was 'Health for all'. In 1967, she returned to the institution she founded - Mahatma

Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences at Wardha and worked as a professor and later as Director. She remained a bachelorette and stayed in a small room in the Ladies Hostel with minimal furnishings. She was known for simplicity and dedication. She did not mind sweeping floors, cleaning utensils, and always treated medical students as her children. Dr.Vijayakumar was her student and later her colleague and co-examiner. He always remembers her dictum: 'Be as simple as Sai Baba.'

Puttanna aka K.S.Nagaraja Rao (1927-2024)

Born in a middle-class family in Bengaluru, Puttanna evolved as a great devotee of Sai Baba and his apostles – Sri Narasimha Swamiji and Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji. A free thinker, poet, and writer, he has influenced tens and hundreds

of people into 'Bhakti Marg.' He was working with Central Silk Board and lived in Mumbai and Bengaluru On retirement he settled in Bengaluru and spearheaded three epoch-making movements – mobilizing ten crores 'Likhit' NamaJapa of 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya, Jaya Sai' and getting them immersed at Kanyakumari at the confluence of three oceans, initiating nine crore times recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama by Sai devotees all over the country, and conducting over 1008 'Homas' of Vishnu Sahasranama at different places. His pious deeds have earned him the name 'Puttanna Guruji' a Sai saint. His songs and poems have influenced many to become Sai Maharaj devotees.



Mother Sita Shri (1930 -2019)

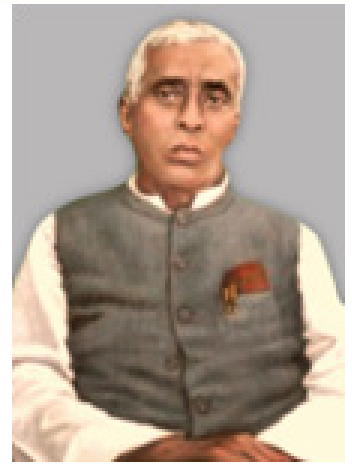
Born in a middle-class Brahmin family in Mylapore, Chennai, Sita Shri showed her divine nature even at age ten. Mother Goddess Kamakshi Devi possessed her. Her musical compositions, melodious singing, and devout actions took her to Paramacharya of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharedra Saraswati, and Sri Narasimha Swamiji at All India Sai Samaj. They earned her the title 'Baba Kolandai' – daughter of Baba. Her admirers have converted this title to 'Gift of Baba.' She had visions of Sai Maharaj, Ramana Bhagawan, and other great saints. She worked for the United States Information Service, Chennai until she relocated to Sainikpuri, a neighborhood in the northern part of Hyderabad city to look after her mother. She had named her residence as 'Sai Ashram'.



Sathanur Sorakayiidoddi Kariyappa (1900-1990)

Popularly known as 'Kanakapura Gandhi' in Bengaluru Rural District, Kariyappa was a great educationist. He transformed many children to learn and lead a life as responsible citizens. He did his Master's in English from Mysore University and decided to work for the rural masses. In 1941, he founded the 'Rural Education Society at Kanakapura, a group of institutions, 70 kilometers from Bengaluru to impart education to rural children spanning primary to post-graduation at an affordable cost with hostel facilities. He was moved by the plight of rural children commuting to the city to pursue their

education. This society is autonomous and offers education to over three thousand children in and around Kanakapura including vocational courses. The Gandhi of Kanakapura did not marry and resided with the students in the hostel and used a mat for sleeping. He was a true Gandhian to the core.



***Till the time
a spiritual seeker,
realises the Truth that,
the God is within him,
he keeps on searching,
FOR HIM
in the external world.***

Be
Sweet
Child
Dr. Pannir Singh's
Pictorial
Message
Mids



A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama–30: Sahasranama Leads You to 'Raise Above the Mundane World'

— by **Seetha 'Priya'**

The Bhagavad Gita says: Dedicate your life and its work unto Me; act intelligently, and your personality will grow to its real potential and your achievements to their meaningful dimensions. Keep smiling, never weep – live life meeting the challenges, both within and all-around. Regrets, tears, sorrows, and sighs only dissipate our energies, and we do not gain any new strength to solve our problems. Then why weep and despair? Let us keep smiling and be ever hopeful; roll up our sleeves, tighten our belts, and plunge into the fields of life to play the game.



The 30th shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama is -
**Ojas Tejo Dhyutidarah Prakashatma
Pratapanah Riddah Spashtaksharo Mantraha
Chandramshuh Bhaskaradhyutihi**

Lord Vishnu is the possessor of life energy (Ojas), valor (Teja), effulgence (Dhyutidarah), and the Radiant Self (Prakashatma). He makes you rise above mundane things. He is a burner of sins (Pratapanah), and wealthy (Riddah) by clearly pronouncing (Spashtaksharo) the mantras (Mantras) has the rays of the moon (Chandramshuh) and radiance of the Sun (Bhaskaradhyutihi).

It was an interesting case of how Sai Baba managed a mundane affair.

The Railway Police had caught a common thief who had stolen some jewelry on the train. He stated in Dhulia court that Sai Baba had presented him with those jewels. Dhulia court summoned Sai Baba to appear in person to give testimony. Sai Baba was furious when he received the summons. He tore it into pieces and put it into the 'Dhuni' right in the presence of the court official who issued the summons.

With this direct insult, the Dhulia court issued

an arrest warrant for Baba.

An officer of the court with a policeman reached Shirdi to arrest Sai Baba. This officer was preparing to go to Pandharpur for Lord Vittal's darshan. This was intercepted and he was sent to Shirdi to arrest Sai Baba. He was in an angry mood. He wanted to complete the assignment very fast. When this court officer entered the mosque, noon Aarthi was in progress. Sai Baba planned to give him a glimpse of his divine form. The court officer glimpsed God Vittal in place of Sai Baba! He was stunned and moved with emotion. The Lord of Pandharpur was right in front of him! He shoved the arrest warrant into his pocket and with folded hands kneeled in reverence! Later he looked at his companion – the Police Constable. He was lost in the vision of Lord Rama! Both were extremely happy with their own experiences but unhappy at the official task assigned to them. However, they met an attorney known to them. On the attorney's advice they returned to Dhulia along with the attorney – but without Baba.

The Magistrate heard the story and heeded the attorney's counsel. A special commission was appointed to go to Shirdi and examine Sai Baba on



the spot. The accused charged with theft was also taken along.

The commission was headed by a judge. The mosque was crowded as usual when the commission reached there. Baba was engaged in stitching a torn gown. There were a few legal luminaries among the crowd. Baba got up and offered a chair to the judge. While he sent away most devotees, the legal luminaries stayed back thinking they could help in some capacity. But does God need anyone's help? He permitted them to watch to how God deposes in the court of humans.

