SAI BABA EXPERIENCES

SRI SAI BABA

I

SRI SAI BABA

Sai Baba is the name of an eminent saint of the Bombay Presidency, styled by various persons a 'SATPURUSHA,' a 'Bhagavatottama,' a 'Siddheswara,' a 'Paramajnani,' an 'Avatar' or an 'Avalia.' He was born of Brahmin parents at Pathri a village in the Nizam's States. Early in his childhood, he was handed over to a Mussalman fakir, but in a few years was restored to the care of a Brahmin, *viz.*, Gopalrao Deshmukh or Venkatesa Guru of Selu. The boy served this guru with such love and ardour that he advanced very high in *Prema Marga* and obtained the guru's *Poorna Kripa*, *i.e.*, full grace, reaching immeasurable heights in Vairagya, Bhakti and Jnana. Wonderful and mystic powers known as *Siddhis* or *Yogaiswaryas* manifested themselves in him in the course of his God-realisation,—without any desire or effort on his part to secure them. His guru was God to him; and Love of God and Guru was the only thing

that he cared for. The incidentally accruing *siddhis** that would turn the head and ruin the hearts of many did not interest him; he kept them, in fact ill-developed or unmanifested for a very long time. *Hari-nama-smarana* (ensouled by love) was everything to him; and these powers were mere distractions.

That guru passed away while Baba was still very young. Baba thereafter resumed his fakir's, *i.e.*, wandering, life. After visiting many places, he went over to Shirdi at the age of sixteen. After some stay, he wandered again. Finally at the age of twenty, he settled at Shirdi and resided there till 15th October 1918, when he left his earthly body on the earth to disintegrate into its pristine elements. This Shirdi is a hamlet of Rahata, a village in the Kopergaon Taluk of the Ahmednagar District, in the Bombay Presidency.

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* Exactly like this is the description of the saint Rishaba in Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha V, Chapter V, para 35. When Rishaba was proceeding with his blissful realisation of God Vasudeva, as identical with his jiva or little self, siddhis unsought were developed unconsciously; such as (1) **Vaihayasa**—Travelling with a physical body in the air. (2) **Manojava**—Quick flash of thought achieving all feats of intellect or reason,—intuition intensified. (3) **Antardhana**—Vanishing or becoming invisible. (4) **Parakaya-pravesa**—Entering into the bodies (living or dead) of other persons or animals. (5) **Duragrahana**—Seeing things that take place at any distance. These he disregarded, as they were distractions to his realisation.

The fact that the perfectly purified mind *Visuddha Satva* realises Brahman and also has power to gain access to every sphere or world and to accomplish everything it desires is attested by numerous texts from the Upanishads, *e.g.*, Mundaka Up. III (1) 8, 9 & 10; Chand. Up. VIII (12) 6: Tait. Up. III (10) 5: Khata Up. I. (2) 16.

When Baba first settled there, he was in reality a highly advanced soul, an adept in the Bhakti or **Prema Marga,** perpetually immersed in his Guru-God and specially adopting *Hari-nama-Japa* for his constant sadhana. He was a real ascetic, caring nothing for creature comforts or pleasures of the senses, living on a little begged food, wearing a coarse '*cupni*'* and resting first under a margosa tree§ and later in a mosque and chavadi. He almost wholly avoided company of the worldly and mixed only with saints and spiritually-minded people except when he went out to tend the sick and cure their diseases with his medicines, accepting no return for his services or drugs. His real spiritual eminence was known only to the saints that he came in contact with, and to the very few that constantly served him, such as Mahlspathi. One saint described him to the villagers as a diamond lying neglected on a dunghill, and another said that the world would one day know Baba's real worth as eminent devotee of Rama. But the generality of villagers took him to be a mere crazy fakir of no importance or merit.

One day the villagers who generally supplied him with oil for the masjid lamps, refused the supply. That night Baba took up the lamps without oil, filled them with water and, inserting a wick in each, kept them burning all night on water alone. That gave a rude shock to the villagers' view of his being a crazy and negligible per-

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* A sort of gown.

§ *Karatala Bhiksha Tarutalavasah*

A tree's shade is his dwelling:

His palm, the bowl for begging.

son. By that time, Baba had given up treating persons with medicines. In the course of his *Hari-Nama-Japa*, he received **Sakshatkara*** and the **Prasada** or grace of Sri Hari; and from that date he dispensed merely **Udhi**, *i.e.*, the ashes of the fire that he perpetually kept burning at his mosque, and not drugs; and the patients that tasted it or smeared it on their persons were restored to health. In cases of obsession by evil spirits, black magic, mental troubles and sorrows, the same ashes given with his blessings were used and afforded relief. Baba showered these gifts and benefits with uniform kindness and perfect equality regardless of class, caste and creed and never accepted any reward or recompense. All this time, his visitors were mostly poor villagers of the locality or its vicinity.

On one occasion, Gopal Rao Gundu, a Revenue Inspector living in the neighbourhood, who was distressed on account of his being childless (though two wives were living with him at the time) sought Baba's blessings to obtain issue. The blessings were given and were followed, in due time, by the birth of a son and heir to Gundu. The official and educated circles wherein he moved soon heard the news and flocked to Baba for his help and blessings.

About 1892, the District Collector's chitnis, *i.e.*, Secretary or Personal Assistant, Narayana Govind Chandorkar, B.A., (popularly known as Nana Saheb Chandorkar) and his police orderly, Ganapat Rao Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe (popularly known as Das Ganu Maharaj) paid

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* *i.e.*, God in the form of Hari appeared before him.

their respects to Baba. Struck with Baba's wonderful powers and simple life, his remarkable love, and perfect purity, they published his name and fame wherever they went. From 1908, Shirdi was consequently flooded every week with hundreds of persons in quest of Baba's *darsan* and blessings. Amongst them, were rajahs and beggars, high officials like the Revenue Commissioner, Mr. Curtis (later Sir George Seymour Curtis) and poor clerks, lawyers and politicians like Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and ignorant peasants, Hindus, Parsis and Moslems, men, women and children, the pious, the worldlings and even criminals.

Attraction of such a vast variety of persons for a long period, naturally indicated great excellence in Sai Baba's nature and powers, attainments and character. Numerous persons have tried to study Baba's nature and doings. But these are often so deep and mysterious as to defy observation and analysis. Large volumes have been written to cover part of this study. In this introduction, we cannot pretend to touch even the fringe of the subject. Anyhow, to give the readers just a rough idea of what Sai Baba was and is, a few brief notes may be set down here.

First and foremost, it must be mentioned that Sai Baba is a living personality to-day, felt by and guiding his innumerable devotees in much the same way as he guided and helped them when he was in the flesh. This is attested by almost every devotee of his: and ample proof is found in the volumes relating to Devotees' experiences. It is not merely the devotees that saw him in the body,

i.e., prior to October, 1918, that assert his present existence and guidance. Numerous devotees have been spurred by devotion into close contact with him after 1918, and have received and are still receiving his tangible help and guidance. Almost the entire body of the Madras devotees are of this class.

Sai Baba's continued existence is nothing surprising. In the first place, no one dies. The soul merely passes on from body to body, from state to state. But the fact remains that amongst thousands that pass away, hardly one has the necessary development and circumstances favouring his re-attraction to his former friends and foes, and interference, either by help, guidance or otherwise, in their affairs. Still cases of such interference do occur and are fairly well-known. In the case of Baba he definitely prepared his devotees for the continuance of such relations. He made them realise, even while on earth, that he was not identical with or confined to the Sai body and that he was really everywhere, and specially to be recognised as the **Antaryami***, the innermost soul of all persons, animals and other creatures. He made them often feel, see, and realise him in his portrait or picture; and numerous devotees saw or felt his presence in their own homes. Such an all-pervading personality cannot perish with the mould of clay that moved at the Shirdi mosque. Still some devotees felt what a void there would be when their daily or constant visits to Shirdi to meet and commune with him should cease by the termination of his earthly

*Cf. B. G. X 20 *Ahamatma gudakesa Sarvabhootasaya Stitah.* 'I am, O Arjuna, the soul seated in the hearts of all creatures.'

life. They expressed their fears to him. In reply, he assured them that his "mortal remains would speak from the tomb," that he would be "active and vigorous" even from there. This has indeed come true. Baba's statements are always true * and reliable.

The first questions that will be asked when any saint is introduced to one's notice are (1) What is his religion? and (2) what is the good he has done or is doing?

