

Aura of Shirdi Sai



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE —

January 2024

Volume 02 - Issue 12

(A Sai Aura Publication)

Desktop Publishing : Gayathri Prints
232/4, 4th Main Srinivasanagar
Bengaluru, Karnataka 560050, INDIA

[illegible]

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Bengaluru, India.



SaiAura
I AM EVERYWHERE



First Word	3
Thought to dwell on	4
Lose Yourself in Sai Baba	4
A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama – 27: Sahasranama Glorifies Onam as Festival of Surrender	5
Dr. Ranavir Singh's Pictorial Message	6
Mystics and Saints	7
Book Review	7
Kaka Dixit Diary	8
Megha's Bath to Sai Maharaj is for Introspection and Atonement	9
Pray to Sai Baba for One Goal	10
IshAvAsya Mantra #18	11
Sai Baba Bemoans	12
Dr. Ranavir Singh's Pictorial Message for Kids	12
Sai Baba's Approach In Pursuit of Happiness	13
Sai Baba is Mahakala	14
Baba as 'Chandrachud' for Chandrayan	15
Inspiration for a Life of Wisdom	16
Let Krishna be Your Festive Guide	17
One Word Answers	18
Sai Baba's Concept of Sanatan Dharma	19
Hanuman's Loin Clothes	20
Savitri's Encounter With Yamaraj	21
Children's Corner	22



HAPPY
Makar Sankranti

Contents

First Word

We are happy to present the twenty-fourth issue of SAI AURA with Best Wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2024. We also invoke the Blessings of Sai Maharaj to the youngest member of our team Amit and his beloved wife Aubrey.

This reminded me of the line

"Yet all experience is an arch where through

Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades

Forever and forever when I move."

—from Tennyson we pass into 2024.

When Seetha and I go on our travels to different parts of the world to visit Sai temples pilgrimage or sightseeing, in Europe, Japan, New Zealand, or America we keep a daily log, a diary recounting our everyday experiences, what we ate, and drank, where we did so, where we stayed, what we saw, paintings, and sunsets, and theatre performances. We have recorded our experiences with Sai Maharaj honestly.



We make a note of what we spend every day, and on what we spend it. We write down what our responses were to what we saw, did, and our experience of surprise, wonder and delight, and often anxiety and apprehension when, like all travelers everywhere, we'd find ourselves lost in a strange place, far from home, and darkness descending. We began the practice of keeping the log several years ago, and despite the pressures of check-out times in hotels, and the schedules of train, bus, and flight departures, have managed to fit in the daily task.

These pan-world journals that we maintain would be of no interest whatsoever excepting Sai devotees, to anyone else; they are purely personal, meant to communicate with no one but ourselves so that we are reminded of Sai Parabrahman. So, what's the point of these jottings? Why did we start them, and why do we continue what by now has become almost a compulsive reflex? Is it a manifestation of narcissism, of ego gratification?

We like to think not. As no one except Sai Maharaj is ever going to read these scribbles apart from us, they can't be an exercise in showing off: See where all we've been; see what all we've seen. No, no showing off. But our logs could be a form of revelation, revealing to ourselves aspects of ourselves, of how we see and experience new things, and how we've responded to them over the passage of time and travels.



Back in Bengaluru when we are at home, cocooned in the comfortable, and comforting, predictivity of domestic routine – the clockwork mechanism of Sai Baba's worship, the morning coffee or tea, the usual chores, the set meal times, the nightly retirement prefacing a reprise of the day gone by – our perceptions go into soft focus. We tend to look at familiar things without seeing them: the flowery print on the wall, the Bhavani rug in the living room, the bedside lamp on a coffee stem reminding of our Malnad days, with the Japanese shade that always tilts to the right.

When we remove ourselves, through choice or force of circumstance, from our customary setting, our senses seem to sharpen. When we become travelers – as distinct from tourists taking a guided tour, with a tour guide pointing out what to look at and why, and arranging our accommodation, meals, and transport for us – we are made to jettison, like unwanted luggage, the set mold of accustomed consciousness as the predictable gives way to the random, sameness to strangeness.

The air feels sharper, alert with the uncertainty of newness. Sights, sounds, smells, and tastes seem sharper, pleasantly or otherwise. What has been transformed, of course, is not the outer world, but the inner world of our perception; we meet within us other selves which we had misremembered in the forgetfulness of the familiar. When we travel, we set out to encounter the many possible selves we are, or might be; we are both journey and destination.

The travelogues Seetha and I keep are mementos of self-discovery as we welcome the new year 2024.





Thought to dwell on

Upasani Maharaj in 1934 in an interview with Sri Narasimha Swamiji recorded – “Baba wanted to groom me as his successor and would have made me a Sadguru on par with him, I am a cipher before Sai Maharaj. I wanted to Annihilate my ego. To become nothing. That is the reason I did not complete four years of internship and left Shirdi stealthily.

Otherwise, mankind would have one more Mahatma like Sai Maharaj.

Lose Yourself in Sai Baba

— by **CV Srivalli**

One day my Sai spoke to me thus in my ears:

"Why do you always remain engrossed in acts seeking distinct recognition?
Sometimes you write poetry and at times you talk of bhakti,
All this is merely the reflection of your ego,

When you shall have recognized your Sai, You shall stop talking thus
Neither would you then write books, nor take part in seminars,
You shall enter into the portals of your heart, And experience Parmanand',
Which is beyond words.

Your whole existence shall then start talking the language
Which no human tongue can express O' you the ignorant! Stop this useless talking of yours
And give up showing your devotion Is devotion something to be shown?
Lose yourself completely in your Sai
And enjoy the bliss of your being".

A Dip into Vishnu Sahasranama – 27: Sahasranama Glorifies Onam As Festival Of Surrender

— by **Seetha Priya**



It was a September morning. Three devotees led by Swami Vijnananda, who had gone to Travancore for the Onam festival had come back to Shirdi. Sai Maharaj greeted them and discussed about Onam which marks the annual homecoming of King Mahabali, who once ruled the three worlds. Though he was an Asura, Sai Maharaj said by virtue of his noble deeds and qualities, he became the ruler of heaven and earth. This made the Devas, gods of the celestial world, very insecure. According to the Bhagavata Purana, as a result, Aditi, their mother, prayed to Bhagwan Maha Vishnu for help. In response, he manifested as her son, Vamana, a dwarf.

As Mahabali was performing sacrificial rituals and offering gifts, Vamana appeared and asked for some land, only as much as he could measure in three steps. Mahabali agreed. Vamana then began to grow in size and measured the heaven in one step, the earth in another, and asked the king where to take his third step. Unperturbed, the generous Asura king offered his head for the third step. Pleased by his sense of surrender and sacrifice, Vamana blessed him.