The judge asked his first question – “Your name?”

“They call me Sai Baba” – The Loving God told him how humans address him. The judge too felt that after all God has no name! The judge asked the next question – “Sai Baba, what is the name of your father.”

Everybody became alert! But is not Sai himself the mother and father of this universe? He just said – “My father's name? Of course, Sai Baba!” Ordinarily, a judge would have lost his temper. But here the Judge was a learned Hindu and a Brahmin by caste. His name was Joshi. He went to the next question – “Who is your Guru?” Sai Baba replied – “Venkusa”. Baba always talked mystically and kept his earlier life a secret.

The next question was – “To what faith do you belong?” Asking Baba about his religion was a means for Joshi Saheb to identify the Holy Scripture that he should use for Baba to take the oath. Baba replied – “Where is the question of my caste or community? I belong to Kabir's class”. What a reply indeed! With that response, Baba again kept himself out of any religion or community on earth! Wasn't Kabir's birth a mystery too? He grew up in a Muslim weaver's family, picked up Islamic culture, yet believed in Ram and Rahim!

The next question was – “What is your profession, Baba?”

“Profession! Oh! The one of Almighty Protector!” What an answer! Any other person would have bowed down to Baba! But Joshi did not do it. Hence, he quickly asked him – “What is your age?”

A silly-looking but real reply came – “Saheb, you want to know my age? Sir, it is countless! It runs into millions of years!”

The judge was still unable to decide which Holy Scripture should be used for Baba to take the oath

of speaking the truth as per court rules. So, he told Baba directly – “Baba, here we are sitting in a court! So, you must ensure that whatever you speak is truth and nothing but the truth!”

Baba replied – “Truth? Why, every word I utter is truth! Nothing less, nothing more!” Those who have an insight into Hindu philosophy know that every word Baba spoke was true to its core.

Joshi Saheb asked an important question – “The accused sitting here, is he known to you?” Baba said in affirmative.

“Baba, this accused says he stays with you. Is it true?” Sai Baba replied on a spiritual level! He said – “Cent percent true! Because I stay with everyone! Everyone is mine!”

“But this jewelry? It was found with him. He says you gave it to him.”

“Right! I gave it. But tell me Saheb, who gives to whom?” The question was subtle indeed! But a witness is not entitled to ask questions to a court! So, Joshi Saheb asked Baba again – “Baba, you just said you gave this jewelry to him. Then tell me how it came to you?”

With this question, Sai Baba flared up! How can God ever like being questioned about how a particular thing came to him or was created? He had all along replied on a human plane, but now he was disgusted at being implicated by a mere statement of a common thief. The accused had not visited Shirdi at all. He gave Sai Baba's name just because he heard it on the train from co-passengers. How can God testify against his child? Sai Baba angrily said – “How can you involve me in this? It is for you to find out from the accused. Why do you ask me?” Baba got up and left the place.

The judge was considerate. He recorded the witnesses of a few villagers and residents. None of them had seen the accused at Shirdi. He also verified the record of visitors to Shirdi, and his name was not on the list.

By then Baba returned to the mosque. The judge told him – “Baba, we have completed our investigation! We find that the accused never visited Shirdi. Therefore, it is impossible that he has got this jewelry from you.”

“That's right! I have nothing to do with it.” – Baba replied

The accused also confessed his crime and was later punished appropriately!



IshAvAsya Mantra #20 (Part 2)

— by **Jayakrishna Nelamangala**

॥ ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः हरिः ॐ ॥

॥ ॐ śrī gurubhyo namaḥ hariḥ ॐ ॥

Mantra #20 (Conclusion part)

In the previous posting we went through each word of the upanishat, and in this we will put it all together.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्

विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।

युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो

भूयिष्ठां ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ॥ २० ॥

agnē naya supathā rāyē asmān

viśvāni dēva vayunāni vidvān ।

yuyōdhyasmajjuhurāṇamēnō

bhūyiṣṭhā tē nama ukti vidhēma ॥ 20 ॥

Oh! Parabrahman who is the preraka for shareera and the World, hence called 'agni' (अग्ने agnē) take us (नय naya) through that path which has no return to the cycle of samsāra (सुपथा supathā) for getting the wealth called mōksha (राये rāyē). Oh! Parabrahman, (देव deva) only You know (विद्वान् vidvān) knowledge in its entirety (वयुनानि vayunāni) only you know if our (अस्मान् asmān) sādhanā is complete (विश्वानि vishvāni). Oh! Parabrahman, liberate us (युयोधि yuyōdhi) from all our (अस्मान् asmat) undesirable karma (एनो enō) which make us 'alpa' (जुहुराणमेनो juhurāṇam). All we can give you (ते tē) is our sādhanā, in the form of jñāna-bhakti (भूयिष्ठां bhūyiṣṭhā) and with this jñāna-bhakti we will say (विधेम vidhēma) the utterance (उक्तिम् uktim) 'namah' (नम nama).

NOTES:

1) By 'anga' meaning preraka for shareera, as also jagat-preraka, the Parabrahman who gets the name "agni" for this reason we need understand Brahman of the Veda to be both bandha-kartr and also mōksha-kartr.

2) svāyambhuva manu "prayed" to Parabrahman viṣṇuḥ who has the name "yajña". Please refer to the very first posting on this series. With shāstra one understands that, the word "yajña" that appears in vēda, is a word that indicates Parabrahman. Therefore, the entire vēda must be understood as revealing Parabrahman (paramātma-para) and not karma-para. The 'prayer' of manu is not mere praising the Lord.

3) jñāna-bhakti should not be thought of as two different things bhakti and jñāna. The upanishat establishes that sādhanā is jñāna and Vedanta calls it bhakti. The intent is that, there is no bhakti without jñāna. There is no jñāna without bhakti because bhakti is the preparation of the mind to receive the knowledge of Parabrahman. Thus, the same sādhanā is addressed by the two words bhakti and jñāna. There is an entire section called bhakti-paada in the brahma-sootras.

śrī kriṣṇārpaṇamastu,
Jayakrishna Nelamangala

Acknowledgements:

I thank the publishers of this magazine for giving me an opportunity to introduce this upanishat through these articles. In particular, I thank Smt Pratibha Gattadahalli for her efforts in making this series happen. If these articles evince an interest in the reader to learn upanishats under a proper teacher, then the series has served its purpose. I would like to inform the readers that this and three other upanishats viz., Isha, Kena, Katha and MunDaka have been published in book form. The fifth one is in the works.



