

Aura of Shirdi Sai



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE —

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Contents...

First Word	4
Sai Baba I'm At Your Lotus Feet	5
A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama:	
Sahasranama Liberates You From The Sticky Groove	6
Guru Poornima message by Swami Chidananda	8
The Victory	9
Karma, The Mammoth Memory	10
Children's Corner	11
Saiway to Overcome Your Anxiety	12
Dr. Ranvir Singh's Pictorial Message	13
Guru Poornima	14
From Kaka Dixit's Notes	15
Good Heavens, It's All A Big Fake!	16
Chaitanya Mahaprabhu	17
The 'Mahatma' and the Sage of Sakori	18
Ishavasya	20
Development of Virtues	21
Sai Baba Leads Us to Crest Jewel of Beauty	22
Give one word answers	23
Sai Baba Explains The Aitereya Upanishad	24
Marble Idol Installed At Samadhi Mandir	26
Sai Baba Takes Us To Vishnu's Abode	27
Book Review	28
Towards A Borderless Society	29
Sai Prachar is From Religion To Responsibility	30
Dr. Ranvir Singh's Pictorial Message for Children	32
Neelkanth Ramachandra Sahasrabhudde	33

EDITORIAL



First Word

I had a difficult decision to make. Desperately I prayed to Sai Baba, “What do You want me to do?” But no matter how much I prayed, I could not get an answer. I went to Sai Mandir to speak to Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji. When we met, he was sitting in an armchair and I sat on the floor in front of him, with no one around us. I began to explain my dilemma, but I was so overcome with emotion that I collapsed burying my head in my hands and sobbing.

Through my tears, I said, "It is so hard to know what Sai Baba wants!" He looked at me calmly and said, "No, it's not." We sat together for a few moments, but it was clear that he had nothing further to say, and so I left.

“It may not be hard for him to know,” I thought, as I made my way home. “But it is hard for me.” Swamiji, however, had not referred to either of us;

he had spoken impersonally of knowing Sai Baba's will. Later, I prayed, "Why is it hard for me?" Instantly, the answer came: "Because you don't want to know. You are afraid that Sai Baba's will may contradict other desires of your heart."

“Reason follows feeling”, Sri Narasimha Swamiji has stated in his masterpiece 'Life of Sai Baba'. Whatever the predisposition of the heart, the mind will follow. Most people are predisposed in favor of their desires, attachments, and the fear of facing an unknown challenge. All these blocks our ability to perceive reality with calm acceptance.

Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji's only "predisposition" was to know the truth. He was not plagued by what Sri Narasimha Swamiji called "the thwarting cross-currents of ego." He had a single desire: To know Sai Baba's will. Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji led with his heart. The clarity of his mind came from the courage of his heart. "In reciting Vishnu Sahasranama," Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji said, "people speak of the need to calm the mind. In fact, it is the heart that needs to be calmed. That is why devotion through Vishnu Sahasranama is fundamental to success and leads to resolve a problem. When the heart is calm and it is directed only to focus on Sai Baba, the mind is also still, because there are no restless feelings to disturb it.

Patanjali defines the state of yoga, meaning 'Union with God,' as 'Yogaschittavrittinirodh.' Yoga is the 'neutralisation of the whirlpools of feeling. 'These whirlpools, chitta, reside in the heart.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji put it this way, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see Sai Baba in all animate and inanimate things.' Purity means the absence of any other desire except the desire to see Sai Baba in our heart. This is our natural state. It is not something we have to acquire. All we have to do is remove impurities of the heart that keep us from knowing ourselves as we truly are: One with Sai Baba - our God.

That simple exchange with Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji —my anguished cry, “It is so hard to know Sai Baba's will,” and Swamiji's calm answer,” “No, it's not.”—was one of the most influential encounters I had with him.

Whenever I find myself struggling to know Sai Baba's will, instead of crying, "What do You want me to do?" as if Sai Baba had to be persuaded to tell me, I pray, "What am I afraid of?" Vishnu Sahasranama chanting guides me. Whether the answer comes in an intuitive flash or after long introspection, once the fear is removed, it may still be hard for me to follow Sai Baba's will, but it is not hard to know.

Sai Baba I'm At Your Lotus Feet

A devotee am I, at your feet, Sai Baba,
A slave am I, at your door Sai Baba!

Sai Baba, you shine day and night, like a bright torch,
And Sai Baba you have reached the destination,
In the world imperceptible!

Sai Baba, you have come here, from the land of mercy.
And have borne all suffering and misery
Sai Baba - For the sake of humankind!

Sai Baba, you lived in a dilapidated mosque
All comforts offered by devotees,
Sai Baba, you have given up,
And beg from five select houses
Only to mix and eat with pigs, dogs, and others,
But people appreciate your love and compassion
As real riches and wealth!

People know not, Sai Baba your real form and beauty,
And people know not, Sai Baba your effulgent character!
Incomparable are the wonders, performed by you Sai Baba,
And only a devotee knows, your real worth Sai Baba!

Thus, I cry Sai Baba,
And with my two paise 'Dakshina' of Shradda and Saburi!!

by **Shreyas Devaraj**

A DIP INTO VISHNU SAHASRANAMA: SAHASRANAMA LIBERATES YOU FROM THE STICKY GROOVE

by **Seetha Priya**

Put your life with its patterns into perspective; by doing this, you can enjoy the richness of life within and with others. I knew someone who was generous, noble, and talented. Despite all this, he was stuck in a groove of his psychological pattern. His goodness did not fully enrich him, for he stuck to what he knew and what he had concluded. He was a victim of his social conditioning. He did not question his conclusions; in fact, he was trapped in his conclusions. His life was lost in proving his conclusions, and in the process, he did not find the richness and poetry of life. Hence, he suffered from stress and discontentment.

Why do we get stuck to our opinion, to our conclusions, to what we like or dislike? Learn to question everything, or else, unconsciously, we will glorify our inner foolishness. Is it not true that we are trapped in our attachment to what we know, and feel it is going to give us happiness or fulfilment? You tend to think, "If I get what I want, then I will become happy. So, I have knowledge of what I want, and there is a conclusion that it will give me happiness. Until that time of getting what I want, I am discontent."

If you investigate discontentment, you will see that you always compare, and in that comparison, you are more discontent. Can you live life without comparisons? You are not happy with 'what is', for you have concluded that you will be happy if you get that 'something'. We have not seen the richness of what we have. With that lack of seeing 'what is', we work for what we do not have. Then, even if we get that, our ignorance will prevent us



from seeing the beauty of what we have achieved.

Unless we learn to be sensitive to 'what is', we will not optimize what we have, and so, we will be discontent. With this discontentment, even if we get what we want, inner discontent will spoil the richness of our achievement. The ninth shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama reflects on this aspect: -

'Ishwaro Vikrami Dhanvi

Medhavi Vikramah Kramaha

Anuttamo Duradarshaha Kritajnah Krutiratmavan'

Guru Poornima message

by Swami Chidananda

Divine Life Society, Rishikesh
(24.7.1964 - Rishikesh)

Salutations and worshipful Pranams to Lord Sainath whose form is to be an object of our meditation, whose feet are to be adored, and whose Grace grants us supreme Divine beatitude!

Guru is one who has destroyed the cravings of his mind and who knows how one must destroy it. The only thing that stands in the way of our spiritual realization is our own mind and it is to remove this obstacle that one comes to the Guru and surrenders himself unto him. But, then, Guru-Kripa has not only to be bestowed, not only to be given; it also must be received. In receiving it, we immortalize ourselves, divinize ourselves. We must be ready to receive it; then it will flow into us and raise us to the highest realm of immortality, eternal light, and infinite bliss. But, then, how can we receive it? How should we conduct ourselves if we are to receive this Grace?