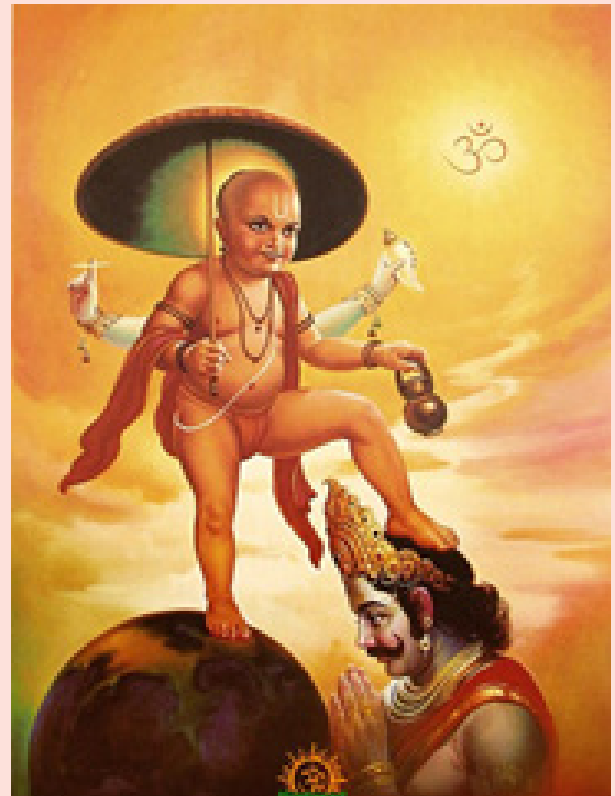
Despite being from the clan of demons, Mahabali was hailed for his noble and generous qualities; a master of the three worlds, he did not

consider himself as their possessor; though he owned the whole world, he stood detached from it; even though he was an emperor, he acted like a renunciant and offered to Bhagwan Vishnu everything he possessed, even himself.

When the visitors arrived Madhav Rao Deshpande was doing 'Parayan' of Vishnu Sahasranama. Baba asked Nana Saheb Chandorkar to recite and explain the 27th shloka of Vishnu Sahasranama which Shama had held up in his his recitation –

**Asankhyeyo Aprameyatma
Visistah Shistakrut Shuchihi
Siddartah Siddhasankajpah
Siddhidah Siddhisadhanaha**

Lord Vishnu is beyond count (Asankhya) or measure and is Immeasurable (Aprameya) Self. He from whom nothing remains out or exclusive (Visistah) is the protector of the virtuous (Shistakrut) and always remains pure (Shuchihi). He



fulfills all our objectives (Siddartah), all our accomplished resolutions (Siddhasankalpah), bestower of desired powers (Siddhidah), and is the means of our Siddhis (Siddhisadhanaha)

Sai Maharaj says, "When you find it difficult to pursue the Jnana Marga, the path of knowledge, that involves introspection, contemplation, and self-inquiry, just detach yourself, renounce, and surrender." This is what we learn from the abject surrender that Mahabali displayed before Vishnu, whom he venerated. In the Ramayana, Vibhishana could not tolerate Ravana's misdeeds and decided to surrender before Rama. Sugreevs objected to it, but Rama replied, "Whoever comes to me for refuge, after leaving all their relations and possessions, I protect them and take care of them."

Travancore was part of Mahabali's kingdom. Because of his qualities like humbleness and humility, the king became the darling of the people of Travancore. Everybody in his kingdom was said to be happy; there was no discrimination, no crime, or corruption. Though he was vested with immense power, Mahabali did not use it. Just as people loved

him as a benevolent king, Mahabali too loved his subjects. After his surrender, when Vishnu blessed him and offered him a boon, Mahabali asked to be allowed to visit his people once a year, to enquire about their well-being and wish them happiness and prosperity. His wish was readily granted. Onam is the day Mahabali is believed to visit his people and bless them.

Baba asked the three devotees to sing a folk song on Onam 'Maveli Nadu Vaneedum Kaalam', a popular Malayalam song that celebrates Mahabali's reign, as a time when people considered themselves as one, every heart was filled with love, with affluence and abundance everywhere. When the Malayalam month of Chingam dawns, it marks the end of rains and heralds the beginning of a season of sunny days. Onam is also celebrated as a harvest festival. But above all, it is a festival that tells us what a true devotee should pray for: 'I am not highly knowledgeable. I know not who I am or what my ultimate destination is. I, therefore, surrender unto your feet, which should take care of me.'

Dr. Ranvir Singh's
Pictorial
Message



*I will protect ..
you and your family,*
BELIEVE ..
NOTHING CAN HARM YOU.

Mystics and Saints

— by **Shreyas Devaraj**

Nittoor Srinivasa Rao (1903 -2004)



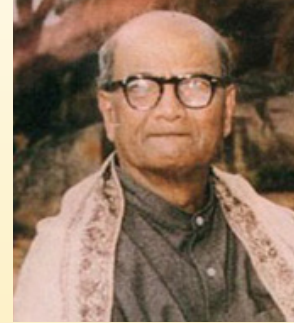
A Gandhian who lived for 101 years was Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka and went on to become the Governor. He never missed his visits to Sai Temple almost twice a week and he used public transport to travel. He claimed to be as simple as Sai Baba.

Sri Sainathuni Sarath Babuji



Right from his college days, he was drawn to Sai Baba and renunciated to become a Sai Pracharak and built an ashram close to Sai Samadhi Mandir at Shirdi. He has written several books on Sai Baba and also founded several temples. The greatness of these temples is that no cost is involved for worship and offerings from devotees. He passed away in Frankfurt in 2010

D. V. Gundappa



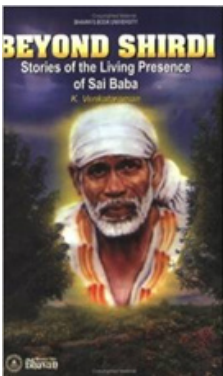
Popularly known as DVG, known for his Gandhian ideals founded the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs. His formal education did not go beyond middle school but he was the author of several books. His magnum opus in Kannada “Mankuthimmana Kaggera” is known as the common man’s Gita and bagged the Sahitya Academy Award and several other awards including 'Padma Bhushan'. This great Mahatma was given an honorarium of Rs. 180 per month but he did not encash any of these cheques. Even the award money of one Lakh in 1967, he handed it over to a public trust.

V Seetharamaiah



An outstandingly popular teacher in Economics and Kannada at the University of Mysore, he was a great scholar and author of several books. His simplicity and adoration to Sai Baba are remarkable.

BOOK REVIEW



Title : **Beyond Shirdi: Stories of the Living Presence of Sai Baba**
Author : K Venkatraman
Publisher : Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan
Pages : 146
Price : Rs. 135/-

In this set of Shirdi stories, the author presents the incidents in which the devotees had experienced the grace of Baba under trying situations, testifying to them Baba's living presence.

The stories here, each self-contained, are spread over the eight decades that have elapsed since Sai Baba's passing away. They are based on the actual experiences of Baba's non-corporeal grace regardless of the religion or region of the recipient. The reader will find the volume absorbing both as a collection of short stories and as a portrayal of experiences relating to Baba from the point of view of one person or another.

Reviewed by : Sudarshan Vakul

Kaka Dixit Diary

Learners must learn to leave the Master



When I was in Paris in 1908, I met a thinker whose writing eventually changed forever the annals of many of us associated with 'Sai Parabrahman and his intimate devotees'. Baba wanted to groom Upasani Maharaj as a Sadguru to

become his heir and continue the divine mission.

Baba fixed a four-year internship to Upasani of staying alone in contemplation at Khandoba Mandir and Sai Maharaj grooming him close behind his thoughts from the mosque. Upasani completed 44 months of internship and suddenly left Shirdi stealthily. Nobody could explain as to why he did like this as in four more months he would have attained Baba's status. Baba also kept quiet and did not encourage any discussion about Upasani.