A Pilgrim in Each of Us

By: Sri Narasimha Swamiji

After Sai Maharaj blessed me with immense peace of mind in 1936, he prompted me to take his message to the nooks and corners of the country. At every step, he offered me guidance, associates, and resources. In my travels, Sai Maharaj prompted a growing desire for deeper, transformative connections with people and places visited. I felt that I was a pilgrim myself.



In his book, 'Bhakti Leelamrita' while describing 'The Art of Pilgrimage', Das Ganu Maharaj writes: "In each of us dwells a pilgrim... the part of us that long to have direct contact with the sacred..."

This 'sacred', he suggests, is that which is worthy of our reverence, what evokes awe and wonder in the human heart, and what, when contemplated, can transform us utterly. Referred to as 'In Quest of Eternity', this is about seeking a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. This awareness is supported and enhanced by a slow and steady journey as described by Das Ganu Maharaj and in the last days of Nana Saheb Chandorkar to spread the glory of Sai Maharaj.

To carry Baba's message to all, I avoided rushing from one place to another. In Sai Prachar, one should always look for angelic and demonic qualities as both are inherent in all people. On March 4, 1861, the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, took the oath of office and made his inaugural address to his country, over which loomed the gathering storm of a murderous civil war. Seven of the states of the South had already seceded from the Union because of Lincoln's determination to abolish slavery. It was feared that the remaining eight southern states would soon follow, tearing the republic apart.

The President appealed to his compatriots, "The mystic chords of memory will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched as they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

What are the 'better angels' in us that Lincoln evoked, in the hope of avoiding a blood-drenched conflict? And if there are the better angels – of compassion, love, and fellowship – must there not also be their opposite, the demons of hate, rage, and

violence, the two sides often engaged in an unresolved civil war within us?

In 1886, R.L. Stevenson personified the angels and demons in us in the characters of the good and gentle Jekyll and the homicidal Hyde, two opposed psyches.

A traveler should remember that in each of us, there is a confrontation between the ideals of truth, honesty, kindness, and generosity and their adversaries – falsehood, deceit, avarice, and malice. Sometimes we fail to distinguish right and wrong, what we ought to do, and what we are tempted to do; we hear the choice we make, in matters trivial or tragic, small or great, is often not a choice at all, but a submission to in which we act against our better judgment through weakness of will.

DH Lawrence wrote: "To be human is to track our way through this haunted forest in that unique expedition that we call our life".

G.S. Khaparde, a lawyer from Amravati, was shadowed by Britishers and came running to Sai Maharaj. Baba assures protection. In a letter to Kaka Dixit, Khaparde recorded how Baba protected him in a sedition case.

Whether you embark on a physical pilgrimage to a holy place like Shirdi or an ordinary place, know that every step can be sacred if you approach it with intention and openness. Think of Sai Maharaj in all your thoughts.



Knowledge of the Self -liberates us from sorrows

— by **Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji**

Sai Baba has stated, “Though ‘Avidya’ the ignorance, is beginningless, it is completely wiped out by the emergence of Vidya, the knowledge.”

Ignorance never goes away unless knowledge, its opposite, is born. The moment we learn what a pot is like, our unfamiliarity with it is over. Similarly, when



we become aware of what a camera is like, our lack of knowledge of how it works is addressed.

‘Life of Sai Baba’ by Sri Narasimha Swamiji reveals that our sorrows, fears, anxieties, stress, and confusion are not because we do not know physics, math, or other subjects. They are because we do not know ourselves. Only knowledge of Self liberates us from sorrows leading us to fearlessness.

Quoting Viveka Chudamani, Sai Baba states that all our sufferings are only due to a lack of awareness of our true nature. Just as a lack of understanding of physics can only be remedied by learning about physics, an absence of self-awareness can only be remedied by acquiring Self-knowledge.

Action cannot sublimate ignorance. Knowledge does verily destroy avidya just as light eradicates deep darkness. Trying to sweep darkness out of a dark room is futile. Even if an army of men carry the darkness in baskets and pour it out, the room will still be dark. Sweeping is not the right method of removing darkness. Only light can remove darkness, however thick it may be. Similarly, we can overcome ignorance by the pure light of Self-knowledge. Hence, an action cannot sublimate ignorance; knowledge is its only antidote. By removing avidya, one uncovers the Self.

The Bhagavad Gita states that the Lord does not take the virtue or sin of any; knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, and thereby, beings are deluded (5.15). Our scriptures clearly say ignorance is the problem, and knowledge of the Self is the only solution.

When ‘Ajnana’, the unawareness, is removed, nothing remains to be understood. Everything is clear, like daylight. Ignorance is like night; when it passes, you are in the daylight of enlightenment. Sometimes, we see thick mist enveloping a garden. If we try to grab it, nothing comes into our hands. It is not a wall; we can walk through it. Still, it obstructs our vision and hinders our progress. The mist continues till the bright



sunlight emerges. After that, it evaporates. Similarly, this inexplicable ignorance causes troubles and endless sorrows in our consciousness. It can be dispelled only by the flash of Self-knowledge.

As a child, one looks, touches, tastes, smells, and listens to the sound, which is a word naming the object being perceived. In this way, ignorance is shed, and knowledge is gained, first of forms and names, then of color and other related attributes. Later, finer distinctions become apparent, including shades of color, various sizes, and shapes.

Ignorance is present in every individual; it is like a dark place where the light of knowledge is essential. It is a cause of bondage and will disappear, just as a solitary lamp dispels darkness in a dark room.



Shree SaptashrungiMaataye Namaha

— by **Smt. Sunanda Ananth**



Kakaji Vaidya was the priest at Mother Goddess 'Saptashrungi' temple at Vani, in Nasik district of Maharashtra. Umpteen domestic problems had robbed him of his peace of mind. To mitigate his problems the Divine Mother gave him a dream vision and asked

him to seek Sai Baba's blessings. He did not know about Sai Baba. He went to Trimbakeshwar at Nasik and worshipped. Again, the Divine Mother in another dream vision clarified it as 'Sai Baba of Shirdi. Kakaji Vaidya was again in a dilemma.

The Omnipresent Sai Maharaj reminded



Madhava Rao Deshpande about a forgotten vow of his mother to Divine Mother 'Saptashrungi' at Vani. Baba asked Madhava Rao Deshpande to go

to Vani and fulfill his vow. At Vani, he met Vaidya and was thrilled to learn his dream vision. Kakaji Vaidya accompanied Madhava Rao Deshpande to Shirdi. Upon seeing Sai Maharaj his mind became calm, and he regained his peace of mind.