Carry out the teachings of the Guru; and this should be our Sadhana day in day out. There may be certain inner qualifications which are necessary for the full and effective reception of divine grace. Even after having attained all the qualifications of the ideal devotee, we have to wait in humility and in patience. There is no loss here, for the goal is immortal life, freedom. If we have become willing servants and willing, obedient devotees, then it is the natural law that Guru-Kripa may come in an unpleasant form. It may come in the form of a series of disappointments. We may think that Guru has not bestowed his Kripa upon us; but that disappointment itself will be his Kripa. We are not fit to judge whether we are ready to receive Guru-Kripa or not, and what form it would take. The best thing is to humbly leave everything to the Guru.

“I do not know whether I am a devotee or not. Therefore, O ocean of mercy and compassion, pray make me a proper devotee. Generate in me that Mumukshutva which makes me a devotee and give me the spirit of willing obedience. Help me in trying to follow thy instructions. Help me in trying to mould myself upon the pattern set up by thee”. This must be our constant prayer. And, by this alone shall we be able to draw the Kripa of our Guru and make our life fruitful. The perfect way of praying is trying our best to be real devotees.

Beloved Sai devotees, to send this message to you, is a great privilege and a joy to me. It is a rare blessedness to think of Lord Sainath, a rarer blessedness to speak about Him, to glorify and praise Him and a supreme good fortune to worship Him. To meditate upon the Guru is the greatest blessing that can come into the life of a seeking soul.



Worship is the means of approaching the Invisible. It takes us closer to the Intangible Divine Essence in which form Sai Baba now abides after setting aside in 1918 the physical form in which He dwelt. By regular worship, the seeker strengthens his spiritual bond with the Guru even beyond the time of his physical existence. By preserving such a bond, the Sai-devotee can draw upon himself the continued Guru-Kripa. He is blessed with guidance and protected by His benedictions in a mysterious way. Adore thy Guru and pay homage unto Him who has opened thy eyes to the glorious purpose of life, and who has shown you the true

path to blessedness and bliss. This is your foremost duty now.

The most holy Guru Purnima is a great annual occasion that provides you an invaluable opportunity of re-establishing this vital inner contact with Lord Sainath. It is a day when all the devotees earnestly put forth special efforts to experience their oneness with the Nirakara Guru Tattva. Renew this contact. And then plunge into a period of spiritual Sadhana. Crown that Anushthana with an inspiring worship of His glorious radiance abiding in His Samadhi at Shirdi. May Lord Sainath's grace be upon all!

The Victory

IN the womb of pain, the
From the mire springs the

IN the womb of pain, the babe of joy is born
From the mire springs the beauteous lotus
The clouded sky reveals the radiant blue
Be grateful!
To Sai Baba
Be grateful!
Sainath has created this beautiful universe
Grim darkness holds the grandeur of light
In the depthless ocean lies the rarest gem
So, in the ache of thought find wisdom pure
In the heart of struggle – the heaven of peace
In the battle of life – the victory.
O Lord Sainath!
And from noble thoughts of three G's
Gayathri, Gopooja and Gita
Our offering
O Loving Master come and accept
Give us Spiritual Grace
Oh Sainath!

by **Sai Ragh**

Karma, The Mammoth Memory

by **Sri Narasimha Swamiji**

It happened in 1935. While taking bath in Pushkar thirth in Ajmer, a crocodile caught my right ankle and my Rama Nam chanting made a Punjabi brother on the bank to fire his rifle at the crocodile and save my life. However, the injury was quite deep, and I was to be in the Government Hospital, Ajmer for over four weeks. Sai Baba kept on reminding me 'Karma is something mysterious! So, it does not matter what it is: once you've gotten used to something, whether pleasant or unpleasant, you cannot drop it!



happened thirty years ago, but it is working on you. Experiments substantiate this: if someone who knows no Chinese, for instance, is exposed to the language when he is in deep sleep, years later, under conditions of hypnosis, he can actually utter the same ten Chinese sentences.

Similarly, what happened thirty million years ago is still encrypted in your body. Everything that ever happened on this planet is still remembered because your body is just a piece of this planet. Your

Karma literally means 'action', but from where does this action arise? From volition, which, in turn, is determined by identification with a narrow sense of individuality. This identification arises from memory. You believe you are an individual because your memory tells you so. It would not be amiss, therefore, to describe karma as memory.

Everything that you consider to be yourself is a product of your past. Your body is just a heap of food you have ingested over time. Your mind is a heap of impressions and ideas you have imbibed over time. Both are creations of the past. So, what you call your 'personality' is simply an accumulation of memory. The essence of everything you consider to be yourself is karmic.

You may not remember consciously what

mind has forgotten life as a unicellular being, but your body remembers. Your mind has forgotten your great grandmother, but her nose still sits on your face. Genetics is essentially memory. Although people think memory only means mind, the volume of memory that the body carries is many billion times greater.

The attraction to one's karmic patterns is powerful because most people experience safety in the familiar. When you are eighteen, life seems full of possibility. But as you grow older, it often feels like choices are shrinking. As the karmic substance increases, the discerning mind takes a backseat, and you work increasingly by habits, patterns, and cycles.

The inherent power of human intelligence has been fragmented into atomized forms of thought and emotion. These have become a source of unspeakable suffering and destruction. Since



people are so identified with their fragmented individuality, shaped by their memory, they see everyone else similarly. Eventually, however, it is the universal that prevails. Creation is like a video game: once it is over, nothing is left on the screen. Not even a flicker to suggest what once was.

The time has come for human beings to transcend

the distorting lens of karma – the lens that makes them confuse the projection for the real, their fragmented memory-driven psychological creation for the incredible majesty of life itself. The time has come to wake up to the fact there is only one crime against life: to make-believe you are something other than life.

Children's Corner

Beloved Children,

Om Namo Sai Nathaya,

Every man is a power in himself. He can influence others. He can radiate joy and peace to millions of people. He can elevate others. He can transmit his powerful soul-stirring, beneficial thoughts to his far-off friends. He is an image of Lord Sainath. There is no such thing as inanimate matter. There is life in everything. Life is involved in a piece of stone. Matter is vibrant with life.

Smile with the flowers and shake hands with ferns

and twigs of trees. Talk to the green grass. Play with the birds and pets, the rainbow, wind, stars, and the sun. Converse with the running brooks and the waves of the sea. Develop friendship with all your neighbors, dogs, cats, cows, human beings, trees, and flowers. Then you will have wide, perfect, and full life. This state can hardly be described in words. You will feel the highest peace, bliss, and joy.

May you be endured with good health, vigor and vitality through the grace of Lord Sai Nath.

Yours Sai Babaly,

Sai Aura Team.

the absolute necessity of certain outcomes in our mind. I absolutely must get promoted; my children absolutely must love me as much I love them; I absolutely must never do anything less than perfect. The absolute nature of such mental demands creates anxiety. Besides, not achieving these absolute goals results in our feeling like a failure. The second set of unhelpful beliefs are usually around our desire for approval by others. We wish for others to really like us. If any of the adversities endangers our perception of our likeability, Sri Narasimha Swamiji pointed out that we feel gravely anxious.

