

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter 32

In Quest of Guru and God - Fasting Disapproved.

In this Chapter Hemadpant describes two things:- (1) How Baba met His Guru in the woods, and through him God; and (2) How Baba made one Mrs. Ghokhale, who had made up her mind to fast for three days, eat Puran-Polis.

Preliminary

In the beginning, Hemadpant describes the samsara (visible world) by the allegory of Ashvattha (Banyan) tree, which has in the phraseology of the Geeta, roots above and branches below. Its branches are spread downwards and upwards and are nourished by the gunas (qualities), and its sprouts are the objects of the senses. Its roots, leading to actions, are extended downwards to this world of men. Its form cannot be known in this world, nor its end, its beginning nor its support. Cutting this Ashvattha tree of strong roots with the sharp weapon of non-attachment, one should seek the path beyond, treading which there is no return.

For traversing this path, the help of a good guide (Guru) is absolutely necessary. However learned a man may be, or however deep his study of Vedas and Vedangas (sacred literature) may be, he cannot go to his destination safely. If the guide be there to help him and show him the right way, he would avoid the pitfalls and the wild beasts on the journey, and everything will be smooth sailing.

Baba's experience in this matter, the story which He gave out Himself, is really wonderful, which, when attended to, will give you faith, devotion and salvation.

The Quest

Once four of us were studying religious scriptures and other books and, being thus enlightened, we began to discuss the nature of the Brahman. One of us said that we should raise the self by the Self and not depend on others. To this the second replied that he who controls his mind is blessed; we should be free from thoughts and ideas and there is nothing in the world without us. The third said that the world (phenomenon) is always changing, the formless is eternal; so we should discriminate between the Unreal and the Real. And the fourth (Baba Himself) urged that bookish knowledge is worthless and added, "Let us do our prescribed duty and surrender our body, mind and five pranas (life) to the Guru's feet. Guru is God, all pervading. To get this conviction, strong unbounded faith is necessary."

Discussing in this wise, we four learned men began to ramble through the woods in the quest of God. The three wanted to make the quest with their free and unaided intellect. On the way a Vanjari (a man who trades in certain things, such as grain etc. by carrying them on bullock) met us and asked us, "It is hot now, where and how far are you going?". "To search the woods", we replied. He enquired, "On what quest are

you bound?" We gave him an ambiguous and evasive reply. Seeing us rambling aimlessly, he was moved and said, "Without knowing the woods fully, you should not wander at random. If you want to walk through forests and jungles, you should take a guide with you. Why do you exert yourselves unnecessarily at this sultry noontime? You may not give out to me your secret quest; still you can sit down, eat bread, drink water, take rest and then go. Be always patient at heart." Though he spoke so tenderly, we discarded his request and marched on. We thought that we were self-contained men and needed nobody's help. The woods were vast and trackless, the trees therein grew so close and tall, that the sun's rays could not penetrate through them; so we lost our way and wandered here and there for a long time. Ultimately through sheer good luck, we came back to the place from where we started. The Vanjari met us again and said, "Relying on your own cleverness you missed your way; a guide is always necessary to show us the right way in small or great matters; and no quest can be successfully carried out on an empty stomach. Unless God wills it, no one meets us on the way. Do not discard offers of food; served dish should not be thrust away. Offers of bread and food should be regarded as auspicious signs of success." Saying this he again offered us food and asked us to be calm and patient. Again we did not like this good hospitality and discarded his offer and went away. Without doing any quest and without taking any food, the three began to move out. So obstinate were they. I was hungry and thirsty and I was moved with the Vanjari's extraordinary love; we thought ourselves very learned but were quite strangers to pity and kindness. The Vanjari was a quite illiterate and unqualified fellow and belonged to a low caste. Still he had love in his heart and asked us to eat the bread. In this way he who loves others disinterestedly is really enlightened and I thought acceptance of his hospitality was the best beginning of getting knowledge. So very respectfully I accepted the loaf of bread offered, ate it and drank water.

Then to! The Guru at once came and stood before us, "What was the dispute about?" He asked and I told him everything that had happened. Then he said, "Would you like to come with me? I will show you what you want; but he alone, who believes in what I say, will be successful." The others did not agree to what he said and left him; but I bowed to him reverently and accepted his dictum. Then he took me to a well, tied my feet with a rope and hung me - head downwards and feet up - from a tree near the well. I was suspended three feet above the water, which I could not reach with My hands, nor which could go into my mouth. Suspending me in this manner he went away, no one knew where. After 10 or 12 ghatakas (4 or 5 hours) he returned and taking me out quickly asked me how I fared. "In Bliss supreme, I was. How can a fool like me describe the joy I experienced?" I replied. On hearing my answer the Guru was much pleased with me, drew me near him and stroking my body with his hand kept me with him. He took care of me as tenderly as a mother-bird does of her young ones. He put me into his school; how beautiful it was! There I forgot my parents, all my attachment was snapped and I was liberated easily. I thought that I should embrace his neck and remain staring at him always. If his image were not fixed in my pupils, I would like better to be blind. Such was the school! No one, who entered it once, could return empty-handed. My Guru became my all-in-all, my home and property, mother and father, everything. All my senses left their places and concentrated themselves in my eyes, and my sight was centred on him. Thus was my Guru, the sole object of my meditation and I was conscious of none else. While meditating on him my mind and intellect were stunned and I had thus to keep quiet and bow to him in silence.

There are other schools where you see an altogether different spectacle. The disciples go there to seek knowledge and spend their money, time and labour; but ultimately they have to repent. The Guru there boasts of his secret knowledge and his straightforwardness. He makes a show of his sacredness and holiness, but he is not tender at

heart. He speaks a lot and sings his own glory; but his own words do not touch the disciples' hearts and they are not convinced. So far as Self-realization is concerned, he has none. How can such schools be of any use to the disciples and how can they be benefited? The master (Guru) mentioned above was of different type. By his grace, realization flashed upon me of itself, without effort or study. I had not to seek anything, but everything became clear to me as broad daylight. The Guru alone knows how the topsy-turvy Suspension, 'with head down and feet up' can give happiness!

Among the four, one was a Karmatha (Ritualistic) who only knew how to observe, and abstain from, certain rites; the second was a Jnani, who was puffed up with pride of knowledge and the third was a Bhakta who surrendered himself completely to God, believing that he was the sole Doer. When they were discussing and arguing, the question of God turned up, and they, depending on their unaided knowledge, went in search of Him. Sai, who was Discrimination and Dispassion incarnate, was one of the four. Being Himself Brahman Incarnate, some may ask, "Why did He mix with them and act foolishly?" He did this for attaining the good of the public, and setting them an example to follow. Though an incarnation Himself, He respected a low Vanjari, by accepting his food with the firm belief that "Food is Brahman" and showed how those who rejected Vanjari's hospitable offer suffered and how it was impossible to get Jnana without a Guru. The Shruti (Taittiriya Upanishad) exhorts us to honour and worship mother, father and preceptor, and to study (learn and teach) the sacred scriptures. These are the means of purifying our minds and unless this purification is effected, self-realization is not possible. Neither the senses, nor the mind and intellect reach the Self. Modes of proof, such as Perception and Inference will not help us in the matter. It is the grace of the Guru that counts. The objects of our life such as Dharma, Artha and Kama are attainable with our effort, but the fourth object, Moksha (liberation) can only be had with the help of the Guru.

In the Darbar of Shri Sai, many personalities appear and play their part; astrologers come and give out their predictions; princes, noblemen, ordinary and poor men, Sannyasis, Yogis songsters and others come for darshan. Even a mahar comes and, making a Johar (his salutation), says this Sai is the Mai-Baap (True parents), Who will do away with our rounds of births and deaths. So many others such as Jugglers, Gondhalis, the blind and the lame, Nath-panthis, dancers and other players come and are given suitable reception. Biding his own time, the Vanjari also appeared, and played the part assigned to him. Let us now revert to the other story.