II

SAI BABA AND RELIGION

Baba's greatest service was and is the planting or restoration of faith in God and in the moral law. Many turned to God and strove seriously to lead a higher life, under his inspiration and guidance. Some achieved great height in devotion, and had beatific visions of their **Ishta Devata**, *i.e.*, their special God. A very few strove to inquire into their self and make some advance in self-realisation. Several regarded Baba himself as their God and began to feel His presence in themselves, their fellows and in the animals and reptiles they met. Love and Universal benevolence characterise his chief devotees. Tole-

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* His motto may be taken as

Anrutom Noktapurva me nachakshye kadachana

Viddhimaa rushibhistulyam...Ramodvir nabhibhachate.

i.e., "Untruth, I have never uttered, nor will I utter it at any time." "Know me as of the same mettle as the Rishis." "Rama resiles not from his word."

rance usually prevails among the diverse races, castes and creeds of his followers. All of them felt and feel renewed faith in their own God and religion, and new faith in Baba. To many Hindu devotees, Baba was and is God*— a living God, a felt presence, inspiring, aiding and guiding them at every turn in their ordinary affairs, as also at critical moments like the moment of death. This view and such conduct are in entire accordance with the Upanishads, the Gita and Bhagavata.

The few facts known about Baba are so peculiar as to defy analysis and application of the usual labels. and suggest that he must be regarded as *sui generis*, a class by himself. If there is any fact, however, about Baba, quite clear and well established, it is this. He was not entangled in the *Hridayagranthi* known as *Dehatma Buddhi*, *i.e.*, the identification of self with the body. This freedom is said to be the first mark of, or, fundamental requisite for, **Jnana** or spiritual perfection. Though Baba used current phraseology based on that delusion, he was himself above it. "I am not this three cubits and a half height of the body called Sai"; "He who thinks that Baba is in Shirdi has totally failed to see Baba," he said. One day, he voluntarily burnt his arm over the fire, and when requested to accept medical help, remarked, "It will be fine fun (for me) to stand by and watch this body (Sai body) burn on the funeral pyre." "I am formless and everywhere" he said at another time. These words and actions of Sai, bearing the evident impress of illumination

* Though Baba wished all to stick to their Gods, Gurus, etc.

and perfect detachment, bring us to the problem of personality in religion and Baba's way of dealing with it. He recognised the almost universal feeling that personality in the worshipper and in the God worshipped is the very root and foundation of religion, especially the religion of Love, and its principle of Surrender. But that very principle and Love (like Jnana or Wisdom) beginning with separateness, invariably end in the merger of the two or many into what may be called either the One or the Numberless. Distinction between the Love and Beloved vanishes in the bliss of ecstatic love, as in the blessed **Laya** brought on by deep introspection into the self, or God within the self. Sai Baba taught this to a very few, and made some experience the ecstacy of losing all sense of difference. "It is popularly supposed," said he, "that I am different from you, and you from me. But this view is wrong. You are in me and I in you." "My devotee feels me in you, in himself and in all creatures." "This wall of separation (the Teli's* wall) parts you from me. If you pull it down, then we will see each other clearly, face to face. Saints do not recognise this differentiation." "If you wish to serve me, give up discrimination and differentiation."

Baba had various moods of this sort. Sometimes, he said "I am a poor fakir. I am God's slave. *Allah Malik, i.e.*, God is the Master, which means, 'Thy will be done' or 'Thou art the doer—and not I.' But at other times, he said, "I am Ganapathy,

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* A 'Teli' (oil monger) lived next to the mosque.

*Lakshmi Narayana, Mahalakshmi, Datta, etc." "I am all and in all,—saints, criminals. animals, etc." "I pervade the Universe." "I created Brahma or Allah." "I am God or Brahman." "Nothing moves but by my grace." He has actually realised and passed through everyone of those moods.

As to the actual practice of religion, it will be noted that Baba held all religions in reverence. He pronounced the *Fatiha* and listened to the Quoran-Shariff from Muslims, and uttered Rama Mantra to the Hindus and taught them the Gita. It is equally correct to call him a person of no religion or philosophic system, or of all religions and systems, or one above all religions and systems. He discouraged conversions and directed each devotee to remain in his own faith. His mosque contained and still contains the "Mimbar" towards which Mussalmans turn for prayer, a fire to which Parsis and Hindus address their worship, and the scared basil **(Tulasi Brindavan)**, and was aptly styled by him "Dwaraka Mayee," or "The Brahmins' mosque." The daily readings there, under his inspiration or orders, include the Puranas and other Holy books read by Hindus, and the Quoran-Shariff read by Moslems. Above all, for over thirty years, Baba is worshipped at his Mosque as a Hindu God-Guru, with Mahratti and Sanskrit **Mantras** and **Aratis** and **Puja vidhi** accompanied by the din and bustle of Hindu temple music, inciuded in the *Shodasa Upachara and Raja Upachara* accorded to saints and kings.

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* *Cf. Sarvadevamayohyaham* Bhagavat VIII *Yada pasyah pasyate rukmavarna Kartarameesam Purusham Brahmayonim*

Mund. Up. III (1) 3.

If one is called upon to state whether there is any single feature or aspect or method of religion that Baba particularly favoured, one may say with confidence, that it was the religion of Love,—a religion suited to and appreciated by all creatures of God. His main plank was **Prema** (Love); **Jnana** (Wisdom) came into it, of course. The end or goal was the Reaching of God, personal and impersonal, with and without form. The welding of the two paths (*Jnana and Bhakti*) in his practice and precepts can be understood by one who has made a close study of them in Srimath Bhagavata. Baba spoke to his devotee Uddavesa Bua of that Purana as that "in which I have spoken to you, and I am speaking to you still" and directed him to meditate on Krishna-Udhavasamvada in XI Skanda. One frequently notes in that Purana that the goal of life and all endeavour is said to be Vasudeva, also styled *Para Brahmam*, who is described as the source and end of everything and beyond everything, as both Personal and Impersonal, and whose fuller description is declared to be impossible. This is the Bhagavati Gati (Satvakas' goal) and the Jnani's end also. And this is indistinguishable from the goal referred to by Baba.*

The eminence of Baba as a saint is not in his striking out a new line of thought or expounding a now philosophical or religious system. His greatness consists in drawing to himself men without any faith or adequate faith in their own ancient systems. Few, whether Hindus

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* This is also the Sufis' goal. Kabir is said to be a Sufi: Kabir's religion is Baba's; Baba stated that he was Kabir, in one of his former births.

or Muslims, have real living faith in the saving truths of religion; and few understand the rationale or use of the religious forms and observances that the conservative sections still keep up. The younger and the thoughtless, even when not scoffing at religion, have no perception of its use or importance, kick at all restraints, and launch into a life of mere worldly pleasure and vanity. To bring this generation back to a sense of the worth and value of religion* (*Dharma Samsthapana*) requires the might of a spiritual giant. Such a giant came to its rescue in Baba. His vast knowledge of all times, places and systems, his perfect selflessness and purity ensure for him a position of command over his fellows. No one knows all that Sai has done for the amelioration of the condition of individuals and society; and even the facts known can only be gleaned out of numerous volumes In this introduction, just a few of them will be placed before the reader to give him a glimpse of Sai Baba, his nature and work.

Once questioned by a Commissioner about his race, religion and profession, Sai Baba answered that he was Parvardigar (*i.e.*, God), Kabir, (or Kabiri) in religion, engaged in bestowing *Duva i.e.*, blessings. As his entire life-time was devoted to the showering of blessings, we cannot do better to understand Baba's religion, than narrate a few varieties of such blessings, and note how they affected his main work for the uplift of men. His

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* *Cf. Dharma Samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yugeyuge*

(B. Gita IV. S) *i.e.*, I am born in every age to sustain Religion.

blessing Nana Saheb Dengle with issue has already been mentioned. We may add some more instances under that head.

III

BABA'S BLESSINGS FOR ISSUE

Sri Damodar Savalram Rasne, a devout and prosperous bangle merchant living at Ahmadnagar and Poona, went to Sri Sai Baba about 1895 and was ardently attached to Baba's service. He had two wives living with him for sometime and yet had no issue. To add to his distress, astrology declared that, with *Ketu* in the fifth place from his *Lagna*, in his horoscope, he could not hope for any issue in this life. He had firm faith in Baba however; and Baba blessed him in a very remarkable manner. One day, Baba distributed a basket of mangoes to the assembled crowd of boys and men at his mosque, and put by eight mangoes, expressly stating that they were reserved for "**Damia**" (*i.e.*, D. S. Rasne) who however was not present then at Shirdi. In a very short time, he arrived there; but before his arrival the boys had purloined four fruits; and Baba gave him the remaining four. Baba told him, not to eat the fruits himself, but to give them to his junior wife; that she would, after eating them, and in due course, bring forth eight children; that his first would be a son whom he should name Doulat Shah, that the second, also a son, should be named Nana Shah, etc. What! Counting

the chickens before they are hatched! Christening, *i.e.*, naming babies before they are born! What wonder is this! Yet every word that Baba spoke was fulfilled. The lady ate the fruits. In one year thereafter she had a son, and in another year or two, another son. Later, she begot more. On the whole, she begot just eight children and not more. Of these, Death filched away four, leaving Damia just four sons.