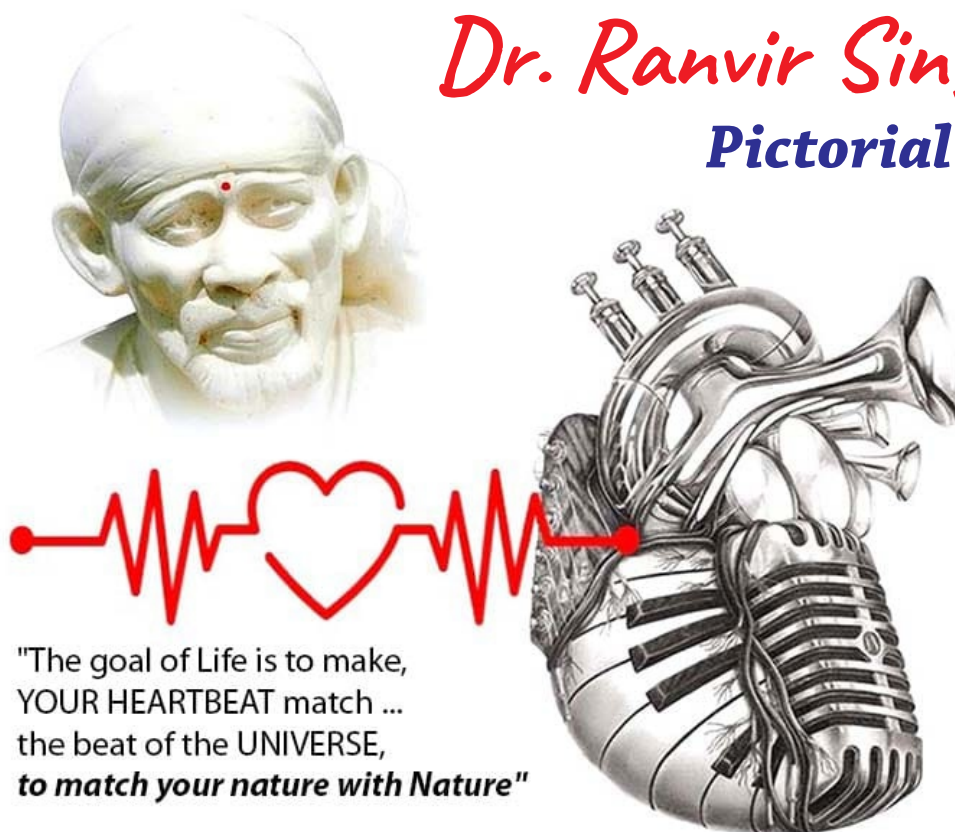
This Police Officer had a strong belief that his self-worth is defined primarily by his success at work and that being passed on for this promotion spells doom for his future. He also believed that his colleagues would naturally start judging him poorly.

The key to altering the recurring pattern of anxiety arising from the common triggers of adversity, is to examine our related beliefs. 'D' is for disputing those beliefs. Is it true that I

absolutely must get promoted to have greater self-worth or be happier? Consider reframing this belief. While a promotion would be nice, it's not that I can't survive without it; if I continue to focus on building relevant skills, the promotion will follow at the right time; being successful at work is merely one part of who I am and not being at the top does not make me a lesser person.

Likewise, we need to dispute the other dominant belief: that your colleagues would now think less of you. You cannot let what people think of you determine what you think of yourself. If you are resilient and positive, they would be too.

'E' is for establishing effective beliefs and strategies that are healthier and serve you well. As the Police Officer started examining his limiting beliefs and embracing healthier ones as advised by Sri Narasimha Swamiji, he began to feel significantly more positive. His faith in Sai Baba paid rich dividends. Soon he was deputed to the Central Government and was placed in a much better position.



"The goal of Life is to make,
YOUR HEARTBEAT match ...
the beat of the UNIVERSE,
to match your nature with Nature"



Guru Poornima

by **Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar**

Guru Poornima also known as Vyasa Poornima marks the birthday of Veda Vyasa. It is a spiritual tradition in Hindu culture dedicated to spiritual and academic teachers, who are evolved or enlightened humans, ready to share their wisdom, with very little or no monetary expectation, based on Karma Yoga. It is celebrated as a festival in India and Bhutan by the Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. This festival is traditionally observed by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains to revere their chosen spiritual teachers/leaders and express their gratitude. The festival is celebrated on the full moon day (Poornima) in the Hindu month of Aashada (June–July)

The celebration is marked by spiritual activities and may include a ritualistic event in honor of the Guru - that is, the teachers which is called Guru Pooja. The Guru Principle is said to be a thousand times more active on the day of Guru Poornima than on any other day. The word Guru is derived from two words, 'gu' and 'ru'. The Sanskrit root 'gu' means darkness or ignorance, and 'ru' denotes the remover of that darkness. Therefore, a Guru is one who removes the darkness of our ignorance. Gurus are believed by many to be the most necessary part of life. On this day, disciples offer pooja (worship) or pay respect to their Guru (spiritual guide). In addition to having religious importance, this festival has great importance for Indian academics and scholars. Indian academics celebrate this day by thanking their teachers as well as remembering past teachers and scholars.

Traditionally the festival is celebrated by Buddhists in honor of the Lord Buddha who gave His first sermon on this day at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, India. In the yogic tradition, the day is celebrated as the occasion when Shiva became the

first Guru, as he began the transmission of yoga to the Sapta Rishis. Many Hindus celebrate the day in honor of the great sage Vyasa, who is seen as one of the greatest Gurus of the Guru-shishya tradition. Vyasa was not only believed to have been born on this day, but also to have started writing the Brahma Sutras. Sanyasis observe this day by offering puja to their Guru, during the Chaturmas, a four-month period during the rainy season, when they choose seclusion and stay at one chosen place.

This was the day when Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa – author of the Mahabharata – was born to sage Parashara and a fisherman's daughter Satyavati. Thus, this day is also celebrated as Vyasa Poornima. Veda Vyasa did yeoman service to the cause of Vedic studies by gathering all the Vedic hymns extant during his times, dividing them into four parts based on their use in the rites, characteristics and teaching them to his four chief disciples – Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu. It was this dividing and editing that earned him the honorific "Vyasa" (Vyas = to edit, to divide). He divided the Holy Veda into four, namely, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. The histories and the Puranas are said to be the fifth Veda.



From Kaka Dixit's Notes

Dixit sat near Baba. Just then a village woman came running up with her child held in her arms. The child was already dead, and she wailed hysterically requesting Baba to bring the child back to life. Her sorrow brought tears in all. Baba kept mum! Kaka Dixit pleaded with Baba to relieve the sorrow of that mother. Baba told him that the child's soul has already entered another body and by interfering in the divine plan, he will be doing injustice as the child will have to leave that body to re-enter this body again – making his new mother unhappy! The wailing mother accepted Baba's verdict and said, "Baba, if my boy is going to be happy in his new birth, let him remain there! Be anywhere, my boy, be happy!" With sobs, she blessed her son!

Asadhu was in the crowd. He had seen that Baba did not bring back to life that dead child. He stepped ahead and requested Baba to save his ailing mother at his native place from death. He carried with him a letter conveying his mother's illness. This sadhu from South India, had come to Shirdi two days earlier and his name was Vijayananda. He was on his way to Manasa Sarovar in the Himalayas. He met Swami Somadev at Shirdi who explained the difficulties in reaching Manasa Sarovar. Vijayananda was in two minds as to whether to proceed to Manasa Sarovar or not and in the meanwhile had received a letter informing that his mother is on the verge of death! When Vijayananda approached Baba for permission. Baba was furious and asked him as to why he took 'sanyas' when he is attached to his mother. Baba asked him to go to Lendi Baug and do three weekly 'parayan' of Bhagawatha. In a mystic way, Baba told Vijayananda that many thieves are waiting to attack him!

Vijayananda did parayan for two weeks. He started the third round of parayan and an uneasiness gripped him. As he walked towards the wada, he collapsed and fell down. Bade Baba rushed to help him, but he was already dead!

Kaka Dixit felt that Baba has given Vijayananda 'Mukti' in Shirdi instead of sending him to the Himalayas or back to his mother! Dixit looked forward to Baba's help in his coming out of worldly attachments.