Kakaji Vaidya stayed at Shirdi for some time. One day, Sai Maharaj asked Nana Saheb Chandorkar to describe the greatness of Mother Goddess Saptashrungi.

Nana Saheb Chandorkar gave a discourse - The real essence of the Goddess, the true form of Shakti, is well encapsulated in one of her most powerful mantras, 'Shree Saptashrungi Mataaye Namah.' The word 'Shree' means consciousness. Mother Goddess 'Saptashrungi' encompasses four different powers — Kriya Shakti, Gyan Shakti, Chitta Shakti, and Icha Shakti. That which causes these four powers to become active and functional is referred to as Mother Goddess 'Saptashrungi'.

What is Kriya Shakti - the power of action?

It refers to creativity. A seed contains the potential to grow into a tree. You sow the seed in the ground and from that small seed, a huge tree of peepal, banyan, or mango emerges. The process of a tree emerging from a seed is called the power of action.



What is Gyan Shakti - the power of knowledge? It is the ability to become a tree from within the seed. Someone who knows about plants can tell that a tree grows from the seed but even the most educated person cannot understand how the Gyan that transforms into a tree inside the seed functions. The nerves in our body, the capacity of those nerves and the brain, the digestive system, the nourishment, and the nutrition obtained from food, are all powered by Gyan Shakti. What knowledge is driving the internal functions of the body? Even during sleep, the heart keeps beating, the brain functions and blood circulation continues. In this way, the power of action and knowledge are evident even in inert nature.

What is Chitta Shakti? We call the unconscious mind Chitta. Its nature is vast. It is said that power arises from the mind. This mind is of the nature of Shiva. All Maya, illusion, emanates from this mind. We do not know of the nature of this mind. What we see in the world is the magic of this Chitta. This



entire universe originated from the Chitta. The vast power of the mind has been described in the Gita thus: “O my mind, you have the treasure within you, nothing outside compares to it.” Whatever you seek outside is all within you. Jiva, the individual Self; Jagat, the World; and Ishwar, the Divine, are all within your mind. Whoever attains the knowledge of this Chitta, attains knowledge of the entire World.

What is Iccha Shakti, the power of Desire? Scriptures state that God desired, ‘Ekah Aham Bahusyamah’—

Let me manifest into many. Consequently, the One manifested into many. Beings, animals, birds, and aquatic creatures were created. All these became manifest forms of the same God. The desire of God has created the world and that same supreme mind, that same great mind is also within us. So, we can say that Iccha Shakti of God is within our minds, too.

‘Namah’ means that we pay respect to. Who do

we pay respect to? Ourobeisanceis paid to Mother Goddess ‘Saptashrungi’ who functions in the entire universe and encompasses Kriya Shakti, Gyan Shakti, Chitta Shakti, and Iccha Shakti. It was to make it understandable to the naive intellect that the Idol was made of the Goddess Divine Mother seated on a lion, holding weapons in her hands, and giving a sweet smile. People accepted this as truth and started worshipping her. They forgot that the symbols were indicating something else.

Nana Saheb Chandorkar concluded his discourse by saying we worship the Mother Goddess ‘Saptashrungi’ and feel satisfied.

Sai Maharaj added that we forget that the one we call Mother Goddess ‘Saptashrungi’ is within us, within our bodies, minds, consciousness, intellect, and ego, functioning everywhere. When we awaken the supreme power, the primal power within us, we imbibe the true essence of Mother Goddess ‘Saptashrungi’.

When chips are down

— by **S Sai Priya**

Hopelessness arises
when life does not go our way.
We feel Sainath is not with us
everything is working against us,
and life will never be better again.
The mind drives us into a negative
downward spiral with every new thought.
Think of Sai Maharaj
and fill the void.
Let us not inevitably get waylaid from our path
Of ‘Shraddha and ‘Saburi’
With Baba’s grace
Overcome worry and living in fear
About what the future holds for us.
That worry only wastes our time and energy.
It does not solve anything.
The key is not to be affected
by what is happening around us.
We must remember the importance
of focusing on the positive

‘Ashirvad’ of Sai Maharaj
as we face life’s challenges.
When we need to
To tap into our inner strength.
We find comfort and solace,
Then, we experience the light of Sai Maharaj.
We are then bathed in joy and bliss
that eclipse any pain
we may experience in the outer world.
We feel Sai’s presence in our lives
and realize that God always supports us.
Anchored in Sai’s abiding love,
We walk through life
without fear or worry.



An Insight into Dhruva's Story

— by **Ramaswamy Seshadri**

It was in 1915. Devotees were looking forward to a great 'HariKatha' performance. Das Ganu Maharaj had not disclosed the topic of his Hai Katha. There were discussions and suggestions among close devotees. Baba also kept quiet.

Kaka Dixit arrived along with a Doctor from Mumbai. He offered his obeisance to Baba by mentioning his name as 'Dhruva Narayan'. Immediately Baba asked Das Ganu Maharaj to select the epic tale of Dhruva, son of King Uttanapada, in the Shrimad Bhagavata, which contains a wealth of wisdom for all times.

Das Ganu Maharaj in his 'Pravachan' depicted a five-year-old Dhruva, a child seeking solace through a simple gesture – attempting to sit on his father's lap, King Uttanapada. Das Ganu Maharaj stated that little did he know that this seemingly innocent act led to events that shaped his life. His gesture was met with cold rejection from Queen Suruchi, known for her arrogance and status as the king's favorite consort.

In a moment of ruthless cruelty, Suruchi declared Dhruva as unworthy of a seat on his father's lap, solely because he was born to an 'unfortunate' mother. This harsh rebuke stemmed from Suruchi's deep-seated envy towards Suniti, Dhruva's mother, a queen neglected by the King.

Das Ganu Maharaj pinpointed Suruchi's words reminding us of the ruinous power of envy within relationships. Envy has the potential to inflict painful emotional wounds that can persist. Sai Maharaj's mandate was to exercise restraint in our



words and actions – the principles essential to preserving harmonious relationships.

The situation grew even more disheartening when King Uttanapada, someone with the authority and capability to intervene and resolve the matter, opted to remain silent in the face of Suruchi's verbal attack. This silence, driven by his excessive attachment to this queen, highlighted a critical lapse in judgment and a failure of responsibility.

Insensitive behavior within family relationships can leave lasting scars on the impressionable minds of the young. Dhruva found himself overwhelmed by emotions – anger, pain, and then frustration. Coping with such an emotionally charged situation was difficult for a five-year-old. His cries of anguish and smoldering resentment ultimately led him to his mother, Suniti, who awaited his arrival in her palace, surrounded by servants.