Dasaratha, a childless monarch, performed grand sacrifices, *Yagas* with the help of Rishyasringa, Vasishta and other rishis of great renown; and a divine figure issued fourth from the fire of the *Homa* and presented the king with blessed *Havishya* the consumption of which by the three queens resulted in their obtaining four sons. So says the Ramayana. Several Hindus that might not have strong faith in that scripture would obtain such faith after noting this grand achievement by Sai for the benefit of a merchant who had not funds enough to celebrate a great Yaga or fortune enough to summon great rishis to his aid. Many people concluded that Sri Sai was not less eminent and powerful than the rishis mentioned above and that his presence at Shirdi was a special dispensation of Providence for the benefit of this age.

In numerous cases, Baba conferred his blessings for issue, and the persons blessed, invariably obtained issue. Of these, we may touch upon two only and pass on. A Mrs. Aurangabadkar had 27 years of connubial life with her husband and had not conceived even once. Medical and popular opinion declared her incurably barren. But

with powerful faith in Sai Baba, she came to Shirdi and on the intercession of "Shama," *i.e.*, Mr. Madhava Rao Deshpande*, Baba gave her bis blessings and said that in twelve months' time, she would beget a son. And she did beget a son at the end of that period. A lawyer at Akkalkote, one Sapatnekar, had, in his student life, treated Baba's name with contempt. Witnin ten years thereafter, while he was a practising lawyer, he lost his only son; and that broke his heart. Remembering his former contempt for Baba, he repented and went to Shirdi. At his first visit, he met with a very chill reception. But a year later, his wife saw Baba in her dream and was invited to Shirdi with her husband. On this occassion, Baba after revealing his wonderful and intimate knowledge of all the leading incidents in the lawyer's life, told him to have faith, then blessed him, and said that he (Baba) would bring that identical soul, the departed child back to its mother's womb. And in one year thereafter the promised son was born.

IV

BLESSINGS TO CHILDREN

When the benovolent and powerful Sai gave such blessings to his devotees, would they stop troubling him with requests? On the other hand, every turn and incident in life furnished them with more oppotunities and excuses for further importunity. When ladies were promised

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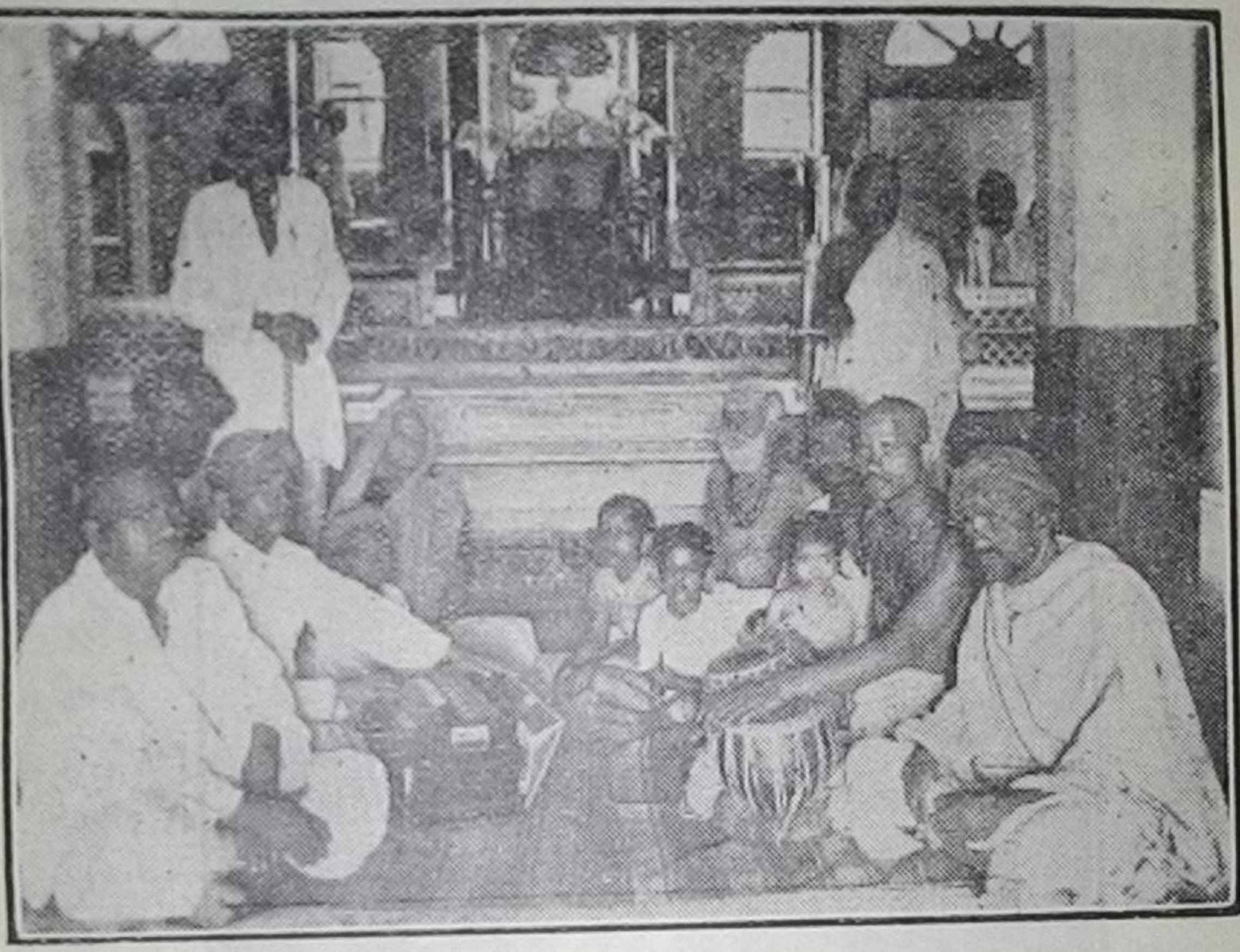
* He lives at Shirdi. Baba always called him Shama.

issue, the anxious season of delivery and parturition troubles led to further prayers, and Baba ran (invisibly) to their rescue and averted dangers. When babies were born, their constant ailments and risks of accident called for Baba's help, and he intervened with remarkable help in many cases. Mr. S. B. Nachne's statement of experience is full of thrilling instances of such relief. Baba, looking at a child at Shirdi said one day. "When this child is sleeping, we have to stand by and keep watching." That same child was walking some days later through a water-gutted lane in that village. On one side of it, there was a five-feet deep trench, dug up for the foundation of a house, but as it was full of storm water, it was indistinguishable from the lane and the child of three or four summers walked into it. As the child did not know how to swim and as there was none just then present, it must have been drowned. But somehow, it came out. Asked how it came out, the child said that Baba showed it the steps cut at one end and that it climbed up these steps. A three-year-old girl, named Santi Kirwandikar at Shirdi used to call Baba her elder brother. One day, she slipped down a draw well. People ran up and found that the child was neither hurt by the fall, nor drowned in the water. She was in the water, but holding on to a projecting ledge. Asked how she escaped unhurt, she replied, "Baba held me up in his hands, as I fell." There was no other explanation for her safety. H. S. Dixit, B.A., LL.B., (Ex. M. L. C.) a leading solicitor of Bombay, had given up his worldly ambition and was entering on a spiritual career under Baba's care and protection. To encourage his perfect detachment, Baba said to him at Shirdi one



Samadhi—Pooja



Baba's Portrait in the Dwaraka Mayee

day, "Hallo, Kaka, (that is how Baba always addressed him) *why do you worry yourself with cares? All responsibility is mine.*" H. S. Dixit said 'yes,' but did not know if there was any necessity for this declaration on that particular day. A few days later, he went home to Ville Parle where his wife and children lived, and learnt that on the very day of Baba's declaration, his young daughter (aged about 6 or 7) had an accident. An almyrah (full of toys) near which the child was playing suddenly fell on her. But, strange to say, the child had no hurt at all, except breaking her glass bangles and getting slightly scratched thereby. All the weight that fell on her appeared to have been genfly lowered and the toys etc., seemed to have been placed away from her. It was then that Dixit discovered the appropriateness of Baba's remark.