Raghunatha Rao Tendulkar and his wife Savithribai - a couple from Bandra, Mumbai, came for Baba's darshan. Tendulkar had published a book titled 'Bhajanawali' describing many of Baba's miracles and it had helped in spreading Baba's name in Maharashtra. Tendulkar's wife pleaded with Baba that her husband is due for retirement and a pension of seventy-five rupees may not be adequate. Baba assured a pension of one hundred ten rupees and blessed them. She also represented that her son due to appear for his final medical examination was diffident as an astrologer has predicted his failure!

Baba said – “What nonsense! These astrologers tell you about the favour of stars, not of God! How do they know what He has on mind! Go and tell your son that my fakir asks him to study as usual and go for the examination! He will pass this year itself!”

Baba's word was a cent percent guarantee – Tendulkar knew!



Then Baba referred to the topic of constructing a Wada. Kaka Dixit enquired about his plan. Baba told him to start construction in right earnest. He can settle down in Shirdi after fulfilling all family responsibilities!

Good Heavens,
It's All A Big Fake!

by **Dr. G.R. Vijayakumar**

Lord Sainath sitting in Dwarakamayi, conferring with his Secretary and most intimate devotee Shama.

Lord Sainath : Well, Shama while I've been on tour to make sure everything's running smoothly in my infinite universe, what's been happening on that tiny little speck called Earth, which I've left in your charge?

Shama: Well, boss, it's a bit tough to say, because it's getting pretty difficult to figure out what's really going on there, and what's not.

Lord Sainath : Difficult to figure out? Why's that?

Shama: It's because of something called fake news. Which are made-up things which people spread around as the truth, so that other people believe them.

Lord Sainath: Golly. But can't these humans make out what's true and what's not?

Shama: Sometimes it's hard for them to do so, because humans are programmed to believe what they're told by authority figures, like parents and teachers, priests and political leaders, TV anchors and social media pundits.

Lord Sainath: Wow. That's a lot of programmed belief. So, what's the latest piece of fake news that people have taken for real?

Shama: Well, actually it didn't start of as fake news, it started off as satire which some people mistook for fact and spread it around as such.

Lord Sainath : OK, so did this satire that people took for a fact, have anything to do with that thing called politics with which humans seem to be



getting more and more preoccupied?

Shama: In a manner of speaking, it does have to do with politics of a sort, the politics of religion, which can be the most political politics of all.

Lord Sainath: You don't say. So, what was their fake news about religion?

Shama: It was about how the parliament of a country called Iceland had passed a resolution saying all religion was nothing but a mental disorder. It appeared in a satirical column called 'Laughing in Disbelief', and a lot of people took it to be for real, and began to share it on social media with other people, until it snowballed into a big issue, with people taking sides, for and against, and getting into verbal fights with each other.

Lord Sainath: Good Lord, or rather, good me! Are people still fighting over religion, all these

thousands and thousands of years after they invented it?

Shama: They are, indeed. In fact, they're fighting over religion more than ever because, over all these years, they've invented more and more religions, each competing with all the others.

Lord Sainath: You mean all these competing religions have become like the football World Cup, or the Indian Premier League?

Shama: It's even bigger than that. Because you come into religious rivalry, with each religion claiming that they hold the sole copyright on you, God.

Lord Sainath: But dash it all, how can they do that? How can they try and divide the indivisible?

Don't they realise that I'm beyond differentiation, beyond taking sides? Can't they see that I'm above all religion, like an impartial referee, or umpire, or whoever those chaps are who don't support one team or other and make sure that no fouls, or match-fixing, or other jiggery-pokery takes place?

Shama: I'm afraid they can't. Each religion believes you support it, and it alone.

Lord Sainath : Well, can't you spread the word that they've got it all wrong, and that I'm for all religions equally and I'm not for any particular one at all?

Shama: Sorry, Boss. But that's one thing that'll immediately be dismissed as being patently fake news....

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

by **Smt. Sarojini Devarajulu**



Sai Baba considered Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as an Avatar of Maha Vishnu. When Das Ganu Maharaj started his first 'Pravachan' Sai Baba blessed him in the name of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and advised him to keep him as his role model for 'Nama Smaran'.

Can a human being be regarded as an avatar, in the present day and age? Sanatana Dharma clearly specifies three minimum conditions for someone to be regarded and revered as God-incarnate: First, references from scriptures; second, specific auspicious symbols and third, bodily characteristics found in such an individual.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji in his Sai-Prachar work in Calcutta and other areas of Bengal has extensively referred to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Vaishnavites regard Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who appeared in West Bengal at Mayapur, Nabadwip in 1486, on the day of Falguni Purnima as incarnation of God. He is regarded as a great saint from Bengal who inaugurated the Sankirtana Movement and propagated the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra.

“In the first part of Kali Yuga, the Supreme with golden complexion, will become the husband of Lakshmi. Then he will become a sanyasi and reside near Jagannatha.” Sri Narasimha Swamiji has paid reverential salutations to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his work 'Life of Sai Baba'. He also made a pilgrimage to Mayapur, Nabadwip

It is quite possible that this evidence can be refuted if it is only coming from one Purana. But more than 10 clear references are there about Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birth, parentage, activities, and philosophy in the Srimad Bhagavatam. His mother Sachi saw that her son leaves footprints containing impressions of auspicious symbols such as lotus, conch shell and disc. Struck with wonder, she shared this information with her husband, Jagannath Mishra. Right from childhood he was regarded as Divine.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has established 'Nama Smaran' as a panacea to obtain God-realization.

The 'Mahatma' and the Sage of Sakori

By **D. Sankaraiah**

Though Mahatma Gandhi and Sai Baba were contemporaries, they never met in person. After Lokamanya Tilak got blessings of Sai Baba, Gandhi tried to meet Sai Baba but each time, due to pressure of work, to his regret, he could not find time to go to Shirdi.

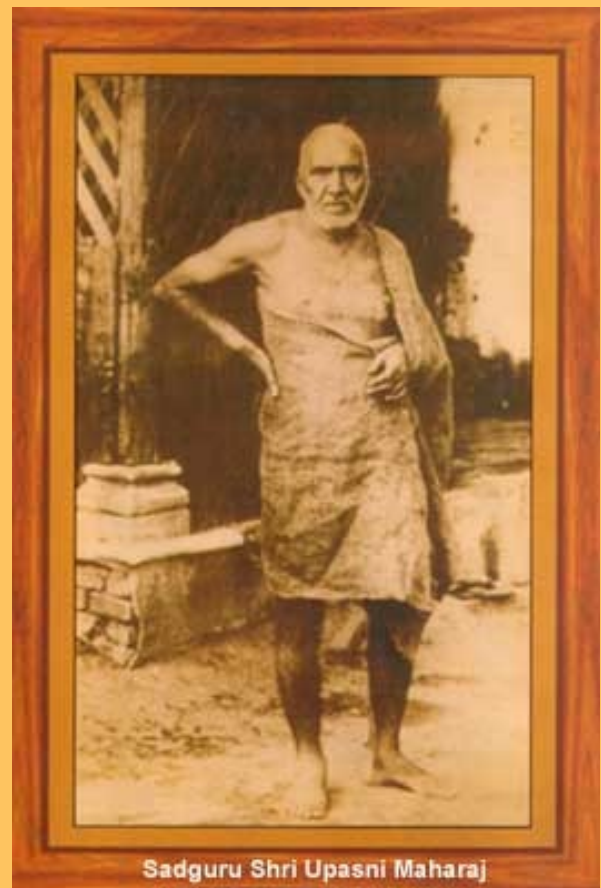


Despite the fact that the two never met, they appreciated each other's thought and work. Sai Baba advised his devotees to “follow the example of Gandhiji in the work of national cause,” To all those who complained of depression, Gandhi advised, 'Remember God in every living being – whether animal or human. Just as you love me here, love everybody else everywhere, whatever you may be doing anytime, remember to recite the name of Prabhu Ram! Let 'Rajaram, Rajaram' be on your lips! Sure, he will look after you!’