Opulent palaces, luxurious amenities, and numerous attendants are of little value when the people we hold dear remain indifferent to our suffering. Suniti was in that very situation.

However, as a wise woman and an exemplary



mother, Suniti quickly sensed Dhruva's disappointment and the vengeful thoughts he harbored toward his stepmother, Suruchi. Recognizing the graveness of the situation, she offered him much-needed emotional support, indicating its importance in nurturing enduring relationships.

Empathy, as powerful as it can be, found its true strength in Suniti's actions. She understood Dhruva's emotional turmoil and made it a priority to cleanse his impressionable heart of overwhelming negativity. While empathy is a cornerstone of healthy relationships, it should extend beyond comprehension to guide individuals toward finding solutions. In short, she advised him not to harbor any hatred in his heart but to seek the shelter of the Divine instead, to fulfill his de-

sires. This is what Sai Baba wanted his devotees to practice.

Suniti's wisdom served as a beacon, leading Dhruva on a voyage of personal growth and spiritual enlightenment. Her guidance vividly illustrates the transformative potential of empathy, devotion, positive emotional redirection, and hope. Her character eventually transforms her husband and Suruchi as well.

With his Mother Suniti's blessings and guidance, Dhruva received Vishnu's rare boons in just six months.

Baba appreciated Das Ganu's 'Pravachan' and concluded that Dhruva's story reveals a combination of expert guidance and unwavering determination that is sure to yield lasting success.



Give Up

*Just give up,
the thoughts then,
you need not give up anything else !!*



Dr. Ranvir Singh's
Pictorial
Message



Kaka Dixit Diary

VAN GOGH: ARTIST AS VISIONARY 'SEER'

One day in 1915, Sai Maharaj asked me to describe an important event I witnessed when I was in England. When I mentioned the name Vincent van Gogh and his art exhibition, Baba was happy and declared that Vincent van Gogh was a visionary 'seer'. Sai Maharaj clarified that in everyday usage, the word 'seer' denotes a sage, a wise person, or a mystic. But the term also refers to one who sees, a visionary.



These two connotations of the word coalesced for me. Then, Baba asked me to read out the portion from my diary during my stay in London about my visit to an exhibition called 'Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience' which displayed reproductions of the works of the Dutch painter.

As the text accompanying the exhibits said, Vincent van Gogh is the 'rock star' of the Western art world, the Presley of painters. People who wouldn't know Rembrandt from Rubens, a Husain from a Souza, instantly recognize Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' -- the most replicated artwork in the world.

Born in 1853 in Holland, Van Gogh died at the age of 37 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. During his all-too-short life, he created over 2,000 artworks, including 900 oil paintings and 1,100 sketches and illustrations. A clinical depressive who suffered from bipolar disorder, he seemed to work in a furious race against mortal time, often completing a new painting in less than 36 hours.

The London exhibition used digital technology and virtual reality to draw the viewers into it, to 'immerse' them in the world as seen by the artist. A real-life scene, of stars in a nightscape, of a town's lights reflected on a dark river, of a flock of birds flying over a field of wheat, of a room furnished with a bed and a chair, were morphed into their transfiguration by the tormented genius of the artist, by how he saw these everyday things and how he painted them.

Stars in the night sky became vertiginous whirlpools of dazzling light, you could hear the wind sighing through the field of grain and the feathers

of birds in flight, feel the texture of the rough cotton sheet of the bed, the crisscross weave of the seat of the chair as if you were sitting on it.

Reality, the reality of normative sensory experience, disappeared and was sublimated, into a more real 'reality' of a double vision, which simultaneously saw both the external world and the immensity of the world within the mind, the inner universe of the artist's consciousness, and bound the two together in an alchemy of paint and canvas.

I was happy to note a personal experience of this great artist - "When I sleep, I dream of painting, and when I wake, I paint my dreams," said Van Gogh.



And the dreams he painted were startlingly unique. Analyzing his use of paint, an oculist has suggested that he saw shades of color differently from others, and perhaps this imparted to his palette knife strokes the fierce energy which makes his paintings leap out of the canvas to stun the viewer with their intense vitality.

Van Gogh was a 'seer' who saw things differently, a prophet far ahead in his time, during which he sold just one work.

Shunned by a world blind to his vision, he became a messiah martyred on the crucifix of oblivion. But he left a life-changing testament for future generations, a gospel of radiant, inextinguishable light.

Sai Maharaj appreciated my efforts to record this memorable art exhibition in my diary.



Hajj Is Akin to Visiting the Almighty

— by **Nawab Mohammed Yusuf Ali Khan**

Anwar came to the mosque along with two of his friends. They had planned to go on a Hajj pilgrimage and had come to seek Baba's blessings. Sai Babanodded and blessed them for a safe pilgrimage. Baba asked the devotees to describe the significance of Hajj.

Bade Baba started speaking. He said that Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, is a profound act of worship in Islam. It is obligatory only for those in good health and who can afford the journey. Those who are indigent, sick, or disabled are excused from this duty.

To perform Hajj, a pilgrim leaves their home and travels to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Upon entering Mecca, the pilgrim first goes to the Kaaba to perform the Tawaf, which is the circumambulation of the Kaaba. Next, the pilgrim performs Sa'i, a brisk walk between the two hillocks of Safa and Marwa. The rites also include a halt at the plain of Arafat, where pilgrims stand in prayer and reflection. Additionally, pilgrims cast stones at a pillar in Mina, symbolically stoning Satan. The culmination of these rituals is the sacrifice of an animal. The essential rituals of Hajj are performed during the calendar month of Dhul Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

What is Hajj? It is a journey undertaken to seek God. It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, in addition to the profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. It involves spending time and wealth to reach those places associated with the memories of God and His true servants. All the rituals of Hajj are a practical demonstration that a person is striving for God, centering his life around Him.

Hajj is akin to visiting the Almighty. It represents the highest form of nearness to one's Lord during worldly life. If other acts of worship are reminders of God, Hajj reaches directly to God.



Hajj has always held extraordinary significance among Islamic acts of worship. In one hadith, it is

referred to as the most virtuous act of worship. It encompasses all acts of worship and invigorates all of them. However, its true importance lies in its spiritual essence, not merely in the external rituals and ceremonies.

In other words, Hajj is not just about going to the sacred land, performing certain rituals, and returning. Regarding the essence of Hajj, the Quran states: The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, wicked conduct, and quarreling while on the pilgrimage. Whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. Make provision for yourselves – but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. “Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding. (2:197)”

What are the precautions one should follow?