A Bombay lady and her son were great devotees of Baba. Baba told them one morning that at 2 P.M. they should return to the mosque; and they did. Baba then told the boy to sit on a mat near himself and warned him not to leave the mat without permission. At 3 P.M., a savage looking female figure with dishevelled hair and horrid features jumped over the compound wall into the mosque. She approached the boy and said "I want to take this boy," Baba said "No" She still persisted and proceeded to seize the boy. Baba got up and gave her a kick that made her howl, get away from the mosque and disappear. That woman, Baba declared, was the Goddess of Cholera; and Baba added that he had saved the boy from cholera and that the danger had passed away. The

boy saw the woman's figure and what passed, but was benumbed and could hear nothing.

Numerous were the occasions when Baba saved children from disease, sometimes by his blessings with *udhi*, sometimes without the *udhi*. In some cases, he drew disease on to himself from the sick patients. The late Dewan Bahadur G. S. Khaparde with his wife and two sons was spending some months at Shirdi in 1911 and 1912. Plague started at Shirdi and one of the sons was having fever. Mrs. G. S. Khaparde was in terror and wanted leave to go away from Shirdi. But Baba told her, in highly figurative language, that the danger would pass off. Her fears were still unabated. Then Baba showed her and "Shama," his own huge bubos and said "Mother, I have to suffer this, on your account." That is, to save her son, Baba had drawn the disease on to himself. That son got better and Baba also after sometime recovered his health. Baba extended a similar favour to Mrs. Manager of the Holy City. When that lady had aching eyes with water constantly dripping from them, Baba looked at her. Then her eyes ceased to water and Baba's eyes were dripping tears.

V

BABA, THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

One finds it difficult to believe that anyone would protect another's life or health with the sacrifice of his own. But this is the ideal set forth in the Bhagavata V (5) 18.

Gurur na sa syat swajano na sa syat
Pitha na sa syat janani na sa syat
Daivam na tat syat na pathischa sa syat
na mochayedyaha samupeta mruthyum

One who does not save a person from death—physical or spiritual (*i.e.* Samsara) is not a guru, father, mother, God, husband nor kinsman. To Sri Baba, this was no copy book maxim. His guru, "Venkusa," sacrificed his own life while saving Baba from a shower of stones pelted by some villagers of Selu. Baba in his turn was equally determined to sacrifice his life, his health, and everything for those who placed their implicit faith in him.

* *"If one devotes his entire mind to me and rests in me, he need fear nothing for body and soul. If one perpetually thinks of me and makes me his sole refuge, I am his debtor and will give my head to save him."*

The declarations of Baba are not extravagant professions, Baba, a *Dharmatma Satyasandhascha* never spoke but anything but the truth. We shall immediately proceed to narrate some more of the numerous instances proving his parental kindness, and vigilance in guarding the life, health and interests of his devotees.

Did Baba ever really offer his head to save devotees? Yes. A number of times. The first occasion was long

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* *Cf.* B. G. IX 22.

Ananyaschinta yanthomam ye janaha Paryupasate
Thesham nithyabhi yukthanam yogakshemam vahamyaham

ago, when the local Muslims banded together, sent for the Sangamnere Kazi and resolved by force to stop what they considered as desecration of the mosque by the Hindus' worship of Baba there with sandal paste. Mahlsapathy alarmed at the prospect of being clubbed to death tried to do his pooja of Baba from outside the compound wall. But, Baba invited him inside, directed him to go on with sandle paste and usual forms of worship and defied orthodoxy to use its force. There was great risk run in adopting this course, as a good number of Maslims were outside, watching the proceedings and ready with clubs. But the very daring of the Shirdi Wizard cowed down opposition; and no violence was used. Again some twenty years later (1914-15), on similar grounds, when Baba, wtth R. A. Tarkhad and others was sleeping at the Chavadi, a fanatic got up at dead of night and wished to cut the throat of all Hindus there as they were spoiling him and adjured Baba to grant him leave. Just then Tarkhad woke up and wondered if he and others were to be murdered in cold blood But the loving father Sai was there to save them. Baba told the fanatic that the Hindus were not to blame for worshipping him, that it was his own madness that spoiled them and resulted in the heterodox worship, and he offered his throat for cutting—if any throats had to be cut. That fanatic's blood-thirst did not go so far as to cut the throat of an eminent Moslem 'Avalia' * and Baba again escaped harm. A year or two later, there came a still fiercer fanatic named the "Rohilla"

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* Baba was taken by Moslems for a moslem, but by some for an eccentric and heterodox Avalia, a crazy saint.

who though not of the Rohilla tribe. was as lawless and truculent a dare--devil as the worst of that tribe. That man struck with the wonderful powers and genius of Baba called him "Paygamber," *i.e.*, prophet. Yet he was repelled by Babas heterodox tolerance of Hindu polytheism and image worship and above all by the worship of Baba at the mosque with the din of Hindu music, mantras and rituals. He came up to slay Baba with a club. Baba just cast a glance at him and touched his wrist. This paralysed the Rohilla who sank to the ground like lead.

There are innumerable instances of Baba's facing disease in trying to save his children—the devotees. We may just touch upon a few here. But before doing so, it may be mentioned that Baba lost his health, vigour and ultimately life, by the interminable strain of meeting hundreds of devotees and visitors every day and having to think out and provide for their needs in a variety of ways. To G. S. Khaparde, he said in December 1910, that for two years (*i.e.*, ever since the crowding into Shirdi began) he had not been well, that the trouble would last as long as he lived at Shirdi and till he went to his native town (*i.e.* God), that he cared more for his people than for his own life, that he found no rest as people troubled him and that it could not be helped. He would not shirk or evade trouble as " to that end he was born, and for that cause he came into the world."

Mr. Santaram Balwant Nachne is the head clerk of the Taluk Sheristadar's office at Kurla and a staunch

devotee of Baba. In 1913, when he visited Baba, the latter made a general observation, "We should not trust mad men. "This did not strike Mr. Nachne as a remark of any use or significance for him. But some time later, he was at home attending to the pooja of his domestic images and Baba's photo. There was a crazy person standing at some distanee. But as he was thought to be harmless, Mr. Nachne did not mind his presence in the house and went on with his pooja. Suddenly, however, the mad man plunged into the pooja room, seized Nachne's neck with both his hands and was attempting to bite his throat saying, "I will drink your blood."

Mr. Nachne was suddenly inspired with courage and with an idea as to the method of repulsing the attack. He thrust his sacred spoon (*Uddharani*) with the finger holding it into the mad man's wide-open mouth, and with his other hand tried to pull the mad man's hand off his neck. Mr. Nachne then lost consciousness. Others in the house rushed to his rescue and saved his life by pulling off the mad man. When Mr. Nachne visited Shirdi next, Baba revealed the part he had played in this incident. Addressing one Anna, Baba said, "Hallo, Anna, had I delayed a moment, this man (pointing to Mr. Nachne) would have expired; for, the mad man had seized his very throat.

But I extricated him. What is to be done? If I do not protect my own children, who else will?"

Baba on another occasion said,

"I will not allow my devotees to come to harm. I have to take thought for my devotees. And if a devotee is about to fall, I stretch out my hands, thus; and with four and four hands at a time I support him. I will not let him fall."*

Here is one more instance of Baba's outstretched arms to save the life of devotees. Nana Saheb Chandorkar, one of the foremost among them was constantly thinking of Baba and regarding him as his sole refuge. Nana was one day driving in a tonga near Poona. Suddenly the horses reared and upset the carriage. That was a critical moment when even the life of Nana was imperilled. Sai Baba, the everwatchful and Arguseyed, shouted out at that very moment at Shirdi (about 100 miles away from Poona) "Alas! Nana is about to die! *But will I let him die?*" Turning to the Poona road, we may see the outcome of the accident. Nana and another occupant of the tonga merely tumbled down, but received no hurt at all. When Nana visited Shirdi next, he was informed by the devotees there of Baba's words on the above occasion; and he then discovered the real explanation of his safe escape.