It was 1927. Upasani Maharaj at Sakori was very famous. Sai Baba wanted to nominate Upasani Maharaj as his successor. Even though he was a great Mahatma, he did not like to be worshipped on par as Sai Baba and mentally had sought Baba's permission to decline Sai Baba's successorship. Out of four years internship fixed by Baba he completed only three years and ten months and left Shirdi.

Gandhi desired to meet Upasani Maharaj and it was Sarojini Naidu who made necessary preparation. About the two, Sarojini Naidu wrote, "We have two mahatmas. One is Upasani Maharaj, who gives us peace. The other is Mahatma Gandhi, who will not let us rest one moment in peace. But each does what he is doing with the same end in view, namely the spiritual regeneration of India".

On seeing an eighteen inches high statue of Gandhi in one of the alcoves in Upasani Maharaj ashrama room, one of his devotees was puzzled and asked him, 'Who should be my ideal?' 'Should it be ever active Gandhi, or ever reticent Upasani Maharaj who sits quietly?'



On hearing the question Upasani Maharaj smilingly looked at him and said, "Who told you that I am sitting quietly?" The devotee said that he had been seeing it with his own eyes. At this, Upasani Maharaj asked him, "Why do you think that what you are seeing with physical eyes is the truth?"

Upasani Maharaj explained to him that both Gandhi and he perform their actions with 'devotion and detachment' and asked everyone to do so. They have completely surrendered themselves to divine will. For both, the keyword is 'surrender'. He said that, if one has surrendered absolutely to God or to a guru like Sai Baba who is Para Brahman himself then he does not have to concern himself about the rectitude or otherwise of the course, he will be taken 'on the right course' by the power to whom he has surrendered.

Gandhi, according to Upasani Maharaj was the exemplar of complete and unequivocal surrender to God. Upasani Maharaj upheld that Gandhi had no interest in Indian independence if it were to be achieved by unspiritual or immoral means.

Gandhi too admitted several times that he was seeking his own salvation through all his actions.

Gandhi endorsed the doctrine of 'surrender' when he said, "And if God guides me, what should I think? Even 'thought' may be an obstacle in the way of His guidance." Explaining this remark Upasani Maharaj said, "It is only after everything is replaced by 'divine will,' all doubts regarding success or failure, right or wrong, disappear. Doubts arise only because one has not surrendered to the divine."

Spiritualism was the cardinal principle underlying all their actions. By 'spiritualism' they meant 'education of the heart'. It represents the 'inner view of life' – 'it is the life within expressing and governing life without.' Both Gandhi and Upasani Maharaj agreed that 'the more the soul is in tune with God, the more it realizes its own inner bliss'.

When Upasani attained Mahasamadhi in 1941 Gandhiji cited the episode from Ramayana: that his work on earth was over and paid 'shraddhanjali'.

Boy in God's shop

Boy : Baba what do you sell ?
Baba : whatever your heart..
 DESIRE.
Boy : I want success and
 the happiness.
Baba smiles and say :
I sell only seeds, **not fruits.**



ISHAVASYA

PART 7

by **JayakrishNa Nelamangala**

Previously we learnt that, fearlessness is, without a doubt, knowledge that paramātmā is sarva-niyantru, and not knowing this truth itself is fear. Vedic Brahman, who is everywhere is taught as "भयकृत् भयनाशनः bhayakṛt bhayanāśanaḥ". For the ignorant, fear from God who is everywhere means fear from all things around him. For this reason, he is constantly worried about protecting himself from various worldly things. For the knowledgeable, there is no fear. Vedic Brahman that is everywhere is his Protector. For the same reason, all things around him also protect him. In this situation, there is no need for him to protect himself. The next mantra teaches that for such a knowledgeable person, there is neither delusion nor there is misery.

Shōka is a product of Mōha. Moreover, this world by itself is not of the nature of Dukha. The misery that we do see is due to moha. Proper knowledge eliminates moha. An adhikārin with proper knowledge of the world as the work of God and that in dwelling God being Completeness of Bliss, sees only joy all around him. What others think as miserable world, is actually a station of ānanda and Jeevan-mukti. This the meaning from ancient times in the tradition of śruti. This Omnipresence or Sarvagatatva is a concept that enjoins several other deeper concepts which are to be known, as one makes progress in the study of shaastra.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि

आत्मैवाभूद् विजानतः ।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः

एकत्वं अनुपश्यतः ॥ ७ ॥

yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāni

ātmaivābhūd vijānataḥ |

tatra kō mōhaḥ kaḥ śōkaḥ

ēkatvaṁ anupaśyataḥ || 7 ||

In Paramātmān all that exists are stationed. That Vedic Parabrahman indeed is in all living beings and in all non-living things of the world from beginning-less times. One who knows thus i.e., one who knows paramātmān as the Support of all that exists and knows paramātmān as distinct and different from the world, specially one who knows thus without doubts, where is delusion for him? Where is misery for him? There is none.

Notes:

· When it is said, all of existence are dependent on Parabrahman, it simply means, their existence is due to Paramātman. Those things are them, because Parabrahman has made them to be so. This is how Parabrahman of the Vēda is Sarva-Kartru. Not only that, He has entered into those created things, from immemorial times. The adjective 'from immemorial times' is added to indicate the fact that, it is like the thing was there first and then Parabrahman entered into it. If that were to be the case, Parabrahman's existence would be सादि sādi.

Because Parabrahman was there before, those other things are there. This is how the entire universe is सादि sādī and Parabrahman is अनादि anādi.

- Paramātman being the Ashraya for this world

Sai Baba Leads Us to Crest Jewel of Beauty

by **Seetha Vijayakumar**



My husband, on his trip along Narmada valley in Madhya Pradesh had picked up a 'Bana Linga' to worship at home and

also had visited 'Jeeva Samadhi' of Sadguru Sadasiva Brahman at Nerur near Karur in Tamil Nadu where a 'Bana Linga' is installed.' Soon he had to go to Srinagar on an assignment and I joined him despite Kashmir being a troubled area.

Shankaracharya Hill comes into view as we approach Srinagar from the airport. The conical temple on top of the densely forested hill overlooks Dal Lake and in the mild afternoon light, it is shining like the crest jewel of the Goddess. The vista brings to mind the image of Vivekachudamani, Crown Jewel of Reason, which is the title of a famous poem that Adi Shankaracharya composed in his relatively short but meteorically brilliant lifespan of 32 years.

This metaphor of a glittering medallion for a scholastic topper seems doubly apt because the crowning glory of the Acharya's academic

achievements was his accession to Kashmir's Sarvadnya Peetha, seat of all knowledge. Also called Sharada Peetha, after the Goddess of Learning, after whom the state got its name in the old days, the shrine is now located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. So, we visited the Shankaracharya Hill. On the way we stopped by a small shrine of Sai Baba.

My husband told me that at this place Shankaracharya meditated to compose his Saundarya Lahiri, the Waves of Beauty. The 100-verse-long poem opens abruptly with the assertion that, only when Shiva is united with his Shakti did he acquire the power of creation. According to a legend, the manuscript was originally authored by Shiva himself and He gifted it to Adi Shankara in the Kailash Himalayas. However, Nandi, the possessive bull of Shiva allegedly grabbed the text in his mouth, only to tear it into two parts and retain the first part with its 41 secret tantric verses. A smiling Shiva then commanded Shankaracharya to write additional verses praising the glory of the goddess.