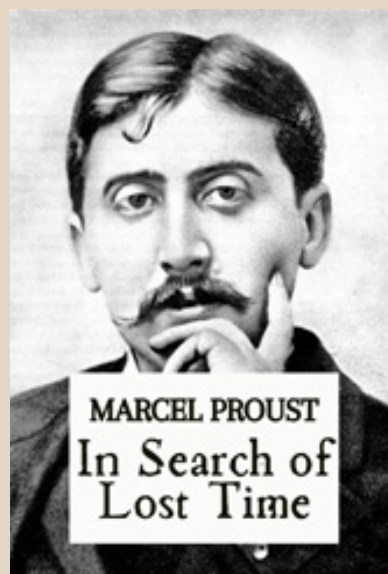
Baba had a game plan of communication about this aspect. At that time in France, a 38-year-old son of middle-class Jewish parents, embarked on a novel depicting the social mores of the era and become a monumental landmark in the limitless realm of creative imagination. I had met this thinker in 1908 before I left Paris.

That man was Marcel Proust, and his magnum opus in translation was titled 'In Search of Lost Time'. Today, Proust is a literary legend. But very few have undertaken the herculean task of reading the work, hailed by Graham Greene as the creation of the 'greatest novelist of the 20th Century', and by Somerset Maugham as 'the greatest fiction to date'. I got this book running to over one thousand pages through Nana Saheb Chandorkar in 1916 from a bookshop in Mumbai. We all went through this book 'In Search of Lost Time' and

Baba intended that we dispel all our doubts about Upasani Maharaj's action and we realized the folly of under-estimating a Mahatma like Upasani Maharaj who had attained the highest spiritual evolution.

From this, we all went through Marcel Proust's thoughts and now we know why Upasani Maharaj did not complete the remaining four months of internship to become a full-fledged Sadguru on par with Sai Maharaj.

Proust from his book explores the twin realms of art and spirituality and Upasani Maharaj in his elevated consciousness, had 'incitements' to spirituality. He never equated himself with Sai Maharaj and always considered himself as 'nothing' and Sai Maharaj as the ultimate Reality,



To do true justice to Proust, or to any master whose vision we would gain, the learner must learn to step out of the shadow of his mentor and walk in the sunlight of one's own making. This is what Upasani Maharaj did. As I could put it, "A genuine homage to Proust would be to look at our world through his eyes, not look at his world through our eyes." And that holds true for any master-pupil relationship like Sai Baba and Upasani Maharaj.

Megha's Bath to Sai Maharaj is for Introspection and Atonement

— by **Sri Narasimha Swamiji**

Most world religions include teachings on forgiveness. The concept might differ, but it still calls for love and a pure heart. Some religious doctrines or philosophies place greater emphasis on the need for us to find some sort of divine forgiveness for our shortcomings. Others place greater emphasis on practicing forgiveness, yet others make little or no distinction between human and/or divine forgiveness.

In Sai Satcharita, forgiveness is seen as a practice to prevent harmful emotions from causing havoc on one's health. As per Sai Maharaj, forgiveness is the part of spiritual purification. We all knowingly or unknowingly hurt people around us. Hurting others – verbally, physically, through our toxic emotions of anger and jealousy – is equal to killing, which comes under violence. The Devotees of Sai Maharaj seek and give forgiveness at the sight of viewing Maharaj's picture.'

In Sai Baba's life, Megha brings water from Godavari and gives a holy bath to Sai Maharaj by loudly chanting – 'Hara Hara Mahadev'. Megha calls it, the Day of Atonement -- the day on which seeking pardon is observed. Baba appreciates it as a fearless introspection and weighing of our habits, tendencies, and manner of living. Jews scrutinize their records of the past and ask the help of the Divine Parabrahman to correct the flaws in the texture of the soul, as they lay on the altar offering remorse for the past, with a determination to make amendments in the future.

Megha's giving bath to Sai Baba from the waters of Godavari is a silent confession and a role model for all of us. We should confess, 'We have been guilty and have dealt falsely and dishonestly. We have spoken evil and perverted the right. We have forged falsehood and



lent evil counsel. We have been false, scoffing, and rebellious. We have been impious and impatient of discipline. We have done wrong and broken faith and have been harsh and hard. We have erred from Thy righteous path and led others astray, turning aside from Thy loving commandments and teachings, and it has profited us naught.'

We pray: 'May it be Thy will, Sai Maharaj. Lord of God, to deal with us in mercy, forgive us all our wrongdoings, pardon and condone all our sins, and help us to atone for all our transgressions.'

Forgiveness is the lightening of our hearts. The darkness of hatred, rage, and contempt that we harbor rarely injures the unforgiven as much as it does the one who will not forgive. Every one of us has bruised another, betrayed, and ill-treated even those whom we love. Can any marriage or any friendship endure without constant forgiveness? What we hope for in the world, we must create. We cannot have what we will not give.

By pardoning another person, we bring something precious into the world – we enhance the presence of compassion.

To forgive someone is to believe that to have been wrong and to let go of the moral leverage that our righteousness grants us over another. It is renouncing the position of remaining superior. It is a leveling born of letting go. Forgiveness does not always mean a renewal of the relationship as it was before. As Sri Narasimha Swamiji says in the book, 'Life of Sai Baba' no one ever forgets where he buried the hatchet. But we can let go of the fury that colors the memory. Let us all hope that we can forgive everyone who offended, angered us, or sinned against us.



Pray To Sai Baba For One Goal

— by **Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji**

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

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

Sai baba says:

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

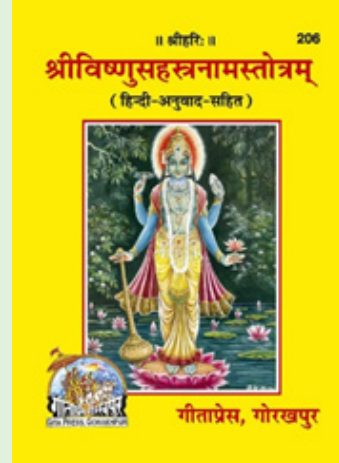
While Hath Yoga strengthens the body through systematic physical activity and breathing exercises, Bhakti Yoga purifies the heart by unswerving devotion to God, and Karma Yoga renders nobility to actions, Jnana Yoga illuminates consciousness through self-enquiry, study of scriptures and meditation. Sai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

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

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

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

Yet, Jnana Yoga is not merely an intellectual pursuit, since its goal is to transcend the mind which is ‘limited



in its vision’ and ‘rigid in its conceptions’. Intellectual engagement with the Supreme Reality is not enough till one realises oneness with all life-forms and integrates the individual self with divine consciousness.

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

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

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

IshAvAsya Mantra #18

— by Jayakrishna Nelamangala

The previous mantra opened up in two ways (1)
The Purusha that is established by mantra #17,
He is eternally present

(2) The Purusha that is established by mantra #17
who is the Inner-Controller in every entity, is the same
Inner-Controller that is in me.

How can the same mantra have two meanings?
That is the first question. When death and separation
occur to this body, what happens to the Inner-Con-
troller? That is the second question.

The next mantra answers both the questions, with
what is known as 'kaimutya'.

What is kaimutya nyAya? An example may help.