On another occasion, it was Nana Saheb's daughter Matusri Minathai, then a girl of seventeen, that needed

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* *Cf.* St. Matthew IV. 6. He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Deut (33) 27 Underneath are the everlasting arms.

help and protection. It was her first delivery time. The pains of labour were very acute and prolonged, so acute indeed that death seemed preferable. There was no medical help in that place, (Jamnere) from which Jalagaon, (the nearest Railway station in those days, *i.e*,, 1904), was thirty miles off. Patient Nana Saheb in his distress went on with his *homa*, etc, and did not communicate her plight to Baba. He never intimated such incidents to Baba. For, Baba himself at times declared,

> *Whatever you do, wherever you may be, ever bear this in mind, that I am always aware of everything you do.*

Baba knew of Nana's distress and implicit faith, and gave some *Udhi* to a Gosavai at Shirdi and directed him to go to Jamnere and deliver it to Nana for his daughter's use. The Gosavai had only two rupees in hand, just sufficient for the railway fare to the Jalagaon station and not enough money to convey him thence (thirty miles by road) to Jamnere. But Baba cryptically said to him, "Go, everything will be provided." When the Gosavai alighted at the station, Jalagaon, there was a peon in livery and a good tonga waiting for him. The peon said they had been sent by Nana Saheb. Proceeding by the tonga to Jamnere, he delivered the *Udhi* to Nana Saheb. Within five minutes of its application, the lady had a safe delivery. When the tonga and peon were mentioned to Nana Saheb, he was surprised; for, there was no intimation of any one coming from Shirdi and neither peon nor tonga had been sent by him. The miraculous provision of tonga and peon were no greater wonders, however, than Sai's marvellous

supervision* over the devotees' affairs and the kind despatch of timely aid to save a girl from death, and torture worse than death.

These were cases when Baba was in the flesh. In 1926 or 1927, *i.e.*, long after Baba's *mahasamadhi*, he saved his devotee's life in thrilling circumstances. A party of Bombay devotees were returning to Bombay after attending Baba's Ramanavami Utsava at Shirdi. When the train reached Thana, one of the ladies got down the platform, filled a vessel with water from the tap and tried to get back into her carriage, with the vessel on her waist. When her foot was yet on the footboard the train moved and she fell down between the moving train and the platform. The husband and others shouted out and tried to stop the train. But the train had moved on a considerable distance, before it ultimately stopped. Persons ran up to see the lady's condition and expected to see only a mangled corpse. What was their surprise to see that the lady was standing up as they approached! She then narrated how at the very moment of her fall, she thought of Baba. And lo! Baba was by her side, pressing her against the platform wall to prevent her limbs being cut by the rolling wheels. Of course, there is no room for a man to stand between the wheels and her body so pressed. But it was Baba that stood and to Baba nothing was impossible. None, however, except the lady saw Baba. Invisibility is a *Siddhi* which is achieved even through yogic practice. But the

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* *Cf.* The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. 2 Chron. XVI, 9.

heart and eye that ever watch the fate of thousands of devotees in all places and the kindness that rushes to their rescue before they utter a word of prayer are not achievements of yoga. They are the hall marks of Divine Love, a Love that says, "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," and extorts a return of love, with words like these :

Satyaseesho hi Bhagavan thava padapadma
Masisthathanubhajathaha purusharthamurthihi
Apyevamarya Bhagavan paripathi deenan
Vasriva Vatsakamanugraha katharosman.

Yearns to suckle its calf the cow.
To bless us babes, so yearnest Thou !

VI

TEMPORAL BENEFITS AND THEIR SPIRITUAL EFFECT

So far we have dealt with cases of averting physical death. Has Sai been helpful in averting the spiritual death termed Samsara? It is a well-known fact that 99 per cent of the visitors of Sai did not go to him for *mukti* or salvation. They went only for the redress of felt grievances, urgently demanding redress. While the stomach is starved and the family is poorly protected against wind and

rain, people's minds cannot turn easily to spiritual improvement. Yet frequently, it is their wordly need that induces them to have faith. That is the seed of religion, or the spring from which the spiritual stream starts and goes on to *mukti*. Hence, those going to Baba in quest of worldly benefits were not repulsed. They were often drawn by him to himself in pursuance of **Rinanubandha**, *i.e.*, pre-natal ties, to secure wordly benefits from him, to resume his company in this life and begin it with fresh gratitude and faith. Hence, he conferred many worldly blessings on them. Securing a hold on their affections, he was in a stronger position to rebuke their vices, to make them repent, change their ways and start on the spiritual career he prepared for them. Even the most intimate devotees like Nana Saheb Chandorkar could seldom make out his plans. But people like Nana implicitly trusted him and he used his super-human powers to increase their faith and love. In numerous matters relating to journeys, mercantile or business transactions, employment, promotion, pension, transfers, punishments, appeals, treatment of disease, social and domestic problems, etc., Baba gave constant help and guidance to the devotees! and the invariable benefits accruing from these have strengthened their admiration, devotion and love to him. Each sincere and earnest devotee becomes a centre from which Sai's blessed influence radiates all around. A perusal of the statements furnished by these devotees will give one some idea of the nature and extent of such help, guidance and influence. We may notice a few typical instances of such help and influence, first, before dealing with the final drive to the goal.

Sustenance

Food is the first requisite of life; and numbers crowded to Baba's feet in quest of it. To the very poor who badly needed immediate doles, Baba gave ample and liberal help. Sai Baba always set an example of hospitality, *Atitya*. He would never taste even his begged food without letting other persons have a share. Dogs and cows always had theirs. After Bombay crowds poured their daily *Naivedyas i.e.*, food-offerings Baba's daily doles enabled a large contingent of beggars and fakirs to live permanently at Shirdi. But there are beggars and beggars—for even Emperors beg. Numerous persons wished to get employment or promotion but failed to pass the required tests or secure the necessary patronage. Baba helped those to pass their examinations and secure employment. Of such cases, we shall cite just one. One Cholkar found that he could gain no living without passing an examination and that the examination was too hard for his capacity. He prayed to Baba for success and employment and vowed that he would go on pilgrimage to see Baba, if he succeeded. Then he passed his examination and got a poor pay which did not enable him to save the railway fare. He then saved that money by small economies such as abstention from sugar even for his tea. When he went up to see Baba, the latter told his host to give Cholkar, tea with *plenty of sugar*. Doctor Tendulkar, when a medical student, was extremely diffident and feared that he was not sufficiently coached up to answer his examination papers. The astrologers he consulted confirmed his fears; and he was hopeless. Baba assured

him of success and directed him to cast aside Astrology and boldly attend the examination. He did so and secured a pass. Similar help was extended to H. S. Dixit's son and to others. Sapatnekar, of Akkalkot had a friend in his student days, that was appearing for the Law examination. That friend had not prepared his subjects well enough and yet hoped to pass his examination. When asked by Sapatnekar, why he was so confident, the reply was that Baba had assured him of success. Sapatnekar jeered at him for being "fool enough" to believe such trash Baba's words were trash in Sapatnekar's estimation. But the results came and that friend passed. Sapatnekar wondered at it but regarded it as a fluke, and had no belief in Sai Baba's powers. Ten or eleven years later, he changed his views and discovered what vast powers—to control the living and the 'dead'—were in Baba.

Baba's declarations read like characters in favour of the public or his devotees. **"In my devotees' houses, there shall be no lack of food and clothing,"** he said. True to his word, Baba has provided them with maintenance at least sufficient for ordinary comfort, if not on a lavish scale. Two excellent instances are those of Das Ganu Maharaj and Upasani Maharaj both of whom were directed by Baba to devote themselves *exclusively* to God and Religion and not to care for wealth. When the former resigned his service without any saving pension or property, Baba promised help; and D. G. has never lacked food and comfort and has some property now. When the latter went to Baba, he owned practically nothing and resigned himself to the care of Sai Baba, and is

now (thanks to Baba's grace) in possession of an estate that suffices to support him and the large establishment at his Asrams.

VII

VARIOUS BLESSINGS AND THEIR EFFECTS

Business transactions.—Baba seldom interfered in business matters. But at the call of powerful devotion he had at times to advise and help even in these. The best way of gripping Baba's loving heart is total surrender to him. **"You should cast all your burdens on me. I will bear them. If you look to me, I will look to you,"** he said to several devotees. "You are my only refuge. Whom else have I to rely upon ?" must be the cry of one's heart. That was exactly Mr. Damodar S. Rasane's feeling. Quite simple and unsophisticated, he trusted entirely to Baba and would never take a single step in his life without consulting and getting the sanction of Baba. He was running a modest but profitable business. Once a Bombay broker tempted him with a venture which might secure for him profits in lakhs of rupees. Mr. Rasane wrote at once to Shirdi for Baba's approval. But Baba turned it down saying "Damia is wanting to catch the sky. He should be content with what he has." Then Mr. Rasne tried to induce Baba to change his views by offering him a percentage on the profits. Baba declared that he would not get entangled in pecuniary matters.