Our plan was to bask in some of the magical vibes associated with the sacred spot while chanting Vishnu Sahasranama and 'Om Namah Shivaya'. It was a difficult terrain, but once you get to the summit, everything seems to change magically. There is bright sunlight all around, and under the friendly blue skies, one can rest on granite seats around the massive 'God trees' that have been planted in front of the shrine. We strolled around to gaze down upon the dazzling Dal Lake with its tiny toy-like houseboats. Suddenly it seems to us that all is well, and God is nigh. So, now we know



why Mughal Emperor Jahangir described Kashmir— “If there is Paradise on Earth, it is here; it is here; it is here,” he's supposed to have exclaimed in ecstasy.

A reference to this shrine occurs in the 12th century work 'Rajatarangini'. It says King Gopaditya (426-325 BC) repaired the shrine to Jyestheswara, a form of Shiva. The Karkota King Lalitaditya Muktapada (724-726 BC) made some land grants to the compact rock temple, which is set on a solid 20-foot-high octagonal base.

The terrace around the square temple is reached through a steep stone staircase set between two walls. A doorway on the opposite side of the staircase leads into the interior, which captures your senses at once as an elegant marvel of architectural economy and ergonomics. The giant Bana-Linga in the sanctum has been smeared with, saffron and sandalwood paste. “Having been brought from the depths of River Narmada, which is geologically more ancient than the Indian subcontinent itself, this Linga truly symbolises the Jyestha-Ishwara, Elder or Primordial One,” the priest informs us, on learning that we are devotees of Sai Baba. His comment reminds us of the words of Sri Narasimha Swamiji: “Kashmir has always been



more than a mere place. It has the quality of an experience, or a state of mind, or perhaps an ideal.”

A visit to Shankaracharya Hill was as good as visiting Sai Maharaj at Shirdi.

Give one word answers

1. Which 'vrata' Sai Baba' advised Bhimaji Patil as a remedy for TB.
2. Name the year Baba first came to Shirdi.
3. Name of Bayaja Ma's son.
4. Who welcomed Sai Baba to Shirdi?
5. Name the Deputy Collector of Kopergaon who came to Sai Baba.
6. Sai Baba made fun of Dixit, name it.
7. What is 'Saburi'?
8. Name the Wada where Baba's Samadhi is situated.
9. What was the name given to the garden daily visited by Sai Baba?
10. Who was the Mother initiated by Baba to chant 'Rajaram Rajaram'?
11. Who was the 'Aayi' referred by Baba?
12. Name the wandering fakir who claimed himself as Baba's Guru.

Answers:

1. Satyanarayana Vrata,
2. 1854
3. Tatya
4. Mhalsapathy
5. Nana Chandorkar
6. Langda
7. Patience
8. Buti Wada
9. Lendi
10. Mother Khaparde
11. Mother Radhakrishna Aayi
12. Jawahar Ali





nervously – “How will I ever beat you Baba? It is unthinkable.” Baba raised his gown and showed fresh swollen marks on the shoulder and right leg.

Baba spoke to that Brahmin – “Listen, did I not come to you sometime back? To eat your curds?” The Brahmin wept – “Oh God, it was you, Baba, in the form of a cat?” He recollected the entire episode. He was suffering from Asthma and Baba had advised him not to use curds. But the Brahmin was fond of curds. So, he prepared curds everyday. But a cat used to come and eat the curds. To prevent this, he kept the vessel in a hanging sling. Even then the cat ate away the curds. He laid a trap and when the cat came that particular day, he trashed it on its shoulder and right leg! Baba did not want his devotee to eat curds and ruin his health. But he missed Sai Baba

in the cat!

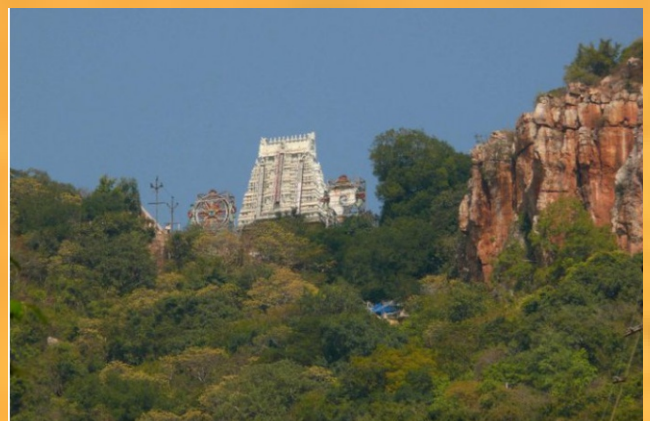
Seeing this great 'Leela' Mrs.Khparde recollected what happened a while ago. On her way, she came across a pig. She offered a chapatti to it mentally considering it as a form of Sai Baba. Baba referred to this and told Mrs.Khparde – “Mother always remember me! I am in every living being – whether animal or human? Just as you love me here, love everybody else everywhere.”

Consciousness as defined in this concept reminds us to see the empirical world as it truly is, as only one relative part of a larger Consciousness and the seeker is to strive for that state of Pure Consciousness where one would experience the immanence of Brahman and not just intellectually grasp it.

by **D. Chamaraj**

The cool breeze blew across their faces as the car made its way along the winding road up to the

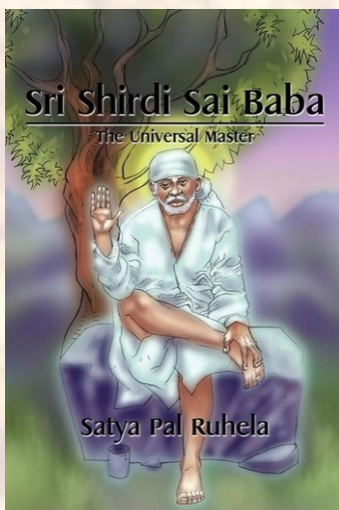
All of us nodded eagerly. 'We're always ready for a story, Mama!' said Shiv. 'According to an ancient legend, these hills are the coiled body of an enormous divine snake called Adishesha or Shesh Naag, who is Vishnu's loyal friend and his guardian. Once, the powerful wind god, Vayu went to visit Vishnu at his home on the heavenly Mount Vaikuntha. Adishesha was standing guard at the entrance and he blocked Vayu's way. "How dare you stop me!" roared Vayu. Vishnu heard the



loud voices at his doorstep and came out to investigate. He found Adishesha and Vayu locking horns, each boasting about how he was more powerful than the other. Vishnu tried to reason with them but to no avail. "The only way to decide this is a contest," suggested Vishnu. "I have an idea, Adishesha, why don't you climb Mount Meru and hold the mountain in your coils as firmly as you can, while you, Vayu, try to dislodge Adishesha. Whoever succeeds will be the stronger of the two." They both agreed. Adishesha wound his massive coils round and round the mountain, until his hood covered the peak. Seeing this, Vayu started blowing as hard as he could. He sent tornadoes, whirlwinds, and hurricanes to blow the snake off the mountain, but Adishesha held on tightly. Several days passed and neither yielded. Then suddenly the wind died down and silence enveloped the mountain. Adishesha thought that Vayu had given up and he lowered his guard.