[Fasting and Mrs. Gokhale](#)

Baba never fasted Himself, nor did He allow others to do so. The mind of the faster is never at ease, then how could he attain his Paramartha (goal of life)? God is not attained on an empty stomach; first the soul has to be appeased. If there is no moisture of food in the stomach and nutrition, with what eyes should we see God, with what tongue should we describe His greatness and with what ears should we hear the same? In short, when all our organs get their proper nutrition and are sound, we can practise devotion and other sadhanas to attain God. Therefore, neither fasting nor overeating is good. Moderation in diet is really wholesome both to the body and mind.

One Mrs. Gokhale came to Shirdi with an introductory letter from Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar (a devotee of Baba) to Dada Kelkar. She came to Baba with a determination to sit at Baba's Feet observing a three days fast. The day previous, Baba said to Dada Kelkar, that He would not allow his children to starve during the Shimga, i.e., Holi holidays, and that if they had to starve, why was He there? Next day when the woman

went with Dada Kelkar and sat at Baba's Feet, Baba at once said to her, "Where is the necessity of fasting? Go to Dadabhat's house, prepare the dish of Puran POLis (wheat rotis with gram-flour and jaggery), feed his children and yourself too." Shimga holidays were on. Mrs. Kelkar was then in her menses and there was nobody to cook in Dadabhat's house. So Baba's advice was very timely. Then Mrs. Gokhale had to go to Dadabhat's house and prepare the dish as directed. She cooked that day, fed others and herself. What a good story and how beautiful its import!

Baba's Sircar

Baba gave a story of his boyhood as follows: - "When I was a youngster, I was in search of bread and went to Beedgaum. There I got embroidery work. I worked hard, sparing no pains. The employer was very much pleased with Me. Three other boys worked before Me. The first got Rs. 50/- the second Rs. 100/- and the third Rs. 150/-. And I was given twice the whole of this amount, viz. Rs. 600/-. After seeing my cleverness, the employer loved me, praised me and honoured me with a full dress, a turban for the head and a shell a for the body, etc. I kept this dress intact without using it. I thought that what a man might give does not last long and it is always imperfect. But what My Sircar (God) gives, lasts to the end of time. No other gift from any man can be compared to His. My Sircar says "Take, take," but everybody comes to me and says 'Give, give.' Nobody attends carefully to the meaning of what I say. My Sircar's treasury (spiritual wealth) is full, it is overflowing. I say, "Dig out and take away this wealth in cartloads, the blessed son of a true mother should fill himself with this wealth. The skill of my Fakir, the Leela of my Bhagwan, the aptitude of my Sircar is quite unique. What about Me? Body (earth) will mix with earth, breath with air. This time won't come again. I go somewhere, sit somewhere; the hard Maya troubles Me much, still I feel always anxiety for My men. He who does anything (spiritual endeavour) will reap its fruit and he who remembers these words of Mine will get invaluable happiness."

Chapter 33

Greatness of Udi

Scorpion Sting and Plague Cases Cured - Jamner Miracle - Narayanarao's Sickness - Balabuva sutar - Appasaheb Kulkarni - Haribhau Karnik.

In the last Chapter we described the greatness of the Guru; now in this we will describe the greatness of Udi.

Preliminary

Let us bow now before the great saints. Their merciful glances will destroy mountains of sins and do away with all the evil taints of our character. Their casual talk gives us good teachings and confers on us imperishable happiness. Their minds do not know any difference such as 'This is ours and that is yours.' Such differentiation never arises in their minds. Their debts (obligations) will never be repaid by us in this birth as well as in many future births.

Udi

It is well-known that Baba took Dakshina from all, and out of the amount thus collected, He spent a lot on charity and purchased fuel with the balance left with Him. This fuel He threw in the Dhuni - the sacred fire, which he kept ever burning. The ash from this fire was called Udi and it was freely distributed to the devotees at the time of their departure from Shirdi.

What did Baba teach or hint by this Udi? Baba taught by His Udi that all the visible phenomena in the universe are as transient as the ash. Our bodies composed of wood or matter of the five elements, will fall down, after all their enjoyments are over, and be reduced to ashes. In order to remind the devotees of the fact that their bodies will be reduced to ashes, Baba distributed Udi to them. Baba also taught by the Udi that the Brahman is the only Reality and the universe is ephemeral and that no one in this world, be he a son, father or wife, is really ours. We come here (in this world) alone and we have to go out alone. It was found and is even now found out, that the Udi cured many physical and mental maladies, but Baba wanted to din into the devotee's ears the principles of discrimination between the Unreal and the Real, non-attachment for the Unreal, by His Udi and Dakshina. The former (Udi) taught us discrimination and the latter (Dakshina) taught us non-attachment. Unless we have these two things, it is not possible for us to cross over the sea of the mundane existence. So Baba asked for and took Dakshina, and while the devotees took leave, He gave Udi as Prasad, besmeared some of it on the Bhaktas' foreheads and placed His boon-conferring hand on their heads. When Baba was in a cheerful mood, He used to sing merrily. One such song was about Udi. The burden of the Udi song was this, "Oh, playful Rama, come, come, and bring with you sacks of Udi." Baba used to sing in very clear and sweet tones.

So much about the spiritual implication of Udi. It had also its material significance. It conferred health, prosperity, freedom from anxiety, and many other worldly gains. So the Udi has helped us to gain both our ends - material as well as spiritual. We shall now begin with the stories about the Udi.

Scorpion-Sting

Narayan Motiram Jani of Nasik was a devotee of Baba. He was serving under another devotee of Baba, by name Ramachandra Vaman Modak. Once he went to Shirdi with his mother and saw Baba. Then Baba Himself told her that he (her son) should serve no more, but start independent business. Some days after, this prophecy turned true. Narayan Jani left service and started a boarding house 'Anandashram' which thrived well. Once a friend of this Narayanrao was stung by a scorpion and the pain caused by it, was severe and unbearable. Udi is most efficacious in such cases; it is to be applied on the seat of pain, and so Narayanrao searched for it, but found none. Then he stood before Baba's picture and invoked Baba's aid, chanted Baba's name and taking out a pinch of the ashes of the joss-stick burning in front of Baba's picture and thinking it to be Baba's Udi, applied it on the seat of pain and the sting. As soon as he took out his fingers, the pain vanished and both the person were moved and felt delighted.

Bubonic Plague Case

Once a devotee in Bandra came to know that his daughter, who was staying in another place was down with bubonic plague. He had no Udi with him; so he sent word to Nansaheb Chandorkar to send the same. Nansaheb got this message on a road near

the Thana Railway Station when he was travelling with his wife to Kalyan. He had no Udi with him at that time. He, therefore, took up some earth from the road, meditated upon Sai Baba, invoked His aid and applied it on the forehead of his wife. The devotee saw all this and when he went to his daughter's house he was very glad to learn that his daughter, who was suffering for three days, began to improve from the very moment Nanasahab invoked Baba's aid near the Thana Railway Station.