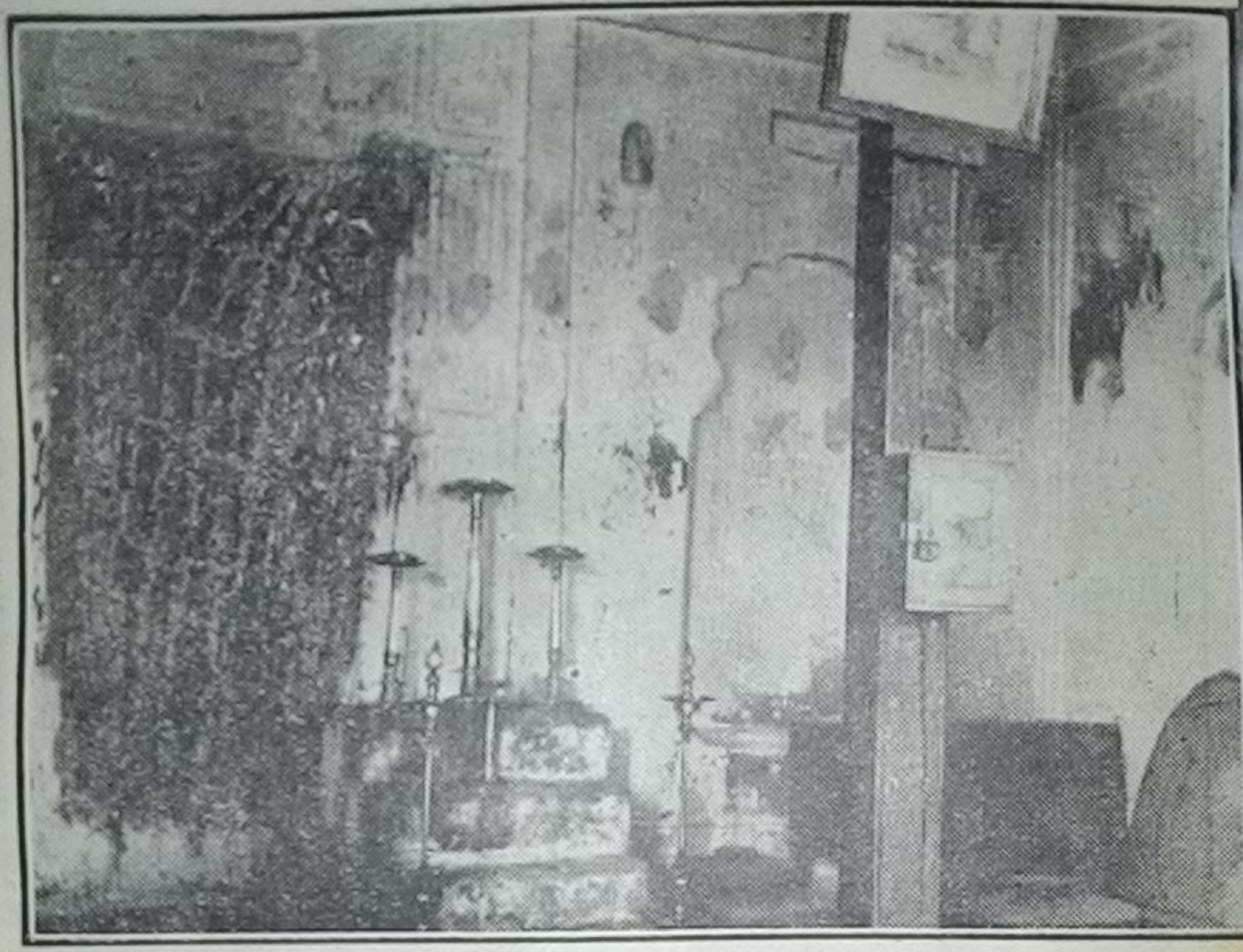
That proposal was dropped. Next a merchant suggested to Mr. Rasne that he should join a partnership for purchase and storage of wheat etc., as grains were steadily rising in price. Baba, when consulted, turned down that proposal also, saying "You will be buying at five measures for the rupee and selling at seven." The friend thought Rasne was too pusillanimous and unwise and pointed to the high prices that prevailed for many weeks after the proposal was dropped. But after that period, what happened? Rains, abundant rains were reported all over the country, and grain-prices went down and the slump continued for a very long time. Baba's prevision and kind fore-warning had saved Mr. Rasne from a serious financial calamity. He and other devotees had numerous proofs of Baba's knowledge of everything and his love towards themselves, and never hesitated to follow implicitly and blindly every direction that he gave them. They found that such directions were the best for them alike in their material and higher interests.

Promotions, Pensions, etc.—Mr. B. V. Dev, Mamlatdar and Mr. S. V. Sathe, Deputy Collector, had each a block in his promotion. The latter complained to Baba about it. Baba assured him that matters would be set right; and suddenly he (H. V. S.) got a promotion of Rs. 100/- and a lift over the head of some seniors also. The former did not complain of it; and that block was not what took him to Baba. But Baba at that first visit was aware of it. and spoke in his peculiar manner, conveying a meaning only to the concerned party, "Oh, this is a dispute about Rs 25/- I have told the big man (*i.e.*, the

superior) to pay it. He would not. Where will it go? He will give it in two or four months." The truth was that Mr. Dev was entitled to get into the higher grade (which involved a rise in his pay of Rs. 25/-) and that this lift was long being withheld from him. Baba's words proved true, for in three or four months' time Mr. Dev got the lift and increase in pay. This event served to confirm Mr. Dev's faith in Baba which a companion of his, a Kavle Patel was trying to undermine.

In the matter of Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe's pension, an initial decision was reached by the pensions department which ignored his final *sub protem* appointment and consequently reduced the proper figure by Rs 50/- When H. V. Sathe complained of it to Baba, the latter forcibly expressed himself and said that he would make them pay the full pension through the nose. H. V. S. took the matter before the Revenue Commissioner who granted him the full pension as claimed.

Fines, etc.—Mr. G. G. Shiriyan is deeply devoted to Baba. In 1928, he was, on very flimsy grounds or none, blamed and fined by his superior. That night he prayed to Baba, who answered him (in a dream) that he would set matters right. The next day, when he went to his office, he found that without any appeal or representation on his part, the superior had changed his opinion. G. G. Shiriyan was exculpated and an innocent boy was made the scapegoat. That boy was fined. That helpless boy and G. G. Shiryan both prayed to Baba who (in a dream) assured G. G. Shiriyan that the fine would be



"Nimbar" within Dwaraka Mayee (mosque)



Dwaraka Mayee (mosque) Entrance

cancelled in 73 days' time. The boy, however, did not appeal or apply for review or mercy. On the 70th day, the boy's immediate superior sent a representation to the officer who imposed the fine and it was cancelled—exactly on the 73rd day.

Another remarkable case of mind control by Baba may be noted, next. A servant of Baba and five others were convicted by a Taluk Magistrate and sentenced to imprisonment. The Magistrate's judgment rested on the direct evidence (which he accepted as credible of half a dozen witnesses to the occurance.) Able and axperienced lawyers and magistrates who saw a copy of it at Shirdi considered it a hopeless case for appeal. But Baba, to whom the matter was taken merely directed the friend of the appellants (who were in jail) to go to 'Bhav,' *i.e.*, S. B. Dhumal, (subsequently, Rao Bahadur) pleader of Nasik. The latter perused the papers and was disinclined to take up the engagement at first; but being informed that it was Baba's order that he should work for the appeal, he went before the Ahmadnagar District Magistrate with his appeal memo and judgment. To that Magistrate's querry what it was all about, he briefly narrated the facts. Then the Magistrate said that the case looked strong, resting as it did on such a number of eye-witnesse's testimony. Mr. S. B. Dhumal retorted that the number of witnesses is no criterion, especially in a faction-ridden village like Shirdi. "Do you think so?" said the Magistrate. "Think! Why, I know it," was the ready response. The Magistrate at once took up the appeal memo and without issuing notice to the complainant, the police or the

Public Prosecutor and without calling for the papers wrote out an appellate judgment on the appeal memo itself, acquitted all the accused and then asked the vakil whether Sai Baba was a Hindu or Moslem and what it was he taught. Before the vakil returned to Shirdi, Baba had called some of the devotees who were going to attend a very disheartening funeral, to stay with him a while, as they would presently see a *chamatkar*, *i.e.*, miracle. They did not however stay with him long enough. After they left the mosque, the vakil arrived and informed the villagers of the astounding news of the summary acquittal, which, they discovered, was the *chamatkar* that Baba had mentioned. They realised that Baba's vast control over people's minds was directed to secure summary justice for those that placed their faith in him. With Baba, all things are possible.