Whenever a few people gather or live together, some grievances inevitably arise. This situation manifests on a much larger scale during Hajj as people of various kinds gather in vast numbers at a single location. Consequently, during Hajj, people frequently cause discomfort to each other. If individuals start quarreling over personal grievances, the spirit of worship would be lost, and the purpose of Hajj would not be fulfilled. Therefore, quarreling and losing one's temper are strictly prohibited during Hajj.

This prohibition makes Hajj a means of training for a significant aspect of life. Just as fighting nullifies Hajj, it also distances a believer's ordinary life from Islam.

Sai Maharaj appreciated Bade Baba's explanation of the Hajj pilgrimage. Anwar and friends left for the Hajj pilgrimage.



Seek The Truth for Yourself

— by **Smt. Seetha Vijayakumar**

Anna Saheb Dabholkar went to Shirdi for the first time in 1908. Since his friends – Nana Saheb Chandorkar and Hari Sitaram Dixit stayed at Sathe Wada, Anna Saheb Dabholkar joined them. Baba had gone to Lendi Baug, they finished their morning ablutions and were waiting for Baba's return to the mosque.

All of them were excited about Baba's darshan. Anna Saheb Dabholkar was not able to make out their excitement. He asked why a Guru needed to guide us. Anna Saheb Dabholkar contented that only individual effort is required. No one agreed with him and Bala Saheb Bhate argued with him about the need for a Guru for all for spiritual development. The arguments were inconclusive as they had to rush to the mosque as Baba had returned by then.

Everyone bowed to Baba. He virtually ignored Anna Saheb Dabholkar when Nana Saheb Chandorkar. Without addressing anyone Sai Maharaj told them the story of a donkey.

A donkey was walking along when night fell. He wasn't sure what his destination was or how to reach it. And what made it worse was that he could

hear wild animals in the forest, where he had been grazing all day. It was too dark for the donkey to see beyond his nose. Fear gripped the donkey as he stared into the darkness ahead to see if he could make something of it. Just as the donkey ambled



about directionless, an owl from a treetop hooted out to him, "Buddy! You cannot see at night, but I can; maybe I should become your guide and show you the path." The donkey could not have asked for anything better. He guffawed with joy and invited the owl to sit on its back.

With the owl perched delicately on his back, the duo made their way through the forest. The owl gave directions, and the donkey followed them. All night, the arrangement worked out well. They managed to avoid wild animals and see the light of day. The sun rose as the team reached the forest's edge, and a new day was born.

In the daytime, the donkey could see very well, but the owl was blinded by the sunlight. For a few minutes, there was confusion, but the owl, having donned the guide's hat, was reluctant to give up the leadership role. The owl was too attached to his seat on the donkey's back and the power it gave him. So, even though the owl could see nothing, he continued to give directions. The donkey did not think much about the arrangement that was well-suited to the night but defective during the day. He did not realize that he could see and did not need the owl's help navigating the forest. Even though he did not require a visual guide now, he continued



to accept the owl as his guide. He never attempted to use his head or eyes and perceived that he could see during the day, hence he did not need a guide. He continued to follow the owl's directions, which were not based on knowledge of the path ahead. At one point, the owl instructed the donkey to turn left and immediately right. The donkey could see a deep, fast-moving river down the cliff. But he was following the guide and not thinking, so he did as he was told. The donkey fell directly into the river and drowned.

Sai Maharaj summed up two things from this incident. When a guide is needed, no guide can be greater than the Guru or the spiritual teacher.

However, it does not mean we stop seeing ourselves or examining things critically. All great seers have encouraged us to look for the Truth ourselves. They have also suggested choosing your Guru guide after consideration.

Baba's story convinced Anna Saheb Dabholkar of the need for a Guru in one's life to search for the Truth yourself. He repented for his foolish argument with Bhate Saheb. Recognizing his scholarship, Baba gave the title 'Hemadpant' to Anna Saheb Dabholkar and assigned the mighty task of composing Sai Satcharita in 800 plus verses, the first authentic collection of details to Anna Saheb Dabholkar.

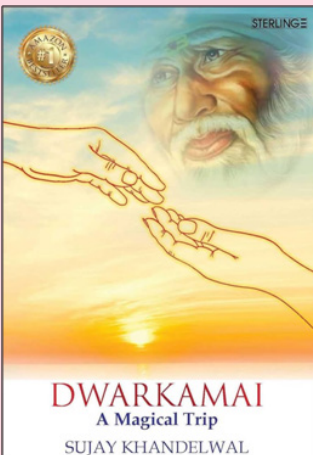
Give ONE Word Answer

1. Whose Son-in-law was Prof. Ganesh Govind Narke?
2. From whom did Baba get his Kufni stitched?
3. When did Das Ganu Maharaj assume Sanyas?
4. Who supplied earthen lamps and pots to Baba?
5. To whom did the Dhulia court depute to enquire Baba giving jewels to a thief?
6. How many Ovis (stanzas or verses) are there in Sri Sai Satcharitra?
7. What was the 'Gothra' i.e. the lineage of Hemadpant?
8. Why Baba used to grind wheat?
9. Who was the first person to receive Baba's 'Padukas' from Baba?
10. Who composed 'Sainath Bhajanamala' and published it in the Sai Leela 11th, 12th and 17th issues?
11. Name the author who first wrote about Baba in the Gujarati language
12. To Whom did Anna Saheb Dabholkar request to obtain Baba's permission to start composing Sai Satcharita?

1. Booty; 2. Bala Shimpi; 3. Pillay; 4. Vaman; 5. Joshi; 6. 846 Ovis; 7. Bharadwaja; 8. Destroy sins; 9. Nimonkar; 10. Savtribai Raghunath Tendulkar; 11. Amidas Bhavani Mehta; 12. Shama

Answers

BOOK REVIEW



Book Name : Dwarkamai – A Magical Trip

Author : Sujay Khandelwal

Pages : 96

Price : Rs.399

Published by : Sterling New Delhi

The miracles of Sai Baba of Shirdi are known to one and all. We read about them in articles or hear about them from people who have experienced them firsthand. It only strengthens our faith and belief in Sai Baba. But sometimes, one truly gets lucky and experiences the divine grace of Sai Baba through some magical, out-of-the-world experiences.

Sujay Khandelwal is a businessman and philanthropist from Kolkata. In this book, Sai Baba's grace over the years is described by Sujay as how Sai Baba has taken over his life to happiness and abundance by several notches. He is the Managing Partner of Mohan Impex - a leading business in the food additives distribution and manufacturing industry. In this book, we can read about Baba's guidance in every moment of his life.