The Jamner Miracle

About 1904-05 Nanasahab Chandorkar was Mamlatdar at Jamner, in the Khandesh District, which is more than 100 miles distant from Shirdi. His daughter Mainatai was pregnant and was about to deliver. Her case was very serious and she was suffering from labour pains for the last two or three days. Nanasahab tried all remedies but they proved in vain; he then remembered Baba and invoked His aid. There in Shirdi, one Ramgirbuva, whom Baba called Bapugirbuva, wanted at this time to go to his native place in Khandesh. Baba called him and told him to take a little rest and stop at Jamner on his way home and give the Udi and Arati to Nanasahab. Ramgirbuva said that he had only two rupees with him and that amount was barely sufficient for the railway fare upto Jalgaon and it was not possible for him to go from Jalgaon to Jamner, a distance of about 30 miles. Baba assured him that he need not worry, as everything would be provided for him. Then Baba asked Shama to write the well-known Arati composed by Madhav Adkar (a translation of this is given at the end of this work) and give a copy of it with Udi to Ramgirbuva to be delivered to Nanasahab. Then relying on Baba's words, Ramgirbuva left Shirdi and reached Jalgaon at about 2-45 a.m. He had only two annas left with him and was in a hard plight. To his great relief he heard somebody calling out "Who is Bapugirbuva of Shirdi?" He went to him and told him that he was the person Bapugirbuva. Then the peon, professing to be sent by Nanasahab, took him out to an excellent tanga with a good pair of horses. They both drove in it. The tanga ran fast and early in the morning they came to a brooklet. The driver took the horses for watering them and the peon asked Ramgirbuva to partake of some eatables. On seeing the beard, moustache and the livery of the peon, Ramgirbuva suspected him to be a Moslem and was unwilling to take any refreshments from him, but the peon satisfied him by saying that he was a Hindu, a Kshatriya of Garhwal and that Nanasahab had sent these refreshments and that there should be no difficulty, nor any doubt about acceptance. Then both of them took the refreshments and started again. They reached Jamner at dawn. Ramgirbuva alighted to attend a call of nature (passing urine) and returned within a few minutes, but found that there was no tanga, no driver and no peon. He was dumbfounded. Then he went to the neighbouring Katcheri and making enquiries, learnt that the Mamlatdar was at home. He went to Nanasahab's house, and announced himself and gave to Nanasahab, Baba's Udi and Arati. At this time, Mainatai's case was most serious and all were in deep anxiety about her. Nanasahab called out his wife and asked her to give the Udi, mixed with water, to their daughter to drink, and sing Baba's Arati. He thought that Baba's help was most opportune. In a few minutes came the news that the delivery was safe and that the crisis had passed away. When Ramgirbuva thanked Nanasahab for the peon, tanga and the refreshments etc. the latter was greatly surprised as he had sent none to the station, and was not aware of any person coming from Shirdi.

Mr. B.V. Deo of Thana, Retired Mamlatdar, made enquiries about this matter with Bapurao Chandorkar, son of Nanasahab and Ramgirbuva of Shirdi and after satisfying himself wrote an elaborate article - part prose and part poetry - in Shri Sai Leela magazine (Vol. 13 Nos. 11, 12 and 13). Brother B.V. Narsimhswami has also taken down the statements of (1) Mainatai (No. V page 14) and (2) Bapusaheb Chandorkar

(No. XX page 50) and (3) Ramgirbuva (No. XXVII, Page 83) dated 1st June 1936, 16th September 1936 and 1st December 1936 respectively and published them in his "Devotees' Experiences, Part III." The following is quoted from Ramgirbuva's statement.

"One day Baba called me to him and gave me a packet of Udi and a copy of Baba's Arati. I had to go to Khandesh at the time. Baba directed me to go to Jamner and told me to deliver the Arati and Udi to Nanasaheb Chandorkar, at Jamner. I said to Baba that all I had was Rs. 2, and asked Him how that could take me by train from Kopergaon to Jalgaon and next by cart from Jalgaon to Jamner. Baba said, "God will give." That was Friday and I started at once. I reached Manmad at 7-30 p.m. and Jalgaon at 2-45 a.m. At that time plague regulations were enforced and I had much trouble. I was to discover what I should do to get to Jamner. At about 3 a.m. a peon in boots, turban and well equipped with other details of good dress came to me and took me to a tanga and drove me on. I was in terror. On the way at Bhaghoor, I took refreshments. We reached Jamner early in the morning and by the time I attended my call of nature the tanga and its driver had disappeared (page 83)."

[Narayanarao](#)

Bhakta Narayanrao (father's name and surname are not given) had the good fortune to see Baba twice during the latter's lifetime. Three years after the passing away of Baba in 1918, he wanted to come to Shirdi, but he could not come. Within a year of Baba's Mahasamadhi he fell sick and suffered much. All ordinary remedies gave him no relief. So he meditated on Baba day and night. One night he had a vision in his dream. Baba coming to him through a cellar, comforted him saying, "Don't be anxious, you will be improving from tomorrow, and within a week you will be on your legs." Narayanrao got perfectly well within the time mentioned in the vision. Now the point for consideration is this: - Was Baba living because he had the body, and was He dead because He left it? No, Baba is ever alive, for He transcends both life and death. He who loved Him once whole-heartedly gets response from Him at any time and at any place. He is always by our side and will take any form and appear before the devout Bhakta and satisfy him.

[Appasaheb Kulkarni](#)

In 1917 the chance of one Appasaheb Kulkarni came. He was transferred to Thana and began to worship Baba's picture presented to him by Balasaheb Bhate. In real earnest he did the worship. He offered flowers, sandal-paste, and naivedya daily to Baba in the picture and longed intently to see Him. In this connection it may be remarked that seeing Baba's picture earnestly is equivalent to seeing Him in person. The following story illustrates this statement.

[Balabuva Sutar](#)

A Saint of Bombay named Balabuva Sutar, who on account of his piety, devotion and bhajan, was called "Modern Tukaram", came to Shirdi for the first time in 1917. When he bowed before Baba, the latter said "I know this man since four years". Balabuva wondered and thought, how could that be, as that was his first trip to Shirdi. But thinking about it seriously he recollected that he had prostrated himself four years ago before Baba's portrait at Bombay and was convinced about the significance of Baba's words. He said to himself, "How omniscient and all-pervading are the Saints and how kind are they to their Bhaktas! I merely bowed to His photo, this fact was noticed by

Baba and in due time He made me realize that seeing His photo is equivalent to seeing Him in person!"

Appasaheb Kulkarni

To return to Appasaheb's story. While he was in Thana, he had to go on tour to Bhivandi and was not expected to return within a week. In his absence, the following wonderful thing took place on the third day. At noon a fakir turned up at Appasaheb's house. His features resembled exactly those of Baba's photo. Mrs. Kulkarni and the children all asked him whether he was Sai Baba of Shirdi. He said 'No', but that he was an obedient servant of His and came there at His order to enquire after the health of the family. Then he asked for Dakshina. The lady gave him a rupee. He gave her a small packet of Udi, and asked her to keep this in the shrine along with the photo for worship. Then he left the house and went away. Now hear the wonderful Leela of Sai.

Appasaheb could not proceed with his tour as his horse fell sick at Bhivandi. He returned home that afternoon and learnt from his wife about fakir's visit. He smarted in his mind as he did not get the darshan of the fakir and he did not like that only one rupee was paid as Dakshina. He said that had he been present, he would have offered not less than rupees ten. Then he immediately started in quest of the fakir and searched for him in the Masjid and other places, without taking any food. His search was in vain. He then returned home and took his food. The reader may remember here Baba's dictum in Chapter 32 that God's quest should not be made on an empty belly. Appasaheb got a lesson, here about this. Then after meals he went out for a walk with a friend Mr. Chitre. Going some distance they saw a man approaching them rapidly. Appasaheb thought that he must be the fakir that came to his house at noon, as his features tallied with those of baba in the photo. The fakir immediately put forth his hand and asked for Dakshina. Appasaheb gave him a rupee. He demanded again and again and so Appasaheb gave him two more. Still he was not satisfied. Then he borrowed Rs. three from Mr. Chitre and gave them to him. He wanted still more. Appasaheb asked him to accompany him to his home. Then they all returned home and Appasaheb then gave him again three rupees, in all nine. He looked unsatisfied and demanded again. Then he told him that he had a currency of Rs. ten. The fakir asked for the same and took it and returned the nine rupees in cash and went away. Appasaheb had said that he would pay Rs. ten and that sum was taken from him and nine rupees, consecrated by Baba's touch, were returned to him. The figure 9 is significant. It denotes the nine types of devotion (vide Chapter 21). It may also be noted here that Baba gave Rs. nine to one Laxmibai Shinde at His last moment.