Diseases.—The last mentioned incident might appear to a highly critical mind as nothing more than thought-control, which several persons making experiments in hypnotism might achieve. We may next refer to incidents where Baba's help and powers do not admit of so easy an explanation. Here is a case indeed where Baba used a human being, or his leg rather, as his means for effecting treatment of disease, without the owner of the leg using his will at all in the matter.

Dr. Chidambaram Pillai, a very devoted *bhakta* of Baba, had guinea worm and his sufferings were so intolerable that he sent word to Baba that instead of wiping out his past karma through those sufferings, he would pray to

Baba that the sufferings might be staved off for the present life and spread over ten succeeding lives of his. Baba rebuked such folly and pointed out that there was no necessity for taking ten more births for that purpose and that *Satpurushas exist to give him relief by enabling him to endure all the sufferings in ten days* and restoring health at once. Baba sent for the doctor and made him lie down at the mosque and told him that a crow would come and peck at his wound and end his troubles. A little later, perhaps the next day, Abdul,* a faithful servitor of Baba (whom Baba welcomed at his first arrival at Shirdi with the words 'My crow is come') in trying to clean and light lamps at the mosque suddenly put his foot without being guided by his own consciousness—on the swollen leg of Dr. Pillai, who at once roared with pain. But this painful operation had a remarkable effect. All the collected pus and the string worms were forcibly squeezed out, completely. In a few days, Dr. Pillai regained his health. Here if the crow's leg was used to perform the required surgical operation, the crow's mind was not.

Next we shall proceed to more puzzling instances of relief. We have read of the kind Jewish Saviour who by laying his hands on the eyes of the blind restored sight to them. The Shirdi Saviour's kindness was exerted in a similar way at times. Vittal Rao Yeshwant Deshpande's grandfather was a stoneblind old man some twentyfive

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* Still living at Shirdi and daily reading his Quoran as instructed by Baba. He uses that book for reading the future and giving his blessings to the devotees who go to him.

years ago. But he had great faith in Baba and was consequently taken to Shirdi and led into Baba's mosque. While bowing to Baba he said sadly, "I cannot see" Baba said at once, "You will." Thereafter, Baba placed his hands on the old man's head. At once, sight was restored and the old man, seeing everything clearly; wept tears of joy, and without any help or guidance walked through the streets of Shirdi and travelled back by train to Bombay.

"Laying on of hands" though not easily explained, is a well-known method of cure of infirmities. But Baba's methods were so numerous, varied and incomprehensible that they cannot be easily sorted and labelled. We may quote just two or three instances.

Sriman K. G. Buty, a rich devotee from Nagpur had an attack of Cholera while he was at Shirdi and his thirst was very severe. Dr. Pillai consulted Baba as to the drink that could allay that thirst. Baba prescribed an infusion of almonds, etc., boiled in sugared milk. This would be considered a fatal aggravation of the disease by any doctor, Western or Indian. But in implicit obedience to Baba's order, that drink (or food) was administered, and it cured the Cholera. Kaka Mahajani, another devotee, had Diarrhoea and very frequent motions. Just when he was at the pavilion in front of the mosque, Baba shouted out with terrible anger and every one ran away. While Kaka also was trying to move away Baba came up to him and made him sit there. Some one at the stampede, had left behind a quantity of groundnut. Baba made Kaka eat

plenty of the groundnut and drink water. This according to medical opinion, is the surest way of increasing the motions. But in Kaka's case, it stopped the motions and he was cured. Another case of cure is still more inexplicable. A man suffering from intermittent fever sought the aid of Baba, who thereupon gave him this very strange recipe. "Take good boiled rice with curds. Go to that temple (naming one) in the village. A black dog will meet you. Give it the rice and curds." The man implicitly obeyed Baba and was cured. One more instance, we may cite here of Baba's wonderful cures and close the list.

One Bhimaji who was suffering from a severe and chronic chest disease (Tuberculosis, it must have been) was brought by Shama who begged Baba to cure him. Baba pointed out that the disease was due to previous evil karma of theft and was at first disinclined to interfere. Then that patient cried out in despair that he was a *saranagata** *i.e.*, that he sought refuge, and that Baba

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* Regarding the power of *Saranagati i.e.*, absolute surrender and seeking refuge, the reader will remember how Draupadi was saved. In that midst of an assembly, Dussasana tried to rip off her clothing and put her to shame. But at that critical moment, she surrendered her soul to Sri Krishna in *Saranagati* and cried.

Shanka Chakra Gadha pane Dwaraka nilayachuta
Govinda Pundarikaksha Rakshamam Sharanagatam
Ha Krishna Dwarakavasa Kasi Yadava Nandana
Imamavasthyam Sampraptam Anatham Kimupekshase

i.e., Oh Achyuta, of Dwaraka, bearing conch discus and mace in Thy hands, Oh, lotus-eyed Govinda, save me. I seek refuge at Thy feet. Oh, Krishna of Dwaraka! Oh, darling of Yadavas! Where art Thou? Art *Thou* slighting me, unprotected and reduced to this strait as I am?

Then was the miracle seen. Cloth after cloth was torn off from her any number of times. A fresh cloth was always covering her person, as each previous cloth was pulled away: and ignominy was averted. Surrender moves Saints and Avatars.

was his sole hope. and prayed for mercy. Then Baba's heart melted and he said, "Stay, cast off your anxiety."

Your sufferings for your past karma have come to an end directly you put your feet on Shirdi soil. The wretched and the miserable rise into joy and happiness as soon as they climb the steps of the mosque.

That fakir (Guru God of Baba) is very kind and will eradicate your disease. He will show his love. He is so kind to all."

Baba made him stay in chavadi and cured him through dreams. In the first dream, he was in his boyish years and suffered the severe pain of a birching which he received for not reciting his lessons properly before his elementary class teacher. In the next dream, some one caused him intense torture and alarm by rolling a stone roller up and down over his chest. With the pain thus suffered his karmic debt was evidently liquidated and his cure was complete. The man went home in perfect health.

In all these cases, Baba conferred worldly benefits, filled his visitors and devotees with gratitude and faith in himself and in God, strengthened their moral principles, and laid a good foundation* for a lofty spiritual superstructure.

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* *e.g.*, belief in the Law of Karma and the truth of reincarnation in accordance with one's karma.

VIII

JOURNEYS AND SOCIAL MATTERS

To persons unable to overcome their disbelief in special Providence, the best remedy is a study of the beneficence of God's agents or Avatars with the aid of credible and living witnesses. It is on such testimony* the following and most of the preceding passages are based.

Baba especially after 1908, was in daily touch with hundreds or thousands. He would go to his *lendi* garden and spend an hour or two looking in each direction—evidently wanting to see where and how he should intervene with his help. His nights at the Masjid were spent in devotion to God and in watching service to see whom he was to help and how. He was watching at all other seasons, times and places also. But the above were specially set apart for undisturbed attention to that work. Nothing was too trival for him to attend to, if it affected the welfare of those who had placed their trust in him.

Journeys,—With Baba's vast knowledge of the past, present and future, with his knowledge men's minds everywhere, he could render invaluable aid to the devotees in

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* That testimony is found in a companion volume entitled "Devotees' Experiences" and in several bigger books. It is not desirable to burden this small introduction with references to authority and discussion of the evidence. A larger book on Sai Baba by this author contains such reference, etc., and is under preparation.

their travels. That is what he did. Where there was risk, danger or needless trouble in the travel, he refused leave to go away from Shirdi or hedged it with conditions. Wise persons like Nana and Bere implicitly obeyed and benefited by his wise guidance. But the unwise cared not for his words and suffered. One day when Bere a Government Official and Das Ganu Maharaj wished to start from Shirdi, Baba gave them leave, but added a rider, that they should hurry up to the Kopergaon station and not halt anywhere. While they were doing so in a tonga, other tongavallas pointed out that there was ample time to catch the train and requested them to wait. They, however, drove on and came safe to the station. The later arriving tongas were no doubt in time to catch the train, but on their way, highwaymen caught them and caused considerable damage to persons and property.

Abdul Rangari visited Baba to get his wife cured of pain in the throat and stomach trouble and as soon as these were cured, left Shirdi with his wife and child in a tonga, despite Baba's order that he should wait, His tonga was seriously damaged when half way up to the station and the poor man was stranded with his family on a lonely road in the middle of the night. Baba by his omniscience knew of his predicament and sent a tonga for him. An European gentleman came with the Nana Saheb Chandorkar's recommendation and Shama's intercession to Baba, and, after a few days stay, left Shirdi despite Baba's refusal of leave. When half way towards the station the horses of his tonga took fright; the tonga was upset; and the poor man sustained severe injuries by his fall, in conse-



Abdul.