When we say a tree fell down, is there a need to
specifically say that all its fruits also fell down? Such
obvious implication in logic is called, "kim-uta" or kai-
mutya nyAya. If I don't even have ten dollars, then
do I have to separately mention that I don't have one
hundred dollars? It is automatically implied.

This logic is used when one is "contained" in the
other, and therefore, when one is mentioned, the other
one is automatically implied. It works above because,
"ten dollars" is contained in "hundred dollars" and
fruits are contained in the tree.

If A is contained in B, and B is contained in C, by
kaimutya we can conclude that A is contained in C.

If A is dependent on B and B is dependent on C,
by kaimutya we can conclude that A is dependent on
C.

Veda teaches that jIva is dependent on prANa and
prANa is dependent on Parabrahman. Since, prANa
himself is taught to be dependent on Parabrahman,
by kaimutya nyAya, it is automatically implied that
jIva is dependent on Parabrahman. Similarly, when
prANa is established as nitya, then, is there a need to
separately establish that Parabrahman is Nitya? That
Truth is automatically established by kaimutya nyAya.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

वायुरनिलम् अमृतम् अथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ॥ १८ ॥

vāyuranilam amṛtam athēda bhasmāntaṁ
śarīram // 18 //

Although this body has ashes as its end, even then
for Parabrahman who is its antaryAmin there is no
case of defect such as death. How come? is answered
as "anilam".

अः ब्रह्मैव निलं निलयनं आश्रयो यस्य सः अनिलः is the
etymological meaning of anila. Parabrahman Himself
is the only support for who, he is 'anila'. Depen-
dent on Parabrahman vAyu 'anila' himself, is nitya
eternal, then do we need to separately mention

that Parabrahman Himself is अमृतम् amṛta?

एतेन मातरिश्वा व्याख्यातः (ब्र. सू. २.३.८) ētēna mātariśvā
vyākhyātaḥ (bra. sū. 2.3.8). In the context of this
brahma-sootra, we learn that, because he possesses
knowledge that neither diminishes

with time nor vanishes at any time, vAyu is also
established as 'nitya'. (This nityatva of vAyu is because
vAyu is 'anilam' or has only Parabrahman as his AdhA-
ra) Even though vAyu has a body that gets destroyed
during the final dissolution, but his knowledge never
diminishes just as the knowledge of mukta-jIvAtmans
does not diminish, hence vAyu is stated to be without
death).

With this background in mind, we may now study
this mantra #18.

उपनिषत् upaniṣat

वायुरनिलम् अमृतम् अथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ॥ १८ ॥

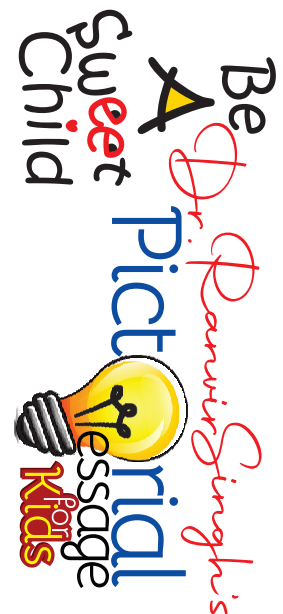
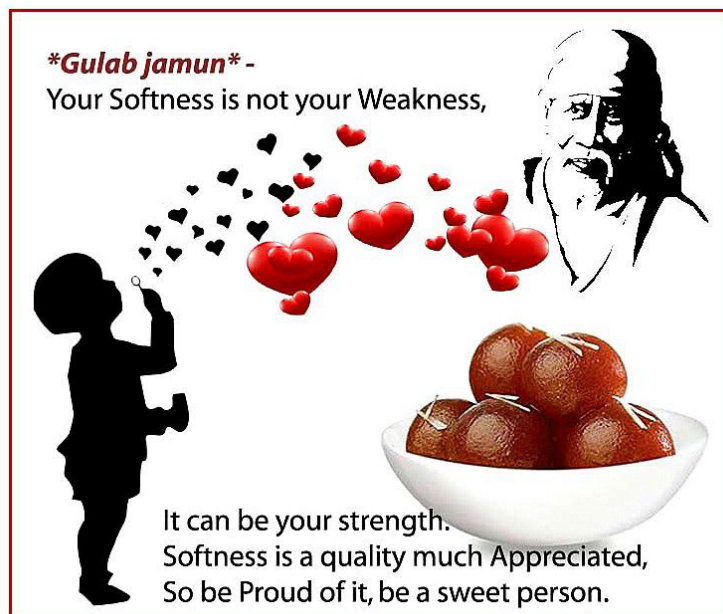
vāyuranilam amṛtam athēda bhasmāntaṁ
śarīram // 18 //

This body which has jeeva in it (शरीरम् śarīram)
has ashes as its end i.e., has death (भस्मान्तं bhasmān-
taṁ). For the prANa who is the instigator for that
jeeva and shareera, because he is "anilam" i.e., because
he has only Parabrahman as his Ashraya, (वायुरनिलम्
vāyuranilam) He (vAyu) is nitya because of his ni-
tya-jnyAna-svaroopā. (अमृतम् amṛtam). This being the
case, if the dependence on Parabrahman itself is going
to give such nityatva (अथ atha) then, it is self estab-
lished that Parabrahman is nitya (इदं ida).

Sai Baba Bemoans

Standing at my door,
Full of agony,
My Sai, spoke to me, thus:
"In what a pitiable condition have my devotees brought me to?
Everyone and at all times
Only seeks favors from me
Big or small,
To keep himself happy
Little realizing,
What all trouble have I to take
To fulfill their never-ending demands.
A peace-loving Sanyasi that I am
Who wishes to remain lost in his Fakir all the time
Has to come running barefooted
To fulfill their demands,
In return, they load me with gold, silver, and diamonds
In the hope,
I shall shower more benedictions on them
Why don't they understand?
I am helpless
I have to come running
To fulfill the assurances given in my lifetime
To my devotees
Otherwise, the whole world will accuse me
Of not keeping my word,
And the prestige of my Fakir shall be damaged
People will call me names
The faith with which my devotees come to me
Shall stand shattered".

— by **Sai Raghu**



Sai Baba's Approach In Pursuit of Happiness

— by **Suresh Chandra Gupta**

When we read Sai Satcharita and read and re-read Sai Baba's assurances, compared to the Draft by Thomas Jefferson, on America's Declaration of Independence unwittingly we find a disservice when it uses the phrase, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", the last four words being taken from the British philosopher, John Locke.



To Locke and Jefferson, "the pursuit of happiness" was the freedom to choose the right path to gather Sai Baba's blessings, which would enable us to lead fulfilling lives. This concept was borrowed from ancient Greek philosophy, and those Americans who worship did not mean a ceaseless quest for physical, material, or emotional gratification.

But that is what it has come to mean today. We view happiness as something out there, like a destination that we must reach, with the blessings of Sai Maharaj.

I'll be happy when I get promoted. I'll be happy when I get married. I'll be happy when I get my own apartment. I'll be happy when...

We come across this situation among Sai devotees visiting many places of Sai worship. It's that "when" that is the problem; it implies a future tense, in both the grammatical sense of the term, and in the sense that this future happiness we seek makes us tense because the search for it implies that we do not possess it at present. Or, as Lewis Carroll puts it in Alice Through the Looking Glass, "The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday – but never jam today."