Appasaheb examined the Udi-packet and found that it contained some flower-petals and Akshata. Then some time afterwards he got hair from Baba when he saw Him at Shirdi. He put the Udi-packet and the hair in a talisman and always wore it on his arm. Appasaheb realized the power of the Udi. Though he was very clever he got Rs. 40/- as pay in the beginning, but after he secured Baba's photo and His Udi, he got many times forty rupees per month and also got much power and influence; and along with these temporal benefits, his spiritual progress was also rapid. So those who are fortune enough to get Baba's Udi should, after bath, apply it on the forehead and take some little of it mixed with water in the mouth as holy Tirth.

Haribhau Karnik

In 1917 Haribhau Karnik of Dahanu (Thana District) came to Shirdi on the Guru-pournima day (in the month of Ashadha) and worshipped Baba with all formality. He

offered clothes and Dakshina, and after taking Baba's leave through Sharma, got down the steps of the Masjid. Then he thought that he should offer one more rupee to Baba and was just turning to get up when Shama informed him by signs that as he had got Baba's leave, he should go and not return. So he started home. On his way, when he went into the temple of Kala Rama at Nasik for darshan, the Saint Narsing Maharaj who used to sit just inside the big door of the temple, left his Bhaktas there came to Haribhau, caught his wrist and said, "Give me my one rupee". Karnik was surprised. He paid the rupee most willingly and thought that Sai Baba recovered the rupee, which he intended in his mind to give, through saint Narsing Maharaj. This shows how the saints work in unison.

This story illustrates the fact that all saints are one and shows how they work in unison.

Chapter 34

Greatness of Udi (continued)

(1) Doctor's Nephew - (2) Dr. Pillay - (3) Shama's Siste-in-Law - (4) Irani Girl - (5) Harda Gentleman - (6) Bombay Lady.

This Chapter continues the subject "Greatness of Udi" and describes cases in which the application of Udi was most efficacious.

Doctor's Nephew

At Malegaon (Dt. Nasik) there lived a doctor (qualified and degree-holder). His nephew suffered from an incurable disease - Tubercular bone-abcess. The doctor himself and his brothers, the medical practitioners, tried all sorts of remedies and even an operation. There was no relief and there was no end to the little boy's suffering. Friends and relations advised the parents of the boy to seek divine aid and recommended them to try Sai Baba, who was known to have cured such incurable cases by His mere glance. The parents, therefore, came to Shirdi. They prostrated themselves before Baba, placed the boy before Him and pleaded humbly and respectfully, and implored Him to save their son. The merciful Baba comforted them saying "Those who resort to this Masjid shall never suffer anything in this life and to the end of time. Be now carefree. Apply Udi on the abcess and within one week he will recover. Believe in God. This is no Masjid, but Dwarawati. He who steps here will soon get health and happiness and his sufferings will come to an end". The boy was made to sit before Baba, Who moved his hands on the affected part and cast His loving glances on him. The patient was pleased and with the application of the Udi, he began to recover, and was all right after some days. The parents then left Shirdi with their son, thanking Baba for the cure, which was effected by Udi and Baba's gracious looks.

After knowing this, the doctor, the uncle of the boy became wonder-struck and desired to see Baba while he was on his way to Bombay for some business; but at Malegaon and Manmad somebody spoke to him against Baba and poisoned his ears. He therefore, dropped the idea of visiting Shirdi and went to Bombay direct. He wanted

to spend the rest of his leave at Alibag, but at Bombay he heard three successive nights, a voice crying out, "Still you disbelieve me?". Then the doctor changed his mind and resolved to go to Shirdi. He had to attend in Bombay to a case of Infectious Fever, which showed no signs of abatement soon. So he thought that his Shirdi trip would be postponed. He however proposed a test in his mind and said, "If the patient gets all right today, I start for Shirdi tomorrow." The wonder is that exactly at the time when the determination was taken, the fever began to abate and the temperature became normal. Then he went to Shirdi as per his determination, took Baba's darshan and prostrated himself before Him. Baba gave him such experiences that he became His devotee. He stayed there for four days and returned home with Baba's Udi and blessings. Within a fortnight he was transferred on promotion to Bijapur. His nephew's case gave him an opportunity for seeing Baba and this visit engendered in him a neverfailing love for the Saint's feet.

Dr. Pillay

One Dr. Pillay was an intimate Bhakta of Baba. He was much liked by Baba, Who always called him Bhau (brother). Baba talked with him off and on and consulted him in all matters and wanted him always at His side. This Pillay suffered once very badly from guinea worms. He said to Kakasaheb Dixit, "The pain is most excruciating and unbearable. I prefer death to it. This pain, I know, is for repaying past Karma, but go to Baba and tell Him to stop the pain and transfer the working of my past Karma to ten future births of mine." Mr. Dixit went to Baba and told Him his request. Then Baba, being moved by his request, said to Dixit, "Tell him to be fearless. Why should he suffer for ten births? In ten days he can work out the sufferings and consequences of his past Karma. While I am here to give him temporal and spiritual welfare, why should he pray for death? Bring him here on somebody's back and let us work and finish his sufferings once for all".

The doctor was brought in that condition and was seated on Baba's right side, where Fakir Baba always sat. Baba gave him His bolster and said, "Lie calmly here and be at ease. The true remedy is, that the result of past actions has to be suffered and got over. Our Karma is the cause of our happiness and sorrow; therefore put up with whatever comes to you. Allah (God) is the sole Dispenser and Protector, always think of Him. He will take care of you. Surrender to His feet with body, mind, wealth and speech, i.e. completely and then see what He does." Dr. Pillay said in return that Nanasahab had put a bandage over the leg, but he found no relief. "Nana is a fool" replied Baba. "Take off that bandage or else you will die. Now a crow will come and peck you, and then you will recover."

While this conversation was going on, one Abdul, who always cleaned the Masjid and trimmed the lamps, turned up. While he was attending to his work of training, his foot accidentally fell upon the stretched leg of Dr. Pillay. The leg was already swollen and when Abdul's foot fell upon it and pressed it, all the seven guinea worms were squeezed out at once. The pain was unbearable and Dr. Pillay bawled out loudly. After some time, he calmed down and began to sing and cry alternately. Then Pillay enquired when the crow was coming and pecking. Baba said, "Did you not see the crow? He won't come again. Abdul was the crow. Now go and rest yourself in the Wada and you will be soon allright."

By application of the Udi and by taking it in the stomach with water, and without taking any other treatment or medicine, the disease was completely cured in ten days as predicted by Baba.

Sharma's Sister-in-law

Shama's younger brother Bapaji was staying near Sawool well. Once his wife was attacked with Bubonic plague. She had high fever and two bubos in her groins. Bapaji rushed to Shama at Shirdi and asked him to come and help. Shama was frightened, but according to his wont, he went to Baba, prostrated himself before Him, invoked His aid, and requested Him to cure the case. He also asked His permission to go to his brother's house. Then Baba said, "Don't go there at this late hour (night), and send her Udi. Why care for the fever and bubos? God is our father and master; she will be all right easily. Do not go now, but go there in the morning and return immediately."