Reviewed by: **B.S. Krishna Murthy**

Why Sage Ashtavakra Feels Wonderful Always

— by **Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar**

Hari Vinayak Sathe complained about Nanavalli to Sai Maharaj that he was creating a lot of problems with his funny behavior so that he could not continue to stay in Shirdi. Sainath pacified him to have 'Saburi' and revealed that Nanavalli is a 'Siddha' and his outward behavior has masked his evolved state of mind.

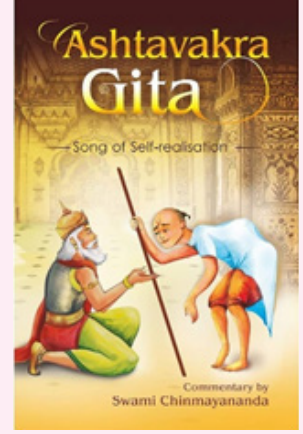
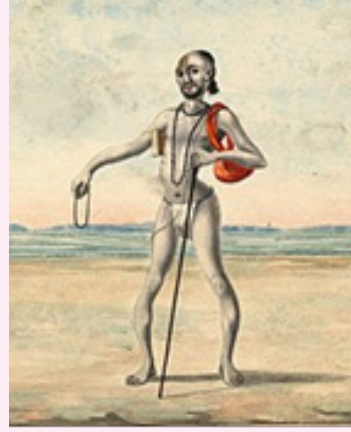
At that time, Moolay Sastry and Booty came to the mosque to meet Sai Maharaj. Moolay Sastri at that time was doing daily 'Parayan' of Ashtavakra Gita. Baba asked Hari Vinayak Sathe to learn from Moolay Sastri about Ashtavakra feeling wonderful always.



Moolay Sastry offered his obeisance to Baba and stated that health generally is assumed to relate to body care, internal and external. A broader view includes mental health. Radically different from all this, is the Vedic view of health, encapsulated in the Sanskrit word, 'Swasthya'. Ironically, Ashtavakra, the sage with eight deformities, presents this ideal.

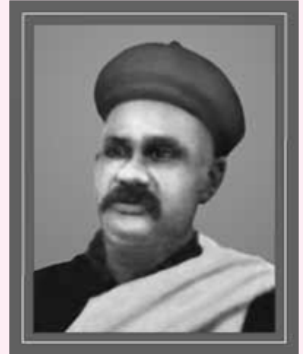
Rather than feel embarrassed by these deformities, as most probably would, Ashtavakra exclaims in ecstasy: 'Wonderful, wonderful am I!' Why? Because deformities notwithstanding, he was perfectly Swasth. He gives us insight into what true health means or should mean. Sai Maharaj added that Nanavalli is a wonderful, dedicated person.

Moolay Sastry continued that his 'Ashtavakra Gita' is a classic of Sanskrit literature and he is doing its 'parayan' at Shirdi. It is structured as a dialogue between the Guru-poet' and the royal sage, Janaka Maharaja. Janaka poses three questions to Ashtavakra: How can Jnana, knowledge, be acquired? How can Mukti, liberation, be attained? How is Vairagya, renunciation, possible? While an-



swering these questions, Ashtavakra discourses on various topics, all anchored in Advaita, the Indian ideal of monism, revolving around the central topic of the SELF. With a total of 298 verses, spread over 20 chapters of varying lengths, Ashtavakra Gita is less than half the size of the Bhagavad Gita. The two works complement each other.

When he first approached Sai Maharaj, the young Moolay Sastri, was under the influence of his Guru Gholap Maharaj and proud of his being a Brahmin, averse to the idea of worshipping Sai Baba whom he thought to be a Muslim. Baba gave him a vision that he is no different from his Guru Gholap Maharaj and made Moolay Sastri realize Advaita, which equates the SELF to God. Sai Baba, however, divined that the young Moolay Sastri was innately rooted in Advaita. Instead of discussing monism, he introduced him to do daily parayan of Ashtavakra Gita. Baba also corrected Hai Vinayak Sathe.



The word, Swasth, commonly connotes health or healthy, implying physical health. However, in Sanskrit, the word 'Swasth' essentially connotes 'established in the SELF', Swasth. This connotation opens new vistas. Swasth goes well beyond the Greek ideal of wellness, defined as a healthy



mind in a healthy body 'Deh'. The Greek view of health would have excluded Ashtavakra, the sage with an 'unhealthy' body with deformities.

Swasth does not imply a mere robust attitude to life; it implies the only true attitude to life. You are either Swasth or sick; there can be no shades of grey between these two conditions.

Sai Baba pointed out that Janaka does not receive theoretical answers to his queries. The interaction with Ashtavakra makes him Swasth; it establishes him in the SELF.

The Swasth person is marked by tranquility. This is due to the expulsion of both, negative and positive thoughts; antipathy as also sympathy; in short, a person who has transcended the entire horde of 'pairs of opposites. Baba wanted Sathe to positively think of Nanavalli.

Whatever Lord Krishna says of 'Stitha Prajna'



in the Bhagavad Gita applies also to a Swasth person. "Purged of all pairs of opposites, such a person", says Ashtavakra, "displays a 'Shoonya Chitta', blank mind. Society may see him doing all the normal acts, but the Swasth person is only inactive and indifferent to the circumstances, 'like a dry leaf blown by the wind'. Sathe realized his mistake of interpreting Nanavalli's pranks.

Moolay Sastri summed up the entire discussion in the words of Ashtavakra – 'He sees the world as a projection of his SELF, and always abides in the SELF. He neither seeks nor avoids the world; he stays indifferent to it. He suffers no ailments because he abides in the SELF as Atmaram.' In Ashtavakra's words, he lives like one 'Videh', bodiless. He does not mind whether his body has eight or eighty deformities. He feels just wonderful – always.

Sai Nama Japa is a tool for transformative living

— by **D.Sankaraiah**

Make 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' mantra your lifeline; it will add substance to your life. However, once initiated, there is no turning back. We must see it to the end. Once discovered, life becomes simpler. Over time, it gathers momentum, sustaining us in life. Infuse it with the greatest consciousness and your life will become rich beyond measure. It will go through peaks and troughs and the intensity will vary. Stay with it always; the mantra will expand your being. Our consciousness needs continuous tending and when the mantra 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' comes to the front, it holds the consciousness together. Make 'Nama Japa of 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' your exercise in living.

The Word rises from the very depths of our being. Let it choose you. It starts with aspiration. You sincerely ask Lord Sainath for a key. It is yours alone. It may be sudden or gradual, but it will surely settle in your being. It is not a mental selection. It rises from the heart. Deep within, 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' resonance is there. Sometimes, it is given by the Parabrahman, but one can spontaneously access the inner guide by going within. This vibration of 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' will define you.