In that moment, Vayu summoned all his divine might and blew as hard as he could. Adishesha and part of the hill were whisked away, and they landed on earth, at this very spot. Adishesha was so dejected by his defeat that he continued to lie where he had fallen and refused to return to the heavens. To appease him, Vishnu said, "My dear friend, don't be disheartened. We will be together on earth as we were in heaven. I will come and live with you here,

and you will take the form of a magnificent mountain range that people will visit and worship for ages to come." So that is the legend of how these hills came to be,' said Seshadri. 'The seven peaks that you see are said to be the seven hoods of Adishesha.' 'So, we are driving up Adishesha's back!' said Shiv, gazing at the hills to see if he could make out the coils of the snake. 'Did Vishnu keep his promise to come to earth and live with Adishesha?' asked Seetha. 'Of course,' replied Seshadri. 'He lived on this hill and it's even named after him, remember? There are many stories and legends about Vishnu and these hills; it could take me hours to tell you all of them.' 'Veer, look!' shouted Shiv, pointing to the peak that had just come in sight as their car turned along yet another curve. Brilliantly lit up by the morning sun and nestled against the green backdrop of the thickly forested hill, stood a tall pyramid-shaped ivory colored tower or gopuram. There it was - one of the most popular temples in the world — Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple of Tirupati.



Title : **Sri Shirdi Sai Baba - 'The Universal Master'**

Book Author : **Satya Pal Ruhela**

This book deals on the divine life, teachings, messages, and grace of Shirdi Sai Baba. It highlights his importance as the Universal Master whose teachings and messages elevate all people spiritually and morally and unite them. His main teachings are God is the sole master of all; the same 'Atma'(soul) is in every creature; everyone is linked to others according to one's past actions and Rinanubandh (bond of give and take). So, one must be kind, compassionate, and helpful to all those who come in this life. He appears before people who earnestly remember Him, in their dreams or in any other person's form to guide, inspire, save, and help them to solve their problems instantly. This book provides valuable information on prominent Shirdi Sai temples, organizations, journals, and websites in the world. It will enlighten and spiritually uplift the readers belonging to all religions, cultures, and nations. This is published by Partridge and available through Amazon (186 pages – 4.9 USD)

Reviewed by: Maheshwari Sanath Kumar



Towards A Borderless Society

by **Smt. Usha Ranganathan**

*W*e need to break free of sectarianism and separatism, move out of belief systems that create division, destruction, conflict, and chaos. We have to make a paradigm shift in our collective consciousness.

Way back in Forties, in his Sai-Prachar messages Sri Narasimha Swamiji wrote, “Curiously enough, it is our religion that zealously maintains the inner barriers that separate and often antagonize nations and people, their respective votaries not even hesitating blasphemously to take God’s own name to humiliate or morally injure their fellow-beings who happen to belong to a different community.”

Sai Baba used to get into terrific rage if someone discriminated in the name of religion. We recollect from Sai Satcharitra that on one evening, he was abusing Hindus and Muslims alike! He threw everything in the Dhuni! Nana Chandorkar, Kaka Dixit and other devotees had assembled for Dasara festival. Baba was blurting – “Damned you all! So many years have passed! Still you ponder whether I am a Hindu or a Muslim! Can you not see I stay in a mosque, read Koran, recite Namaz, yet burn a Dhuni, celebrate Rama Navami and Ramzan with equal zeal? Still you want to know Who I am? What is there to guess? Hindus doubt I am a Muslim? Muslims doubt I am a Hindu? See with your own eyes – see who I am?” One by one he removed his clothes and stood naked.

By this, Sai Baba’s intention was that, as individuals and as members of society, we need to get over our limited mindset and open up to merge with integrated wholeness.

Transformation can only take place when we are able to transcend duality, divisibility, and differences, especially what is based on caste, creed, and religion. We should visualize Sai Baba in every atom.

The only way to achieve this is through an awakened and ascending consciousness level. For consciousness is all-pervading, and all-embracing. Whatever may be the nomenclature, God is

Supreme Consciousness. Ganesh Rao challenged Sai Baba that he will accept him as ‘Sadguru’ only when Triveni – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati flow from His Lotus Feet. Even when it happened, he did not take it as holy ‘tirth’ as he was prejudiced that Baba is a Muslim!

A raised or awakened consciousness can reconnect us with that non-dual, non-divisible cosmic consciousness where synchronicity of universal oneness and inclusivity prevail. In other words, the universe itself is consciousness.

The Ishopanishad states, “He who sees all creatures in himself and himself in all creatures no longer remains concealed,” Through analysis, experiments and explorations, quantum physicists, too, seem to arrive at the same conclusion. According to panpsychism, every living and non-living object has consciousness. Consciousness is all-encompassing energy, which is present in all spheres, everywhere; so, it can change perceptions.

Inner evolution is required to achieve a higher state of consciousness. Purification of body, mind and spirit is necessary, connecting the atman, soul, to cosmic consciousness, Brahman.

Elevated consciousness helps the individual soul get united with the universal soul. Ego-centric I-ness gives way for a borderless perceptive, thereby visualizing Sai Baba everywhere, in every soul. Spiritual insight and deeper awareness lead to the realization that the Absolute, Supreme Consciousness, and Self are one: Tat Tvam Asi. Judgemental mind, limiting beliefs, contradictions and complexities make way for acceptance, compassion and understanding for a more cohesive world.

Pure existence is where one is in all and all is one. This integrated consciousness realigns and redefines our relationship with other people and with all of nature. Sage Ashtavakra explained, “You are not the body; rather you are pure Consciousness, the knower of all that you witness. The result of this knowledge will be peace.”



***Sai Prachar is
from Religion to Responsibility***

by **O.K.Varada Rao**

Two footwear salesmen were sent to different parts of Africa. A week later, one sent an urgent mail home: "Get me out of this place. Nobody wears shoes here!" The other salesman wrote back: "Wow! No one wears shoes here. Send me a shipload. Here's a ready market!"

Sri Narasimha Swamiji often narrated the above story to those who asked him why he maintained a punishing travel schedule to take Sai Baba's message. "Do you really believe the entire world will take to Sai Baba?" they asked.

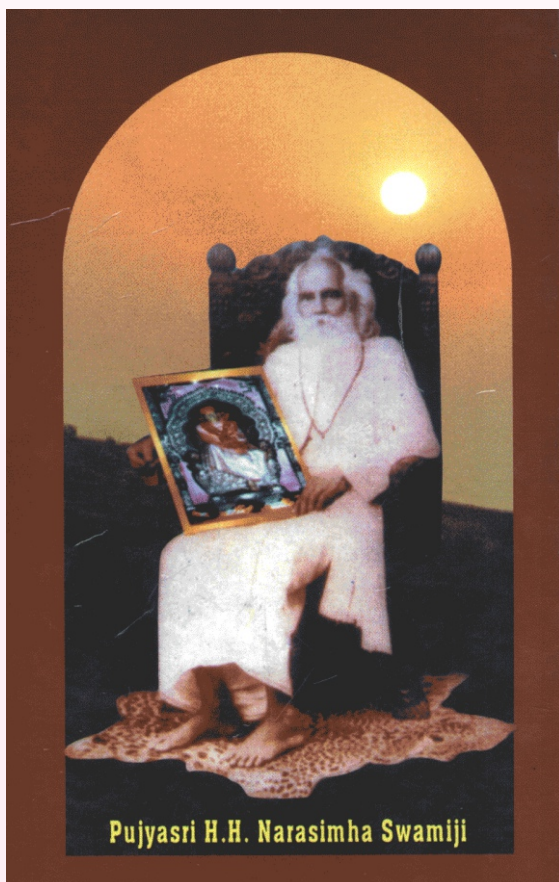
Sai Baba attained Mahasamadhi in 1918 and Shirdi thereafter generally faded out of public memory. People visiting Shirdi were very few and by 1936, hardly ten people visited on any day. Close devotees of Sai Baba thought that his power

was over as in the case of any contemporary saint. Sai Baba's Samadhi was being worshipped like a Muslim Darga!