Shama had full faith in Baba's Udi. It was sent with Bapaji. It was applied on the bubos and some of it was mixed with water and was given to the patient for drinking. No sooner was it taken in, than perspiration set in profusely, the fever abated and the patient had a good sleep. Next morning Bapaji was surprised to see his wife all right and refreshed with no fever and bubos. When Shama went there next morning with Baba's permission he was also surprised to see her at the hearth and preparing tea. On questioning his brother, he learnt that Baba's Udi cured her completely in one night. Then Shama realized the significance of Baba's words. "Go there in the morning and return immediately."

After taking tea, Sharma returned and after saluting Baba said, "Deva, what is this play of Yours? You first raise a storm and make us restless and then calm it down and ease us". Baba replied "You see mysterious is the path of action. Though I do nothing, they hold Me responsible for the actions which take place on account of Adrista (destiny). I am only their witness. The Lord is the sole Doer and Inspirer. He is also most merciful. Neither I am God nor Lord. I am His obedient servant and remember Him often. He, who casts aside his egoism, thanks Him and he, who trusts Him entirely, will have his shackles removed and will obtain liberation".

Irani's Daughter

Now read the experience of an Irani gentleman. His young daughter got fits every hour. When the convulsion came she lost her power of speech, her limbs got shrunk and contracted and she fell down senseless. No remedy gave her any relief. Some friend recommended Baba's Udi to her father and asked him to get it from Kakasaheb Dixit at Vile Parle (suburb of Bombay). Then the Irani gentleman got the Udi and gave it mixed with water to his daughter daily for drinking. In the beginning the convulsions, which were coming on hourly, came every seven hours and after a few days the daughter recovered completely.

Harda Gentleman

An old gentleman of Harda (C.P) was suffering from a stone in his bladder. Such stones are generally removed by surgical operations and people recommended him to undergo one. He was old and weak, lacked strength of mind and could not think of submitting himself to surgical treatment. His suffering was soon to end in another way. The Inamdar (City Officer) of that town happened to come there at this time. He was a devotee of Baba and had always a stock of Udi with him. On the recommendation of friends, his son got some Udi from and mixing it with water, gave it to his old father to drink. Within five minutes the Udi was assimilated, the stone was dissolved and came out through his urine and old man was soon relieved.

Bombay Lady

A woman of the Kayastha Prabhu caste in Bombay always suffered terrible pain at her delivery. She was very much frightened each time she became pregnant and did not know what to do. Shri Rama-Maruti of Kalyan, who was a devotee of Baba advised her husband to take her to Shirdi for a painless delivery. When she next became pregnant, both husband and wife came to Shirdi, stayed there for some months and worshipped Baba and got all the benefit of His Company. After some time the hour of delivery came and as usual there was obstruction in the passage from the womb. She began to suffer labour pains, did not know what to do, but began to pray to Baba for relief. In the meantime, some neighbouring women turned up and after invoking Baba's aid, gave her Udi-mixture to drink. In five minutes, the woman delivered safely and painlessly. The issue was stillborn according to its fate; but the mother who got rid of the anxiety and pain, thanked Baba for the safe delivery and ever remained grateful to Him.

Chapter 35

Tested And Never Found Wanting

Kaka Mahajani's Friend and Master - Bandra Insomnia Case - Bala Patil Newaskar.

This Chapter also continues the subject of the importance of the Udi; it also gives two cases in which Baba was tested and not found wanting. These cases will be taken up first.

Preliminary

In spiritual matters or endeavours, sectarianism is the greatest bar to our progress. Those, who believe the God is without form, are heard saying that to believe the God is with the form is an illusion and that the Saints are only human beings. Then why should they bend their heads before them and offer Dakshina? Persons belonging to other sects will also raise objections and say, "Why should they bow and offer allegiance to other Saints, leaving their Sadgurus?" Similar objections regarding Sai Baba were heard before and are heard even now. Some said that when they went to Shirdi, Baba asked for Dakshina from them. Is it good that Saints should collect money in this fashion? If they do so, where is their Sainthood? But there are many instances where men went to Shirdi to scoff; but remained there to pray. Two such instances are given below.

Kaka Mahajani's Friend

A friend of Kaka Mahajani was a worshipper of God without form and was averse to idolatry. Out of curiosity he agreed to go to Shirdi with Kaka Mahajani on two conditions, viz., (1) that he would neither bow to Baba, (2) nor pay Him any Dakshina. Kaka agreed to these conditions and they both left Bombay on a Saturday night and reached Shirdi the next morning. As soon as they put their feet on the steps of the Masjid, Baba, looking at the friend from a little distance, addressed him in sweet words as follows, "Oh, welcome sir". The tone that uttered these words was a very peculiar one. It exactly resembled the tone of the friend's father. It reminded him of

his departed father and sent a thrill of joy through his body. What an enchanting power the tone had! Being surprised the friend said; "This is no doubt the voice of my father". Then he at once up and, forgetting his resolution, placed his head upon Baba's Feet.

Then Baba asked for Dakshina twice, once in the morning and again at noon at the time of their taking leave; but He asked it from Kaka only and not from the friend. The latter whispered to Kaka, "Baba asked for Dakshina from you twice. I am with you, why does He omit me?" You ask Baba Himself" was Kaka's reply. Baba asked Kaka what his friend was whispering, and then the friend asked Baba himself whether he should pay any Dakshina. Baba replied, "You had no mind to pay, so you were not asked; but if you want to pay now you may." Then the friend paid Rs.17 as Dakshina, the same amount that Kaka paid. Baba then addressed him a few words of advice, "You do away, destroy the Teli's wall (sense of difference) between us, so that we can see and meet each other face to face". Then Baba allowed them to depart. Thought the weather was cloudy and threatening, Baba assured them of their safe journey and both of them reached Bombay safely. When he reached home and opened the door and windows of his house, he found two sparrows fallen dead on the ground and one just flying out through a window. He thought that if he had left the windows open, two sparrows would have been saved, but thought again, that they had met their lot and that Baba had sent him back soon just to save the third sparrow.

[Kaka Mahajani's Master](#)

Kaka was the Manager in the firm of Thakkar Dharmasey Jethabhai, a solicitor of Bombay. Both the Master and the Manager were on intimate terms. Mr. Thakkar knew that Kaka was often going to Shirdi, staying there for some days and returning, when Baba permitted him. Out of curiosity and just to test Baba, Mr. Thakkar decided to go to Shirdi with Kaka during Shimga holidays. As Kaka's return was uncertain, he took another man with him as an associate. The three started together and Kaka bought two seers of raisins (dried grapes with seed) on the way for presentation to Baba. They reached Shirdi in due time, and went to the Masjid for darshan. Then Babasaheb Tarkhad was there, Mr. Thakkar asked him why he came there. "For darshan", Tarkhad replied. Mr. Thakkar asked if miracles took place there. Tarkhad replied that it (to see miracles) was not his attitude, but the earnest intentions of the Bhaktas were satisfied here. Then Kaka prostrated himself before Baba and offered the raisins to Him. Baba ordered them to be distributed. Mr. Thakkar got a few of them. He did not like the raisins and he was advised by his doctor not to eat them without washing and cleaning them. So he was in a fix. He did not like to eat them, nor could he reject them. To keep up formalities, he put them into his mouth, but did not know what to do with the seeds. He could not spit them out on the floor of the Masjid, so he pocketed them against his wish. He then said in his mind that if Baba was a Saint, how could He be ignorant of his dislike for the raisins and could He force them on him. When this thought arose in his mind Baba again gave him some more raisins. He could not eat them, but held them in his hand. Then Baba asked him to eat them up. He obeyed and found, to his surprise, that they were all seedless. He wanted to see miracles and here was one. He knew that Baba read his thought; and as per his wish converted raisins (with seeds) into seedless grapes. What a wonderful power! Again to test further he asked Tarkhad, who was sitting by and who also got some raisins, "What kind of grapes you got?" He replied "They variety with seeds." Mr. Thakkar was still more surprised to hear this. Then to confirm his growing faith Thakkar thought in his mind that if Baba was a real Saint, the raisins should be now given to Kaka first. Reading this thought

also, Baba ordered that distribution should be commenced from Kaka. These proofs were sufficient for Thakkar.