Like the jam which represents it, happiness for most of us is something that needs to be "pursued like a fugitive", as Hari Vinayak Sathe has put it in Sai Satcharita.

In this endless pursuit of happiness, we create a sense of disaffection. We create the opposite of happiness; we create unhappiness. According to evolutionary

science, perhaps our brains are hardwired to be in a constant state of discontent, a trick of survival handed down to us from our pre-human predecessors.

The primates from whom we are descended had to be on ceaseless guard against predators. Those who were complacent were easy prey, while those who were edgy and always in the stress-inducing "flight-or-fight" mode of vigilance were favored for survival and passed on their genetic disposition of discontent. With Baba's blessings, we can opt for 'Survival of the fittest'.

It is this restless discontent, this drive to achieve something better, something more, which created fire, the 'Sudarshana Kala Chakra' and our success in Space research. But it has also caused executives who drop dead due to stress. Hold on to Sai Maharaj you are safe.

When a poet was asked what his poem was about, the reply was that a poem is not about something other than itself. A rose is a rose, is a rose; a poem is a poem, is a poem. Are such statements a meaningless repetition of words? Is what we call happiness, like a rose, or a poem, not about something but is just itself, what the Sai devotees termed an "in-itself"?

Dasganu Maharaj would say that happiness results from total surrender to Sai Baba and detachment of desire. A concept echoed in the ego, free from the shackles of longing.

Like a mirage forever receding as it is approached, happiness eludes entrapment by its pursuer. The most elusive thing about happiness is that it's an experience we might already be living without realizing it, so busy are we in quest of it.

Pursuit of happiness? Give it a break.



Sai Baba Is Mahakala

— by **C.S. Dinesh**

Sai Baba identified himself with Brahma Vishnu and Maheshwara.

“I am mighty Maha Kala, the eternal Time-spirit, the destroyer of the worlds. I am out to exterminate these people. Even without you all those warriors, arrayed in the enemy’s camp shall die.” This Bhagwad Gita’s verse 11: 32 became very famous because of a film on the physicist, Robert Oppenheimer, in which he was shown reciting it when the first Atom Bomb was detonated in 1945 in New Mexico.



Time occupies a central place in the Indic philosophical tradition. For example, in the Yoga Sutras, section I, verse 26, Patanjali clearly states that Ishwar – the creator of the Universe -- is beyond Time. Sai Satcharita reverberates this concept through Sai Baba.

In the Indian philosophical system, it is also believed that in the beginning three forces, sattva, rajas, and tamas were in equilibrium. When the equilibrium was disturbed, Vedas state that the Universe came into being, though there is no explanation for why and how it happened.

This tallies with the modern concept of the time-space matrix. In the beginning, time and space were together and in equilibrium. We do not know how this equilibrium was disturbed. But once it did, time came out and space started flowing and that was the beginning of the Universe.

Time, therefore, occupies a unique position in the scheme of things. So, when Krishna says, “I

have become Time”, he shows Arjuna his divine attribute by saying he has presently come down from being ‘beyond time’ to become it; and with time running its course the Universe has a beginning and an end. And that is what Krishna implies in the verse that all warriors on the Mahabharata battlefield will die, irrespective of what one does or does not do.

Ancient Indians understood the concept of time and space and it is very prominently mentioned in Patanjali Yoga Sutras. There are close to 20 sutras in it on the concept of time.

Incidentally, verse 11:32 is the only verse in the Gita on the concept of Time. The Gita, some believe, is the distillation of all the yogic systems practiced in India and thus this verse has a great meaning.

Regarding all our ancient texts, we are not quite sure whether what we have today about them, is really the original text or something else. This is because they were transmitted by oral tradition and not by writing. With time, the text could have been corrupted or lost.

Since these scriptures talked about complex things like space-time and the origin of the Universe, probably enigmatic verses were either omitted or distorted. The same could be true of Gita also.

Interestingly, Krishna decided to show Arjuna his Viratroopa, the divine, form as written in Chapter 11 which was basically about galaxy formation, brighter than a thousand suns, and a glimpse of black hole creation. So, from the discussion of how to live a good life and follow a great Kshatriya dharma, Krishna talks about space-time and the origin of the Universe. This was quite a leap of imagination on the part of Gita’s author.

Nevertheless, one hopes that anything – book, film, or documentary on Oppenheimer encouraged young people to study the Gita and understand its true meaning.



Baba as 'Chandrachud' for Chandrayan

— by **Dr G R Vijayakumar**

Sai Baba was worshipped all over the world for the success of Chandrayan III. We worship Shiva, who is also known as Chandrachud, because a crescent moon adorns his matted locks, as crowning glory. Shiva is dark in color, ashen or blue in many depictions, perhaps also because the entire universe and all of its cosmic bodies, including microcosmic matter, are contained in him. With the universe teeming with dark energy, and dark blue being a cosmic canvas, it is no surprise that the god of infinity should be associated with those hues.

Krishna says in the Bhagwad Gita (15:13), “Gam avishya cha bhutani dharayamy aham ojas pushnami chaushadhi sarvah somo bhutva rasatmakah.” That is, ‘Permeating the Earth, I nourish all beings with my energy. Becoming the watery Moon, I nourish all plants with the juice of life.’ This is also the spirit behind the Hariyali Teej festival which celebrates nature.



Soma is the juice of life, believed to be stored in the Moon and Shiva as Somadeva is the protector and creator (and also destroyer); he presides over the powers of the Moon, the so-called energy of soma coming from his divinity, as the lord of beginnings and endings, a cycle of life and death that is perpetual. Shiva is also Time, so he controls the waxing and waning phases of the Moon. He is also called Chandrashekhar, as the most popular Hindu name is

Chandra. Sai Satcharita authenticates these facts.

The Moon has inspired romance and evocative poetry; it has also lent itself as an adjective to describe a beautiful human face. Mythological stories across cultures have deified and romanticized the Moon. It is an object of worship, just as is the Sun and this natural satellite of the Earth has also been the subject of study by mental health researchers. The gravitational pull of the Moon connected to its waxing and waning phases, which cause high and low tides, are believed to accentuate human mood swings.

Shiva is said to control the mind, and, he is a yogi and meditator. In meditation, one is taught to cultivate mind control, after which, comes learning how to expand the mind to become one with Parabrahmn, which is as infinite as the expanse that is eternal, self-perpetuating. Soma as a Moon deity is also found in Buddhism and Jainism.

With the blessings of Sai Maharaj, this year's Shravan season will go down in history, with the success of India's Moon mission, Chandrayaan-3 – as the craft landed on August 23, 2023, near the south polar region of the Moon. This lunar area is usually referred to as the Moon's 'dark' side, not because it is devoid of light but because it is an unknown, mysterious part that is yet unexplored. Until now, that is, for, with India's Moon mission successfully landing there, there is now scope for knowledge that will lead to universal common benefit. Just as Sai Baba as Shiva, is said to guide the seeker who is floundering in darkness – to progress towards the light of wisdom.