With persistence, it shapes every movement inside. It is your aspiration and the Force behind the words that give the mantra 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya



Jaya Sai' its power. It embodies and steers you to your destiny.

The mantra 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' clears the mind. Often filled with repetitive thoughts, the mind endlessly revolves in circles. The Words 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' provide a counterweight, leaving the space uncluttered, vast, and free.

Witness too, the Words 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' gradually making your inner and surface parts become one. Allow it to align your being. With sustained practice, the mantra 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' starts to internally repeat itself. When that happens, it purifies, instilling and then reinforcing the reign of soul over nature. You will carry this unique vibration 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' always. Allow it to preside over every activity of the day. It will protect you from mishaps and accidents. Let it accompany your work. It helps one focus on what is at hand. Keep repeating 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' through the day's actions until you sleep at night. When the words are continuously present, the mantra 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' acts as a reflex, consciously addressing whatever situation is at hand. It becomes a panacea.

The mantra can also be a single syllable of 'Sairam' It is a repetition of the sacred name, Sai Nama japa. Whatever form it takes, as we evolve, we become conscious of its unique vibration, of 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya constantly in the background yet nourishing our being. Japa is the ballast that holds our being together. Whenever things go awry, one goes back to 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' and normalcy returns.

When synchronized with the breath, 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' paves the way for continuous practice. It brings endless aspirations into action. Japa of 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' resonates strongly with the body.

Repetition of the Divine Name 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' unties the habits of the physical consciousness. The body is the crucible of transformation, and the Jap of 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' can accompany it to the threshold of this divine change.

Once we start chanting 'Om Sai Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai' we discover our life changes for the better. An indelible link is created, and an imprint is laid upon our souls.



Give up attachments

— by **C.S.Dinesh**

SAI Maharaj begged from five houses, mixed all this food, and shared it with pigs, dogs, and other hungry creatures. He was never attached to any one house for begging or a particular food.

The Bhagavad Gita recommends that we renounce attachment – ‘Jit-Sang-Dosh’ – as it is an obstacle to our spiritual progress.

Attachments can be to things and beings. Attachment to material things is always one-sided because they are not attached to us. It is we who become dependent on them. We feel, that without that object, we cannot be comfortable, or without it, we do not have any status in life. It can be so consuming that we are averse to taking a holiday and going out of station as we fear for the safety of the house in our absence. Imagine we are prisoners of our own houses due to our excessive attachment to them.

All our possessions, such as big, fancy houses, and luxury cars, boost our ego and status. We get attached to them also because of the false notion that they will give us happiness.

In the case of attachment to human beings, there is a problem. Suppose one person is attached to the other, but the other does not reciprocate. In that scenario, the one who is attached gets angry and upset. Therefore, undue attachment causes dependence, possessiveness, jealousy, and fear.

A common question generally asked by all parents is, “How to give up attachment to our children?” The answer is simple, “That attachment cannot be given up.” It is because of this attachment that the whole world is going on. It is because of it that a mother is ready to suffer the pains of childbirth, and parents toil to bring up children. You cannot give up worries. But our worry level should not exceed point 3 on a scale of 0-10. If the mother worries 10 out of 10, then it is a problem.

Loving others is never a problem but getting attached and dependent is painful. Therefore, along with attachment, it is important to have a clear understanding and discernment. Children must be allowed to grow. Do not make them dependent on you, nor should you become dependent on them.

Love them but give them space, nurture their talents, empower them with the right values, and allow them to spread



their wings and fly.

In his masterpiece, ‘Life of Sai Baba’, Sri Narasimha Swamiji uses the words, ‘clinging attachment’, for attachments with dependence. If we become dependent on something or make someone dependent on us, it becomes a cause of bondage for both.

Therefore, our Sai Satcharita declares that attachment should be given up. Is it possible? It certainly is difficult, because our mind constantly wants to hold on to something.

Sai Maharaj advised Nana Saheb Chandorkar to regularly recite ‘Narada Bhakti Sutra’ which presents a remedy: Attach yourself to great, pious people who are well-versed in

the scriptures and established in the Truth. Hence, engage in ‘Satsang’. He wanted Nana Saheb Chandorkar to continue to be in the company of saints and sages, and continue to serve and learn from them.

Attachments cloud our objectivity and clarity. But when we associate with spiritually eminent people, we develop right thinking. The beauty of Satsang is that it gradually leads to detachment and finally releases us from all other attachments.



Ultimately, turn the mind towards the true source of joy our ‘Antaryamin’ Sai Maharaj, the Divine. A mind full of attachments leads to sorrow and bondage; a mind absorbed in Sai Maharaj leads to peace and fulfillment.





CHILDREN'S CORNER

— by **Smt. Sunanda Ananth**



Beloved Children,
Aum Namō Sainathaya

A mother was hurt and shocked to hear her son telling lies. So, she took the boy to 'Gurusthan' at Shirdi and told him about the perils of telling lies. "When you

tell a lie, Lord Sainath will send a demon with red eyes and a horn on his head who will drag you from your bed in the middle of the night and punish you badly. Then, I am sure you will never lie," she continued.

"No Mother, from now on, I will never lie," assured the son, and then he added, "Mother, tell me about 'Awareness' of Sainath Parabrahman so that I will look for him always."

The mother narrated that in 1917, one Christian devotee by name of Toser asked Sai Baba the same question – What is awareness? Toser was carrying a copy of the Bible at that time. Sai Maharaj took that Bible and randomly opened a page and asked him to read it aloud.

The page that Baba opened in the Bible states, "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" Our eyes, senses, and minds are not passive entities that must grapple with whatever is presented. Rather, they are powerful entities that can choose what to take in, when, how much, and when to stop.

Toser got the reply from Sai Baba for his question on 'Awareness'. The mother asked her son to

contemplate Lord Sainath as he is close behind our thoughts.

Let us begin by becoming conscious of our body and its associated physical sensations. The body sends strong signals when it is at ease and when it is in distress. We need to receive these signals, nourish



them with care and love, and make sure that we are not subjecting it to toxic stimuli. we realize it and seek Baba's 'ASHIRVAD'

The learned mother told the boy – "Anyone can understand that there are different levels of knowledge, but only few can understand that there are different levels of Being. Being is your presence – a good, pure, inspiring, and transparent essence. One should not confuse existence with Being. The stone exists, the plant exists, a man exists, but they exist quite differently. It is here the idea of Being comes in. For example, the Being of a plant, stone, animal, man, or the divine are all at different levels".

So, you become a sincere devotee of Baba. Let's resolve right now to make a beginning to transform with Baba's guidance in transformation in our daily lives.

Yours SAI BABALy
THE SAI AURA team





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