Then Shama introduced Mr. Thakkar as the master of Kaka, upon which Baba said, "How could he be his master? He has got a different Master altogether". Kaka appreciated this reply. Forgetting his resolve, Thakkar saluted Baba and returned to the Wada.

After the noon-Arati was over, they all went to the Masjid for taking Baba's leave for their departure. Sharma spoke for them. Baba then spoke as follows.

"There was a fickle-minded gentleman. He had health and wealth and was free from both physical and mental afflictions, but he took on him needless anxieties and burdens and wandered hither and thither, thus losing his peace of mind. Sometimes he dropped the burdens and at other times carried them again. His mind knew no steadiness. Seeing his state, I took pity on him and said, "Now please keep your faith on any one place (point) you like, why roam like this? Stick quietly to one place.

Thakkar at once came to know that, that was an exact description of himself. He wished that Kaka should also return with him but no one expected that Kaka would be allowed to leave Shirdi so soon. Baba read also this thought to his and permitted Kaka to return with his master. Thakkar got one more proof of Baba's capacity to read another's mind.

Then Baba asked Kaka for Rs. 15/- as Dakshina and received it. To Kaka He said, "If I take one rupee as Dakshina from anybody I have to return it tenfold to him. I never take anything gratis. I never ask any one indiscriminately. I only ask and take from him whom the Fakir (My Guru) points out. If any one is indebted formerly to the Fakir money is received from him. The donor gives, i.e. sows his seeds, only to reap a rich harvest in future. Wealth should be the means to work out Dharma. If it is used for personal enjoyment, it is wasted. Unless you have given it before, you do not get it now. So the best way to receive is to give. The giving of Dakshina advances Vairagya (Non-attachment) and thereby Bhakti and Jnana. Give one and receive tenfold".

On hearing these words Mr. Thakkar himself gave Rs.15/- in Baba's hand, forgetting his resolve not to do so. He thought he did well in coming to Shirdi as all his doubts were solved and he learnt so much.

Baba's skill in handling such cases was unique. Though He did all those things He was totally non-attached to them. Whether anybody saluted Him or not, or whether anybody gave Him Dakshina or not, it was the same to Him. None He disrespected. He felt no pleasure because He was worshipped and no pain because He was disregarded. He transcended the pairs of opposites, viz. pleasure and pain, etc.

[Insomnia Case](#)

A Kayastha Prabhu gentleman of Bandra suffered from Insomnia for long. As soon as he laid himself down for sleep, his departed father appeared to him in his dream, and abused and scolded him severely. This broke his sleep and made him restless the whole night. Every night this went on and the man did not know what to do. One day he consulted a devotee of Baba in this respect. He recommended the Udi as the only infallible remedy he knew. He gave him some Udi and asked him to apply a little of it to his forehead before going to bed and keep the Udi-packet under the pillow. He

tried this remedy and found, to his great surprise and joy, that he got sound sleep and that there was no disturbance of any kind. He continued the remedy and always remembered Sai. Then he got a picture of Sai Baba, which he hung on the wall near his pillow and started worshipping it daily, and on Thursdays, offering garland, naivedya etc. Then he got on well and forgot altogether his past trouble.

Balaji Patil Newaskar

This man was a great devotee of Baba. He rendered most excellent and disinterested service. Every day he swept and kept clean all the passages and streets in Shirdi through which Baba passed in His daily routine. This work was, after him, equally well-done by another female devotee named Rahda-Krishna-Mai, and after her by Abdoola. When Balaji reaped his corn every year, he brought the whole quantity and presented it to Baba. He returned with what Baba gave him and maintained himself and his family with it. He followed this course for many years and after him by his son.

Power and Efficacy of Udi

Once it happened that at Balaji's death anniversary day, a certain number of guests were invited and the dinner was prepared for them. But at the dinnertime it was found that thrice the number of people invited had turned up. Mrs. Newaskar was in a fix. She thought that the food would not suffice for the people assembled and that if it fell short, the honour of the family would be at stake. Her mother-in-law comforted her by saying, "Don't be afraid, it is not ours, but Sai's food; cover every vessel with cloth, putting some Udi in it, and serve from the same without opening it: Sai will save us from ignominy." She did as she was advised and it was found to their surprise and joy that not only did the food suffice for all, but also plenty of it remained after serving. "As one feels intently, so he realizes accordingly" was proved in this case.

Sai Appearing as Serpent

Once Raghu Patil of Shirdi went to Balaji Patil at Newase. That evening he found that a serpent entered the cowshed hissing. All the cattle were afraid and began to move. The inmates of the house were frightened, but Balaji thought that it was Sai Who appeared in his house as a serpent. Without being afraid in the least he brought a cup of milk and placing it before the serpent said, "Baba, why do you hiss and make noise? Do you want to frighten us? Take this cup of milk and drink it with a calm mind". Saying this, he sat close by unperturbed. The other members were frightened and did not know what to do. In a short time the serpent disappeared. Nobody knew where it went. It was not found though a search was made in the cowshed.

Balaji had two wives and some children. They sometimes went to Shirdi from Newase for taking Baba's darshana. Then Baba bought saris and other clothes, which were given to them with His blessings.

Chapter 36

Wonderful Stories of

(1) Two Goa Gentlemen - (2) Mrs. Aurangabadkar.

This Chapter relates the wonderful stories of two gentlemen from Goa and Mrs. Aurangabadkar of Sholapur.

Two Gentlemen

Once two gentlemen came from Goa for taking darshan of Sai Baba, and prostrated themselves before him. Though both came together, Baba asked only one of them to give Him Rs.15/- as Dakshina which was paid willingly. The other man voluntarily offered Rs. 35/-. This sum was rejected by Baba to the astonishment of all. Shama, who was present, asked Baba, "What is this? Both came together, one's Dakshina you accept, the other, though voluntarily paid, you refuse. Why this distinction? Baba replied, "Shama, you know nothing. I take nothing from anybody. The Masjidsayi (The presiding Deity of the Masjid) calls for the debt, the donor pays it and becomes free. Have I any home, property or family to look after? I require nothing. I am ever free. Debt, enmity and murder have to be atoned for, there is no escape". Baba then continued in His characteristic way as follows:-

As first he was poor and took a vow to his God that he would pay his first month's salary if he got an appointment. He got one on Rs.15/- p.m. Then he steadily got promotions, from Rs.15/- he got Rs. 30, 60, 100, 200 and ultimately Rs.700/- per month. But in his prosperity he forgot the vow he took. The force of his karma has driven him here and I asked that amount (Rs.15/-) from him as Dakshina.