Inspiration For A Life of Wisdom

— by **Rajeshwari Somasekhar**

Nana Saheb Chandorkar recorded in a letter to Kaka Dixit on 15th March 1915 about Mother Radhakrishna Mai, a young widow who was living on her own at Shirdi. She was making tea one morning and as she tried to pour some hot milk, it fell all over the kitchen floor. Normally one would clean it up right away, but instead, she thought of the neighbor's two cats who might like a treat. The neighbor agreed. Half an hour later, the mess was mostly gone – the two cats had enjoyed most of it. Mother Radhakrishna Mai then cleaned up the rest. And thereafter, did not give the mishap a second thought.



In comparison to real-life problems, such an anecdote might seem trivial. However, life is a narrative we too often become over-identified with and so, even in the simplest of stories, we can discover something insightful: Mother Radhakrishna Mai could have become upset at the incident – after all, living on your own is hard enough in itself. But she did not react in such a way. By not cleaning up immediately, she gave herself a chance to consider her options – how best to deal with her postponed tea fix.

Often, when we get upset, we are tempted to react impulsively and not think about the situation first. By asking ourselves how we may overcome our reaction, we try to change it. Before life becomes too heavy, remember that at any given time, we have options at the ready. If we help ourselves and others when life just plays itself out, so much the better. Of course, we may also turn to Sai Maharaj

in Dwarakamayi and seek help, but we need not shy away from working hard to give life a deeper meaning.

When she went to meet Sai Baba, in the noon. he incidentally asked her to recite Marathi poet-saint Tukaram's Abhang 3364 which reads: "God does not possess salvation ready-made, so that he may hand it over to his devotee. Salvation consists in conquering the senses and mind and making them empty of the pursuit of objects."

In the story, overcoming the senses would mean that we do not get upset by what we witness, but stay equanimous as much as possible. When it comes to the mind, things might be trickier: after all, dealing with emotions of anger and thoughts of despair can cause anyone to lose their balance. However, we might also say that they are only objects of living beings Jivahood: things always pass and change all the time.

Sai Baba explained that Tukaram is encouraging us to look beyond the samsara and find a deeper meaning in life. Why get upset over anything if it is only Maya and has nothing to do with the Supreme Truth? We can always allow good to come out of any challenging life situation. If we do, we will have done our best. The Divine cannot ask more of us, because as Dasganu Maharaj puts it in his Hymn to Sainath, verse 24: "He who through Thy grace has gained the human birth here, and yet does not strive to practice and walk rightly the spiritual path, but instead lives a life of sensual pleasures, is there a man more despicable in this world than he?" Mother Radhakrishna Mai was convinced.



Let Krishna be Your Festive Guide

— by **Ramaswamy Seshadri**

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

Like a full moon in the darkness of the night, Bhagwan descended among us over 5,000 years ago and still lives in our hearts as love, beauty, and good culture as Sai Maharaj.

In Sai Krishna, we see a picture of a complete life. There is love, tenderness, knowledge, dispassion, patience, generosity, compassion, and also courage. When a person has all these qualities, he can accept every situation in life and awaken goodness in other people.

When a driver encounters different road situations like sharp turns, steep inclines, and potholes, he shifts gears accordingly. In the same way, Sai Krishna demonstrated throughout his life on earth how to be joyful – from childhood in Gokula to old age as Sai Baba at Shirdi – and how to make our entire life a celebration.

Once, a man was helping a blind man to cross a road. Although the blind man would normally hold a cane, he didn't have one. On the other hand, the helper held the man's cane. He held the man with his left hand and his cane in the other. Seeing this, a bystander said, "Sir, you can see. Why are you using a cane?" The helper replied, "It's not for me, it's for

this blind man."

The helper did not need the cane for himself; he had eyes to see. It was merely for the blind man that he held it. This is how avatars like Sai Baba and Krishna are. For the sake of the world, they voluntarily assume human limitations.

Even though saints descend to Earth at a particular time, the benefit they provide to the world transcends time. Sai Krishna's goal was not limited to stopping the decline of dharma during his lifetime. It was also to teach us how to ascend to the level of a god, as well as to revive the spiritual culture.

Many of us are stuck in a vicious cycle of 'achieving more' to be happy and then worrying over whether our achievements are being applauded, acknowledged, and awarded. What we are doing is attaching a 'condition' to actions. If we create something, we want the world to praise us. If we have a child, we want them to fulfill 'our wishes'.

Krishna told Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra: *Karmanye Vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana* – Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction. It has a deep meaning that no matter what the result of karma is, exercise the intellect to accept it with the same grace. It is important to break free from the cycle of putting 'conditions' and losing sleep over them.

Our creations are as anitya, ephemeral, as us. That which is impermanent cannot thus be true, for truth is permanent. Truth is also liberating. To believe in the anitya to be the truth is avidya, false knowledge. An obvious question thus is if our life is a pursuit of anitya, propelled by avidya, should we





not do anything? Should we just sit? Is inaction the 'desired action'?

Arjuna faced the same dilemma on the battle-ground. Krishna came to Arjuna's rescue and said: Karmano hyapi boddhavyam boddhavyam cha vikarmanah. Akarmanash cha boddhavyam gahana karmano gatih— You must understand the nature of all three – karma, recommended action; vikarma, wrong action; and akarma, inaction. The truth about these is profound and difficult to understand.

Those who see 'action in inaction' and 'inaction in action' are truly wise. Although performing all kinds of actions, they are yogis and masters of all their actions. So a yogi is 'calmly active' and 'actively calm'. They do not renounce action. They renounce the tendency to put a 'condition' on the outcome of their actions.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra provides a more succinct explanation of why it is important to train the mind to not be a victim of setting conditions for actions and worrying over outcomes.

Patanjali says: Anitya Suci Du Khanat Masu Nitya Shuci Sukhat Makhya Tira Vidya – Ignorance is taking that which is non-eternal, impure, painful and non-Self, for eternal, happy pure, Atman, Self. Ignorance is mistaking avidya for vidya. By freeing ourselves from conditions, we move closer to being a yogi.

A yogi is someone who has freed their being from imposing conditions on actions. Conditions create desires. To be desire-less is to be a yogi.

The one who lives without 'Ego', He is devoted to Sai in word and deed"

—Dada J. P. Vaswani

"Sai Satcharita proclaims one truth, Love all and serve all, Let it be the motto of life"

—Sri Narasimha Swamiji

"Recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama daily shall wash the dirt in you?"

—Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji

Give ONE Word Answer

1. How many daughters were born to Mahlsapathi?
2. From where did Radhakrishna Mai accompany Nana Saheb Chandorkar to Shirdi?
3. Where did Shama die in 1945?
4. What was Nimonkar's Seva?
5. To whom did Baba exchange his life?
6. Who was the first to receive Baba's Padukas?
7. What is the original name of Nanavalli?
8. Who among Baba's close devotees maintained a diary?
9. Who brought Moolay Sastri to Shirdi?
10. Who called Nana Saheb to Shirdi on behalf of Baba?
11. A great devotee of Baba born at Ahmednagar, died at Mumbai, and a vibratory memorial at Nanded – Who is that Mahatma?
12. What is the native place of Booty?

ANSWERS: 1. Three; 2. Pandarpur; 3. Cashier; 4. Tatyapa Patil; 5. Bya Ma; 6. Nimonkar; 7. Shanikara Vaidya; 8. Kaka Dixit; 9. Booty; 10. Appa Kulikarni; 11. Dasganu; 12. Nagpur.