Prior to 1940, all over India, hardly anyone knew about Sai Baba or heard of the place 'Shirdi'. But today we find temples of Sai Baba in nooks and corners of the country. Associations of Sai devotees, Satsangs, Samajs are in plenty. Many have given Baba's name to their children. Many shops, institutions, industries bear Sai Baba's name. Shirdi is now on the international map and lakhs of people visit Shirdi to seek Baba's blessings.

Sai Baba's invisible but unmistakably perceptible presence in Shirdi pulled Sri Narasimha Swamiji in 1936 to take him all over the globe in the next two decades. Sri Narasimha Swamiji is the heart of Sai movement. He is the embodiment of Sai grace and through his herculean efforts effected a silent revolution by which he made Sai Baba known all over India initially and now the world over. A revolution in which innumerable low and sinful people turned over a new life of piety by taking up worship of Sai Baba. He gave direction and life to Sai movement which had become static by 1936.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji's pioneering efforts of Sai Prachar from village to village, city to city, and making individual house visits took Sai Baba out of Shirdi in the remote corner of Maharashtra to all over the country and even abroad. For this purpose, every Sai devotee should be ever grateful for the strenuous efforts of Sri Narasimha Swamiji from 1936 till he attained 'Mahasamadhi' in 1956. When we offer obeisance to Sai Maharaj, our foremost 'Pranams' should be to Sri Narasimha Swamiji.



Who is Sri Narasimha Swamiji? How did he live? How did he realize Sai Baba? What are his efforts to distribute the treasure of 'Sai Baba's grace' to one and all? An attempt is made here in all humility to tell the fascinating story of this messenger of Sai Baba.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji took birth in a beautiful village of Bhavani in Tamil Nadu, on the banks of the confluence of three rivers – Kaveri, Bhavani and Guptagamini, on 21st August 1874. At a tender age he mastered the scriptures and later acquired a degree in Law. He became a prominent lawyer in Salem city and acquitted creditably as the President of Salem Municipality for two decades and as a Member of the State Legislature. He took part in the freedom struggle and was a follower of Annie Beasant's Home Rule movement. A tragedy in which two of his children were killed made him renounce his home in 1925 to perform severe austerities and realize God. For eleven long years he travelled all over the country, stayed with great saints like Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamigal of Sringeri, Ramana Bhagawan of Tiruvannamalai, Siddharooda Swamiji of Hubli, Narayan Maharaj of Khedgaon, Meher Baba and Upasani Maharaj. In fact, Sri Narasimha Swamiji is responsible for introducing Ramana Bhagawan to the world through his book 'Self-Realization' – Biography of Ramana published in 1929. Subsequently through another book 'Sage of Sakori' published in 1936, he introduced Shri Upasani Maharaj. When Sri Narasimha Swamiji arrived at Sai Baba's Samadhi on 29th August 1936, he found his liberating truth. He felt Sai Baba engulfing his body and transforming him into a new personality. A great surge of compassion and devotion flooded his mind and he felt at peace with him. Thus, an ardent devotee of Sai Baba who could spread his message in the length and breadth of the country was thus re-born.

Sai Baba's 'Ashtothara' recited by millions of his devotees has been composed by Sri Narasimha

Swamiji in which he has poured out his devotion. He guided the Sansthan authorities to adhere to a set pattern of worship, which is followed even today. With the help of Das Ganu Maharaj, he rationalized the singing of different Arathis. He also composed 'Sai Sahasranama' for elaborate worship of Sainath Maharaj. He also introduced chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama in the daily routine of worship.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji learnt Marathi and interviewed the contemporaries of Sai Baba and brought out the book 'Devotees Experiences'. He undertook a whirlwind trip of Maharashtra during 1936-39 along with Das Ganu and Awasthi Maharaj to carry the message of Sai Baba. Sai Baba prompted Sri Papaiah Chetty of Nellore to gift a sum of Rupees 11,455.00 to Sri Narasimha Swamiji at the Samadhi Mandir in Shirdi which Swamiji refused. But Sai Baba made him accept it for establishing 'All India Sai Samaj' at Madras in 1939 which became a nucleus for Sai-Prachar. He brought out booklets, pamphlets and made extensive lecture tours all over the country to carry the message of Sai Baba. In fact, he took 'Sai Baba out of Maharashtra and placed him all over India. He wrote extensively in newspapers on Sai Baba.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji's divine personality attracted people of all faiths to join Sai path that rapidly grew to hundreds of thousands. During Sri Narasimha Swamiji's very lifetime, devotees worshipped him as 'Sadguru'. During 1936-56, Sri Narasimha Swamiji travelled alone and at times with a few volunteers – from the icy peaks of the Himalayas, through valleys and deep jungles to Kanyakumari, from Gauhati to Lahore, and thus the whole of India. He had covered more than 11,500 villages, sanctified more than 1,50,000 homes, written about 2,00,000 letters, built 450 Satsangs called Upasamajams, and initiated over 50 temples and given countless discourses.

He never worried whether twenty people attended his lectures or two thousand! His Sai-

Neelkanth Ramachandra Sahasrabhudde

by **Bhanumathy**

Baba said, “however distant my people may be, I draw them to me just as we pull a bird to us with a string tied to its foot.”

In the year 1910, Nanasaheb Chandorkar visited Neelkanth Sahasrabuddhe's house and asked him when he was going to Shirdi. When Neelkanth said he had to collect his monthly pension, Nana said Annasaheb Dabholkar will arrange to collect his pension. He gave Rupees 10.00 for his expenses in Shirdi, gave a letter to be handed to Shama in which he asked Shama to arrange for additional funds if needed, and asked Neelkanth to leave at once.

Neelkanth boarded the train to Shirdi the very next day. On the way he asked his co-passenger on Manmad Mail if he knew Sai Baba. The young co-passenger immediately said, 'I know that mad fakir.' On reaching Shirdi, Neelkanth met his old school friend Tatyasahib Noolkar in Sathe Wada. Initially Noolkar did not recognize him but when he told about him and their student days, he gave a big hug and said, 'now you are my responsibility.'

Neelkanth went to the masjid along with Noolkar for the noon aarthi and paid his obeisance by touching Sri Sai Baba's feet. Over the next 3 days Baba repeatedly told him to serve Noolkar. He believed some great souls graced this earth but was doubtful about Sai Baba and jested about it. Eventually Noolkar asked him to stop talking about Baba like that as it hurt him immensely. One day Neelkanth said he could not understand Baba's words of asking him to serve Noolkar and asked Baba to explain him without hidden meaning.

A few days later during one of his discourses Baba said, "our experiences are not indirect. Those who feel so can go and those who don't should experience and go." Neelkanth wanted to experience Baba's words and Baba allowed him to stay in Shirdi.

Noolkar who was in good health suddenly became very ill and died. Neelkanth took care of him and nursed



him. Noolkar tearfully said "Baba brought you for this purpose only so I may not suffer."

Baba gave Neelkanth many experiences in Shirdi. Once when he was in Shirdi, Das Ganu Maharaj's wife Baya was in Shirdi and was very sick. Baba pointed at Neelkanth and told him, 'Tai is your daughter-in-law. So, take care of her.' Tai's mental condition was not stable, and hence she was brought to Shirdi. Taking care of Baya was a herculean task. She was completely demented and on several occasions was unaware of the state of her body. She had developed severe skin disorder on both of her hands. Neelkanth arranged to send her with another lady to attend nature's call every night. He used to give her a bath every day and had her do 108 parikramas to the deity in Sathe Wada. With this kind of tender care, Baya recovered completely. But no one immediately understood why Baba told Neelkanth that Tai was his daughter-in-law. Then they all realized that it was because Das Ganu and Neelkanth had the same surname, Sahasrabhudde and Neelkanth was much older than Das Ganu Maharaj.





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