Another story, while wandering by the seaside I came to a huge mansion and sat on its verandah. The owner gave me a good reception and fed me sumptuously. He showed me a neat and clean place near a cupboard for sleeping. I slept there. While I was sound asleep, the man removed a literite slab and broke the wall entered in and scissored off all the money from my pocket. When I woke up, I found that Rs.30, 000/- were stolen. I was greatly distressed and sat weeping and moaning. The money was in currency notes and I thought that the Brahmin had stolen it. I lost all interest in food and drink and sat for a fortnight on the verandah, bemoaning my loss. After the fortnight was over, a passing fakir saw me crying, and made enquiries regarding the cause of my sorrow. I told him everything. He said, "If you act according to my bidding, you will recover your money; go to a fakir, I shall give his whereabouts, surrender yourself to him, he will get back your money; in the meanwhile give up your favourite food till you recover your money." I followed the fakir's advice and got my money. Then I left the Wada and went to the seashore. There was a steamer, but I could not get into it as it was crowded. There a good-natured peon interceded for me and I got in luckily. That brought me to another shore, where I caught a train and came to the Masjidsayi.

The story finished and Baba asked Shama to take the guests and arrange for their feeding. Then Shama took them home and fed them. At dinner, Shama said to the

guests that Baba's story was rather mysterious, as He had never gone to the sea-side, never had any money (Rs.30, 000/-), never travelled, never lost any money and never recovered it, and enquired whether they understood it and caught its significance. The guests were deeply moved and were shedding tears. In a choking voice they said that Baba was omniscient, infinite, the One (Para Brahma) without a second. The story He gave out is exactly our story; What He spoke has already taken place in our case. How He knew this, is a wonder of wonders! We shall give all the details after the meals.

Then after the meals while they were chewing betel-leaves, the guests began to tell their stories. One of them said:-

"A hill-station on the ghats is my native place. I went to Goa to earn my living by securing a job. I took a vow to God Datta that if I got any service, I would offer Him my first month's salary. By His grace I got an appointment of Rs.15/- and then I got promotions as described by Baba. I did forget all about my vow. Baba has just reminded me of it in this way and recovered Rs. 15/- from me. It is not Dakshina as one may think it to be, but a repayment of an old debt and fulfillment of long forgotten vow".

Moral

Baba never, in fact, actually begged any money, nor allowed His Bhaktas to beg. He regarded money as a danger or bar to spiritual progress and did not allow His Bhaktas to fall into its clutches. Bhagat Mhalsapati, is an instance on this point. He was very poor and could hardly make both ends meet. Baba never allowed him to make any money, nor gave him anything from the Dakshina amount. Once a kind and liberal merchant named Hansaraj gave a large amount of money to Mhalsapati in Baba's presence, but Baba did not allow him to accept it.

Then the second guest began his tale. "My Brahmin (cook) was serving me faithfully for 35 years. Unfortunately he fell into bad ways, his mind changed and he robbed me of my treasure. By removing a laterite slab from my wall where my cupboard is fixed, he came in while we were all asleep and carried away all my accumulated wealth, Rs. 30,000/- in currency notes. I know not how Baba mentioned the exact amount. I sat crying day and night. My enquiries came to nothing. I spent a fortnight in great anxiety. As I sat on the verandah, sad and dejected, a passing fakir noted my condition and enquired of its cause, and I told him all about it. He told me that an Avalia by name Sai lives in Shirdi, Kopergaon Taluka. Make vow to Him and give up any food that you like best and say to Him mentally that 'I have given up eating that food till I take your darshan'. Then I took the vow and gave up eating rice and so on, "Baba, I will eat it after recovering my property and after taking your darshan".

Fifteen days passed after this. The Brahmin, of his own accord, came to me, returned my money and apologized, saying, "I went mad and acted thus; I now place my head on your feet, please forgive me". Thus everything ended well. The fakir that met me and helped me, was not seen again. An intensive desire to see Sai Baba, whom the fakir pointed out to me, arose in my mind. I thought that the fakir who came all the way to my house was no other than Sai Baba. Would He, who saw me and helped me to get my lost money ever covet to get Rs.35/-? On the contrary without expecting anything from us, He always tries His best to lead us on the path of spiritual progress.

I was overjoyed when I recovered my stolen property and being infatuated, I forgot all about my vow. Then when I was at Colaba, one night I saw Sai Baba in my dream. This

reminded me of my promised visit to Shirdi. I went to Goa and from there wanted to start for Shirdi, by taking a steamer to Bombay, en route. But when I came to the harbour, I found that the steamer was crowded and there was no place. The captain did not allow me, but on the intercession of a peon, who was stranger to me, I was allowed to get into the steamer, which brought me to Bombay. From there, I got in the train and came here. Surely I think that Baba is all pervading and all knowing. What are we and where is our home? How great our good fortune that Baba got back our money and drew us here to Him? You Shirdi folk must be infinitely superior and more fortunate than we; for Baba has played, laughed, talked and lived with you for so many years. I think that your store of good merits must be infinite, for it attracted Baba into Shirdi. Sai is our Datta. He ordered the vow. He gave me a seat in the steamer and brought me here and thus gave proof of His omniscience and omnipotence".

[Mrs. Aurangabadkar](#)

A lady from Sholapur, wife of Sakharam Aurangabadkar had no issue during the long period of 27 years. She had made a number of vows of Gods and Goddesses for an issue, but was not successful. She then became almost hopeless. To make a last attempt in this matter, she came to Shirdi with her stepson Vishwanath and stayed there for two months, serving Baba. Whenever she went to the Masjid, she found it full and Baba surrounded by devotees. She wanted to see Baba alone, fall at His feet and open her heart and pray for an issue, but she got no suitable opportunity. Ultimately she requested Shama to intercede with Baba for her when He was alone. Shama said to her that Baba's Darbar was open, still he would try for her and that the Lord might bless her. He asked her to sit ready with a coconut and joss-sticks on the open courtyard at the time of Baba's meals and that when he beckoned to her, she should come up. One day after dinner, Shama was rubbing Baba's wet hands with a towel when the latter pinched Shama's cheek. Shama feigning anger said, "Deva, is it proper for you to pinch me like this? We don't want such a mischievous God who pinches us thus. Are we Your dependents, is this the fruit of our intimacy?" Baba replied, "Oh Shama, during the 72 generations that you were with me, I never pinched you till now and now you resent my touching you". Shama, "We want a God that will give us ever kisses and sweets to eat; we do not want any respect from You, or heaven, balloon etc. Let our faith unto Your Feet be ever wide-awake". Baba, "Yes, I have indeed come for that. I have been feeding and nursing you and have got love and affection for you".

Then Baba went up and took his seat. Shama beckoned to the lady. She came up, bowed and presented the coconut and joss sticks. Baba shook the coconut, which was dry. The Kernal within rolled and made a noise. Baba said, "Shama, this is rolling, see what it says". Shama, "The woman prays that a child might be similarly rolling and quickening in the womb. So give her the cocoa-nut with Your blessings".

Baba, "Will the coconut give her any issue? How people are foolish and fancy such things!"

Shama, "I know the power of Your word and blessing. Your word will give her a string or series of children. You are wrangling and not giving real blessing".

The parley went on for a while. Baba repeatedly ordering to break the coconut and Shama pleading for the gift of the unbroken fruit to the lady. Finally Baba yielded and said, "She will have an issue". "When?" asked Shama. "In 12 months" was the reply. The

cocoanut was therefore broken into two part, one was eaten by the two, the other was given to the lady.

The Shama turned up to the lady and said, "Dear madam, you are a witness to my words. If within 12 months you do not get any issue, I will break a coconut against this Deva's head and drive him out of this Masjid. If I fail in this, I will not call myself Madhav. You will soon realize what I say".

She delivered a son in one year's time and the son was brought to Baba in his fifth month. Both husband and wife, prostrated themselves before Baba and the grateful father (Mr. Aurangabadkar) paid a sum of Rs.500/- which was spent in constructing a shed for Baba's house "Shyamakarna".