Sai Baba's Concept of Sanatan Dharma

— by **D. Sankaraiah**

Sai Baba used to get angry at religious conversions. He used to ask – “Have you changed your father?”

Sanatan dharma is the homage of divinity to itself as per Sai Maharaj. It is Sanatan, eternal, for not being static and for its ability to become new again, as per the Atharva Veda, X.8.2.

As Sri Narasimha Swamiji puts it, ‘Sada bhavah sanatanah. Sanatana karoti iti sanatanayati. Sanatanayatiti sanatanah. Sanatanashchasau dharma iti sanatano dharmah,’ meaning, ‘That which is always existent is Sanatan; that which causes one to become Sanatan is also Sanatan. That which is Sanatan and dharma is Sanatan dharma.’

Dharma is not a set of dogmas but the embodiment of higher values of life, enunciated and vouchsafed from time to time. It is the way to abhyudaya, worldly excellence, and nihshreyasa, spiritual fulfillment. Derived from the root ‘dhri’ which means ‘to uphold, support’, it connotes both the moral law and the law of one’s being. In its highest aspect, dharma is truth itself.

To adopt truthfulness in life, abide by the laws of nature, see Sai Baba as divinity in everything around, and stay whole in mind, body, and spirit, are age-old ideas of Sanatan dharma, which continue to be relevant. Spirituality, its core aspect, provides the cosmic vision that one’s good lies in the good of the other.

The Sai Satcharita gives Vedic insight that there is one unchanging reality appearing as many; that consciousness is the substratum of matter, mind, and all else that exists; that the microcosm contains in the macrocosm, provided a new vision to scientists like

Niels Bohr, Erwin Schrodinger, Werner among others.

In his Preface to *The Tao of Physics*, Fritzof Capra mentions that in meditative moments, he saw ‘cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses’. He envisioned ‘the atoms of the elements’ and those of his body ‘participating in the cosmic dance of energy’, and proclaimed that the phenomena were indeed the dance of Shiva.

Sanatan dharma, in its popular form as Hinduism, cannot be assessed strictly in terms of concepts applicable to other faiths that started in historical times and have a single scripture.



There have been periods of twilight in its history but never was light eclipsed from view. With its corrective mechanism, it has endeavored to separate primeval truths.

Sai Baba makes Sanatan dharma to goad one ‘to move from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality’. There is no place in it for heresy or

blasphemy, no tradition of crusades, no bifurcation of humanity into the faithful and the unfaithful, and no clash with science or with other faiths, as truth can be expressed in a million ways.

The universal brotherhood propounded by Sai Maharaj, ‘One planet, One people’ is an echo of the Sanatan dharma ideal, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, meaning, the whole mankind is one family. The Vedic prayer: Saha na vavatu, saha nau bhunaktu, sa-haviryam karavavahai – Let us learn together. Let us enjoy the fruits of our knowledge together. Let us get strengthened together – can script the unity principle among different communities and faiths.

Hanuman's Loin Clothes

— by **Smt. Sunanda Ananth**

One morning, Nanavalli and his friends all dressed as monkeys trouped into Sai Baba's presence. Nana Saheb Chandorkar was doing 'parayan of Sundarkhand. Dada Khelkar raised a question related to Hanuman.

The context relates to Hanuman leaping across the ocean on a mission to gather intelligence regarding Sita, kidnapped by Ravana and held in Lanka.

On hearing this, Dasganu recited a kirtan as follows: 'Crossing the sea, Raghav's yeoman/ Leapt to the golden city; yet – wonder! His loincloth never slipped.'

Hanuman had taken the aerial route to cross the sea. He did so not in the safety of a closed place but in full exposure to wind-pressure. And he had to contend with an ogress on the way. Never once in all this did his loincloth slip. One can extend the wonder to include other flights of Hanuman: when he flew to the Himalayas to fetch the miracle herb, Sanjeevani, and when he fought aerial duels with Ravana's son Indrajit and other Lankan warlords. Hanuman's loincloth, let's recall, was not secured by any pins or hooks. And yet it stayed in place.

Apart from sounding witty and smart, Dasganu's epigram encapsulates the essence of Ramayana wisdom. The key word in the epigram is 'yeoman'. Hanuman did all that he did not as an independent individual, but as 'Rama's yeoman'. As Tulasidas puts it, Hanuman was aatur, ever eager for action, but not to implement his own mind. His eagerness was to serve Rama's kaaj, Rama's purposes. He had no personal will or agenda. He had surrendered his will to Rama. When you make yourself a mere instrument of God, acting per His Will to His greater glory, there is no chance of failure in your mission. There can be no slippages, major or minor. Your loincloth holds securely.

This is the message of the Gita. Krishna tells the wavering Arjuna to cast away his qualms and firm up to the battle. This was the reply



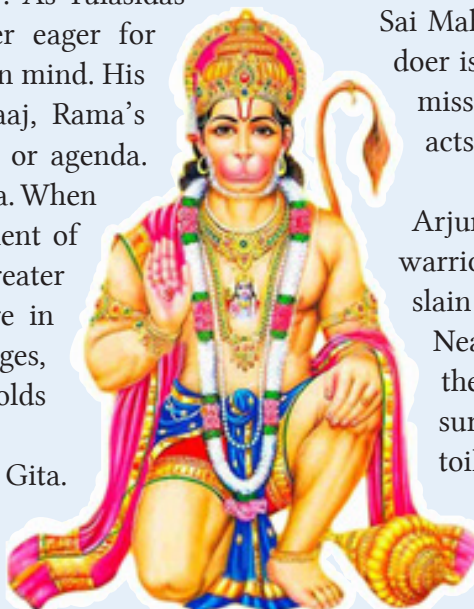
given by Sai Maharaj to Dada Khelkar's question as to how Hanuman's loin clothes remained in place.

Baba went on to explain that Arjuna's despondency in the Gita, owed to the fact that he saw himself as an independent being, confronted by the hard option of killing in battle his dear ones. Krishna corrects this delusion by offering Arjuna a simple way out. Arjuna should fight not for the sake of the Pandavas, but for the sake of God. 'Be you intent on doing actions for My sake', the Gita 12:10. Baba called Towser a Christian who was in the gathering at the mosque to recite from the Bible the invocation: 'In the name of God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost'. This is a guarantee of success. In case you fail, accept such failure as the will of God. The crux of their prayer is: 'Thy Will be done!' There is no other right approach to action. As the Bible affirms, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it', Psalm 127.

Sai Maharaj asserted that the real, the only doer is God, and the success of a devotee's mission depends on the extent to which he acts as an instrument of the Divine.

In the Gita 11:35, Krishna reassured Arjuna on the battlefield, 'These great warriors ranged here have already been slain by me. You rise and reap fame.' Nearly four million warriors perished on the Kurukshetra field. The five Pandavas survived. In the eighteen days of battle toil, never once did their crowns roll down. Any wonder?

Sai Maharaj reverberated as Lord Krishna.



Savitri's Encounter With Yamaraj

— by **B.S. Krishna Murthy**

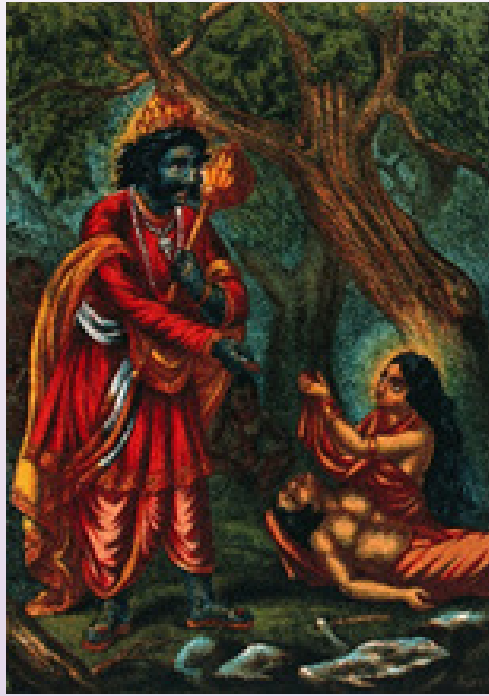
The story of Savitri and Satyavan, when told to me as a child, ended with the lesson, “So great was her devotion to her husband that she was able to win him back even from Yama.” When I grew up as a devotee of Sai Maharaj, to read the story, which occurs in the Mahabharata, I knew of her victory, against the god of death, to be born of her complete absence of fear, her strong inner convictions and great presence of mind.

Sai Baba narrated the story to Kaka Dixit and others. Yama had come, yanked Satyavan's life, and started going southwards with it.

Savitri did not faint, nor cry, nor scream, nor fight. From her lap, she gently placed Satyavan's head on the ground and stood up to negotiate with Yama himself.

Savitri followed Yama and began by establishing a relationship with him, as an equal partner in conversation. She said, “Seven steps, they say, are enough to contract a friendship. Now I have walked more than that with you and so as a friend I would like to say something, listen.” Baba asserted that Yama was charmed. Having made him her friend, Savitri asserted the importance of dharma.

Yama was more impressed. He granted her a boon, “Ask me for a boon other than the life of Satyavan,” became his rhetoric. Savitri asked for her father-in-law to regain his eyesight and health. She, however, did not stop following Yama. Yama too did not get irritated. He gently told her, “You will get tired, go back.” Savitri said she would not tire as she was walking with her husband and spoke of the value of having righteous companions, the merit of Satsang. With this, she paid a compliment to the company



she was in. Again, Yama was impressed and this time she asked that her father-in-law regain his lost kingdom. That granted, Yama said, “Now go back. Do not take more trouble.”

Savitri had established friendship and spoken of Satsang, now she described those who make the Satsang, taking off as it were from the advice he gave her to turn back. “Your duty is to restrain all creatures with your command. That is why you are called Yama. I think our primary duty is not to hurt any other being in thought, word, or deed, but to live with love for all. There are

those who have no devotion and there are the good who protect even their foes.” Has she gently told him how he should behave? Yama was appreciative. He granted her a boon that her father begets a hundred sons.

Now, Savitri addressed Yama as the one who is equal to all in his disposition. Though he takes lives, she described him as one with a good heart who inspires confidence in people. Yama granted her another boon with the same caveat. She asked for a hundred sons. And Yama granted that. Savitri went on to extol the righteous ones. Yama granted her yet another boon but Savitri said, “The fourth boon cannot fructify without my husband Satyavan.” Not once had she begged for Satyavan's life. Her composure drew it back to her. Yama returned her Satyavan to her so that she may beget a hundred sons. Those sons came to be known as Savitri Putras, celebrating, as it were, her fearlessness, strategy, tenacity, and success.

Sai Baba extolled women's empowerment and the need for bold and fight for equal rights.

Children's Corner

Beloved Children,
Om Namo Sainathaya

A Group of young children who had come to Shirdi requested the SAI AURA team to take them to Yeola to visit Anandanath Maharaj and his Ahram – 60 km away from Shirdi, on the Kopergaon – Manmad Rail route. 5 km from Yeola village. We hired a van and it was a blissful trip.

On reaching the Ashram we were received by a German monk Swami Sai Ananda who took care of our needs and showed us the Ahram.

Anandanath Maharaj was 95 years old in 1854 when Sai Maharaj came to Shirdi they used to meet quite often and there is a reference to the Maharaj in Chapter 5 of Sai Satcharita.

Anandanath Maharaj resembled Swami Samarth, who is known as Akkalkot Maharaj and we were told that Swami Samarth visited Yeola Ashram and created a well and a lake with crystal clear water. Swami Samarth also materialized an idol of Dutta which is worshipped at Anandanath Maharaj's sanctum.

The children asked Swami Sai Ananda a few questions about a few mythological pictures there. Swami replied that the core idea of mythological animals is to bring together lofty goals to embellish our lives and guide us toward excellence.

He said – "The desire to excel in every aspect of human life is as old as life itself. All our ancient texts 'Lead me from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth, and from the fear of death to the knowledge of immortality', from the Brihadaranyak Upanishad, or the even older lines yearning to be of one mind without discord, as mentioned in the



Rig Veda, the aspiration has always been lofty. Anandanath Maharaj in turn has held up to be an example to illustrate it.

Rama was described by Valmiki as being as forgiving as the earth and as dignified as the mountains. Birds and animals also became ideals for human aspirations. An endearing example is that of the parrot, the image of which is woven into the bridal saris by the mother of the bride. The parrot is said to visit only beautiful spots where there are plenty of fruits; so the mother wishes her daughter lives in a house of abundance and beauty. The hans is another common motif ornamenting saris and even temple doorways. It is believed to have the ability to separate milk from water, symbolizing that it is endowed with the wisdom of discernment and represents the pure soul which is full of wisdom.

Swami Sai Ananda continued – "The elephant was highly revered for its majestic appearance, its incredible memory, its usefulness in battle, and the fact that it does not kill to feed itself. Human genius added wings to this creature so that an element of the divine was introduced. The flying elephant is a mythological creation of many cultures. So too the horse. The flying horse, known variously in different cultures as Uchchaishravas, Pegasus, or Devadatta holds the same idea. By adding wings, the speed and power of the horse gained sacred connections

Then came animals which were a combination, like the shardula. There is a school of thought that perhaps animals like the shardula did exist. The shardula has been translated as the lion or the tiger, but iconographically it seems to be a combination of

the lion and another animal or bird, which could be a horse or an elephant and so on. Sita mentions it in Valmiki Ramayana as one of the frightening beings that roamed the forest. In common parlance, the shardula has come to symbolize the resplendent, the most powerful, and the best.

The makara is another fascinating animal, as far as our knowledge goes, mythical. It comes with the body of a fish, the trunk of an elephant, the feet of a lion, the eyes of a monkey, the ears of a pig, and the tail of a peacock. An aquatic animal, it is considered auspicious as it has beauty and prowess of every kind. Therefore, it ornaments many temples.

The Navagunjara comes with a story. It is said that Arjuna was meditating when a creature appeared before him. It had the face of a rooster. It had one foot raised like a human arm holding a lotus in its hand. The other three feet belong to an elephant, a tiger, and a horse. Furthermore, it had the neck of a peacock, the hump of a bull, the waist of a lion, and its tail was a serpent. Arjuna prepared to attack it but realized it was the Vishwaroop, the unified divine form of Krishna.

The 'Satsang' at the Ashram of Anandanath Maharaj was blissful and we returned with happy memories.

Yours Sai Babaly
Sai Aura Team



Complimentary Copy. Not for Sale.