Chapter 37

Chavadi Procession

In this chapter Hemadpant after making some preliminary observations on some points of Vedanta, describes the Chavadi procession.

Preliminary

Blessed is Sai's life, blessed is His daily routine. His ways and actions are indescribable. Sometimes He was intoxicated with Brahmanand (divine joy), and at other times content with Self-knowledge. Doing so many things sometimes, He was unconcerned with them. Though He seemed at times quite actionless (doing nothing) He was not idle or dozing; He always abided in His own Self. Though He looked calm and quiet as the placid sea, He was deep and unfathomable. Who can describe His ineffable nature? He regarded men as brothers, women as sisters and mothers. He was a perfect and perpetual celibate, as everybody knows. May the understanding (knowledge), we got in His company, last long unto death. Let us ever serve Him with whole-hearted devotion to His feet. Let us see Him (God) in all beings and let us ever love His name.

Hemadpant, after making some lengthy dissertations on some topics of Vedanta, which he himself considers as a digression, goes on to describe the Chavadi procession.

Chavadi Procession

Baba's dormitory has been already described. One day He slept in the Masjid and on the next, in the Chavadi (a small building containing a room or two near the Masjid). This alternate sleeping in both these buildings went on till Baba's Mahasamadhi. From 10th December 1909 devotees began to offer regular worship to Baba in the Chavadi. This we will now describe with His grace. When the turn of retiring to the Chavadi came, people flocked to the Masjid and made bhajan in the mandap (courtyard) for a few hours. Behind them was a beautiful Ratha (small car), to the right a Tulsi-vrindavan and in front Baba, and between these the devotees fond of bhajan. Men and women who had a liking for the bhajan came in time. Some took Tal, Chiplis and Kartal, Mridang, Khanjiri and Ghol (all musical instruments) in their hands and

conducted the bhajan. Sai Baba was the Magnet Who drew all the devotees to Him there. Outside in the open, some trimmed their divatyas, (torches), some decorated the palanquin, some stood with cane-sticks in their hands and uttered cries of victory to Baba. The corner was decorated with buntings. Round about the Masjid, rows of burning lamps shed their light. Baba's horse 'Shyamakarna' stood fully decorated outside. Then Tatyapa Patil came with a party of men to Baba and asked Him to be ready. Baba sat quiet in his place till Tatyapa came and helped Him to get up by putting his arm under Baba's arm-pit. Tatyapa called Baba by the name of Mama. Really their relationship was extremely intimate. Baba wore on his body the usual kafni, took His satka (short stick) under His armpit and after taking His chilim (tobacco-pipe) and tobacco and placing a cloth over His shoulder became ready to start. Then Tatyapa threw a golden-embroidered beautiful Shela (Shawl) over His body. After this Baba, moving a little the bundle of fuel-sticks lying behind with His right toe and then extinguishing the burning lamp with His right hand, started for the Chavadi. Then all sorts of musical instruments, tashe, band and horns and mridang, gave out their different sounds; and fire-works exhibited their different and various coloured views. Men and women singing Baba's name started walking, making bhajan to the accompaniment of mridang and veena. Some danced with joy and some carried various flags and standards. The Bhalgars announced Baba's name when He came on the steps of the Masjid. On the two sides of Baba stood persons, who held chavaris and others who fanned Baba. On the way were spread folds of cloth on which Baba walked on, being supported by devotees' hands. Tatyapa held the left hand and Mhalasapati the right and Bapusaheb Jog held the chhatra (umbrella) over His head. In this fashion Baba marched on to the Chavadi. The fully decorated red horse, named Shyamakarna led the way and behind him were all the carriers, waiters, musical players and the crowd of devotees. Hari-nama (the name of the Lord) chanted to the accompaniment of music rent the skies as also the name of Sai. In this manner the procession reached the corner when all the persons that joined this party seemed well pleased and delighted.

On coming to this corner Baba stood facing the Chavadi and shone with a peculiar lustre. It seemed, as if the face of Baba glittered like dawn, or like the glory of the rising sun. Baba stood there with a concentrated mind, facing the north, as if He was calling somebody. All the instruments played their music while Baba moved His right arm up and down for some time. Kakasaheb Dixit at this time came forward with a silver plate containing flowers besmeared with gulal (red powder) and threw them on Baba's body off and on. The musical instruments played their best at this juncture and Baba's face beamed with steady and added radiance and beauty, and all the persons drank this lustre to their hearts' content. Words fail to describe the scene and splendour of this occasion. Some times Mhalasapati began to dance being possessed or obsessed by some deity, but all were surprised to see that Baba's concentration was not in the least disturbed. With a lantern in his hand Tatyapa Patil walked on Baba's left side and Bhagat Mhalasapati on the right, holding with his hand the hem of Baba's garment. What a beautiful procession and what an expression of devotion! To witness this, men and women, poor and rich, flocked together there. Baba walked very slow. Bhaktas followed on both sides with love and devotion. With joy pervading the whole atmosphere of the place, the procession reached the Chavadi. That scene and those days are gone now. Nobody can see them now or in the future; still remembering and visualising that scene and sight, we can bring solace and comfort to our minds.

The Chavadi was also fully decorated with a good white ceiling, mirrors and many sorts of lamps. On reaching it Tatyapa went ahead and spread an asan and placing a bolster made Baba sit there and made Him wear good angaraksha (coat). Then the devotees worshipped Him in various ways. They put on His head a mugut (crown) with a tuft

above, placed garlands of flowers and jewels round His neck and marking His forehead with musk-mixed vertical lines and a dot (as Vaishnava devotees do) they started at Him for long to their hearts' content. They changed His head dress now and then and held it aloft on the head, fearing that Baba might throw it away. Baba knew the heart of them all and meekly submitted to all their methods without objection. With these decorations He looked wonderfully beautiful.

Nanasaheb Nimonkar held the Chhatra (umbrella) with its beautiful pendants, which moved, in a circle with its supporting stick. Bapusaheb Jog washed the feet of Baba in a silver dish and offered 'arghya' and worship with due formalities, then besmeared His arms with sandal paste, and offered tambul (betel-leaves). Baba sat on the asan (gadi), while Tatyā and others kept standing and falling at His feet. When Baba sat on the gadi supporting Himself against the bolster, devotees on both sides waved chamars and fans. Shama then prepared the chillim and handed it over to Tatyā who drew a flame out of it by his breath and then gave it to Baba. After Baba had His smoke, it was given to Bhagat Mhalasapati and then it was passed round to all. Blessed was the inanimate chillim. It had first to undergo many ordeals of penance, such as being treated by pot-makers, dried in the open sun and burnt in fire and then it had the good fortune to get the contact of Baba's hand and His kiss. After this function was over, devotees put garlands of flowers on His neck and gave Him nosegays and bunch of flowers for smelling. Baba who was dispassion or non-attachment incarnate, cared a fig for all these necklaces of jewels, and garlands of flowers and other decorations; but out of real love to His devotees, He allowed them to have their own way and to please themselves. Finally Bapusaheb Jog waved the arati over Baba, observing all formalities, the musical instruments playing thier auspicious tunes. When this arati was over, the devotees returned home one by one saluting Baba and taking His leave. When Tatyā Patil, after offering chillim, attar (scent) and rose-water, rose to depart, Baba said to him lovingly - "Guard Me, go if you like, but return sometimes at night and enquire after Me." Replying in the affirmative Tatyā left the Chhavadi and went home. Then Baba Himself prepared His bed. He arranged 50 or 60 white chadders one upon another and thus making His bed, went to rest.

We shall also now take rest and close this chapter with a request to the readers that they should remember Sai Baba and His Chavadi procession daily before they retire and go to bed.