श्री साईबाबा संस्थान, शिर्डी.

quence of which he had to stay for a long time in the hospital.

Devotees like Nana found that implicit obedience to Baba's orders even in matters of great official importance was the safest and wisest course. One day Nana had to meet his Collector and other officers at a camp and prayed for leave. Baba declined it. Nana Saheb courageously stayed away at Shirdi. The next day when he went to the camp with Baba's leave, he found that the previous day's meeting had been postponed by the Collector's wire. A pleader having to conduct an important case on a particular date at Pandharpur asked for Baba's leave to start so as to be there on that date. Baba refused the leave and gave it only for attendance on the following date. The lawyer who obeyed Baba found that the case had been postponed for one day during his absence, on the application of the other side.

Tatya Patel who was summoned to appear before a District Munsiff was stopped by Baba from starting. He sent up some excuse, and it was discovered that the court was closed on that day on account of the Munsiff's indisposition. H. S. Dixit was summoned twice or thrice to appear in the High Court as a witness in a Will case but Baba did not permit him to go. His own side was even considering if a warrant should be taken, But on each of these occasions the Will case was not reachad. And on the date it was actually reached, Baba had sent H. S. Dixit to Bombay and he was examined.

Mr. H. V. Sathe had a very important engagement to meet the Collector and his superior officers at a camp and wanted Baba's leave to start from Shirdi. Baba did not grant the leave. H. V. Sathe sent word through his father-in-law to Baba, that absence involved the risk of dismissal from service and other serious consequences. Baba ordered the father-in-law to lock up H. V. Sathe. For two days, he was detained and he was fretting about the consequence. Going to camp on the third day, he discovered that all the original arrangements had been cancelled by the superior officers without intimation to him. Though *he* had no notice, Baba took notice of this and all other facts on his behalf, and saved him from the trouble of a useless journey. When ultimately Mr. Sathe realised this fact, his faith in Baba was further strengthened.

We may wind up this rather lengthy reference to Baba's temporal help with a few instances of marital problems. One Mr. G. D. Vaidya, a devotee of Baba, was at his wit's end to find a match for his daughter Baba appeared to him in a dream and showed him two boys and said that he need not worry, as "Kesava Dixit's son" would be the match for his daughter. Mr. Vaidya's son to whom the dream was fully explained pointed out that one Dixit whose father was Kesav Dixit was in his office and had the features of one of the boys seen in the dream. On making due enquiries and starting the necessary negotiations, the match settled by Baba was soon an accomplished fact.

Another devotee, Mr. G. G. Shiriyan, had come to an

agreement with a friend in 1924, that the latter's son should marry his daughter. But as time passed, the friend's desire to have a large '*Karini*', *i. e.*, bridegroom's price overcame his respect for the oral pact and he resiled from it. G. G. S. was greatly pained and mortified, but had none to help him except Sai. To Sai he appealed; and Sai definitely promised to get the identical boy for his son-in-law in the course of two years. The friend's plans and efforts for obtaining a high bridegroom price broke down and the friend's son raised objections to such efforts on grounds of conscience and policy alike. So the old pact was restored and the marriage was celebrated in two years as promised. G. G. Shiriyan never could doubt Baba's word and he was given further material to spread faith in Sai Baba as the 'Sheltering Rock of Ages' that nothing can shake.

The next and last case is illustrative of the extent to which petted devotees might go. Baba said to his devotees, that he as "the mother*" would never get angry with them, the children, while they as dearly loved and dearly loving children had the privilege of getting angry with him. Mrs. B. Chowhan, a deeply attached devotee if not angry with Baba, came very near to the point of

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* In the daily prayers of the devotees, they address Sai, with gushing love and say repeatedly following B. G. IX 17.

Sai Natha Guru Majhe Ayi Majala tava Dhyavapavi

Sainath guru, mother mine!
Shelter me at Thy feet divine.

Thwameva mata pita thwameva mama devadeva

Thou, God of Gods art father,
And thou alone, my mother.

anger and once challenged his powers. In spite of her best eflorts, her daughter remained a spinster; and one gentleman was hesitating in 1923, to send his final reply to settle the match, for nearly six months. She approached Baba's picture one night and addressed him thus, "Baba, you give experience of your miraculous powers to all. Why not give it to us? My daughter is still a spinster, and I am greatly worried over it. *If you have any power*, then I *must* get a reply by to-morrow." That night she was blessed with a dream. She dreamed that the next morning's post brought the affirmative replyf rom the long hesitating party; and it did. The marriage was soon celebrated.

A. H. Mamuah

10

IV

Dr. Paul Brunton
with Kind regd.

SRI SAI BABA

A. N. Naidu
4/4

I

18-10-1936.
Santa Cruz. 4—P.M.

Rao Bahadur Moreswar V. PRADHAN, B.A., LL.B.,
High Court Pleader & J. P.

Prabhu aged 56, (Residing at) Sai Baug.
Santa Cruz

SAYS :—

Nana Saheb Chandorkar was the cause of all my relations going to Baba and therefore the cause of my going also. It was the first week of May 1910. A group of my brothers and other relations were chatting with Mr. Chandorkar. Then my brother Rama Rao asked :—

"Is there any one nowadays of the type of Akkal kote Maharaj?"

N. C :—Do you want to see one?

R. R :—Yes.

N. C :—In that case, go to Shirdi. In Sai Baba of Shirdi you have one.

R. R :—This is the first time we hear of Shirdi. Where is it and how do we get to it?

N. C : It is in Kopergaon Taluk, Ahmednagar District. You have to go to Kopergaon Station (on Dhond Manmad Line) and take a tonga. Shirdi is 11 miles off the station.

Mr. Chandorkar gave such a vivid and glowing account of Baba's power, personality, kindness and greatness that all his hearers were aglow with the desire to rush at once, or as early as possible, to Shirdi and have darsan (sight) of Baba. These relations and friends of mine, forming a group of about 10 or 14 people started the very next day to Shirdi. They wanted me to be of the party. But I had been out and they left word with my wife and went away. I was that day with my mother who told me of their trip to see Baba; but I, in my ignorance, said to her "Who can say, if he is really a genuine saint?"

When the party returned from Shirdi, I took a loan from my brother of two things that they had brought, a copy of Baba's picture and chapter 31 of Bhakta Lilamrita of *Das* Ganu. describing Baba's life and the miracles he wrought, promising to return them the same day. I took them home. showed them to my wife, and began to read aloud that Chapter 31 to her. The effect was deep and electric. All the doubt that I had expressed to my mother vanished. I was converted. From that moment I got a firm belief that Baba was a true and great saint if ever there was one. My wife's faith was even greater. I told her that the book and the picture had to be returned that day. But she could not think of parting with Baba and that on a Thursday. So at her

insistence, I kept them on, even the next day and the third. Then as they were called for by my brother, I had to return them on the fourth day.

Now we were burning with a desire to go to Baba. But circumstances seemed to be adverse to any such adventure. My sister-in-law, who had been recently widowed, appeared to be in advanced pregnancy and had no son. We all fervently hoped she would have a son; and I, as the only male member in the house, could not leave the town as the delivery might take place any day.

But my wife and sister were very anxious that I should not lose the chance of seeing Baba early. So I started about a fortnight after the first party returned from Shirdi by the end of May 1910. By the kindness of Mr. Chandorkar, his two sons Babu and Bapu became my companions. At starting I had provdied myself with three or four gold sovereigns (guineas, as they were called) and some notes. I got a note changed with the object that I might be able to give silver rupees when Baba should ask for dakshina. I had 20 Rupees in cash and the rest in notes. Thus provided, I went to Shirdi. After a good reception at Kopergaon from the Mamlatdar and a good bath at the Godaveri, we reached Shirdi. There at that very moment of our arrival, Baba was standing at the Lendi, as though he was waiting for us. So we at once got down and bowed to him. We put up at the Sathewada and there had the company of Rao Bahadur Sathe, Mr. Noolkar, 1st Class Sub Judge, &c,, Soon after, I took all the flowers, garlands, fruits &c., I had brought to the Masjid to garland Baba and gave him all the presents. When I looked quietly into his face and eyes, I felt confirmed in my impression that Baba is a really great saint and said within myself "Thank

God, I am come". This deep impression was quite opportune. Baba at once proceeded to put my faith to the test.

Baba asked me for a Dakshina. Instead of giving him silver as I had intended when I changed the notes at Kalyan, I gave him gold. I put a sovereign in his hand. Baba received it, turned it in his palms now with St. George's figure upwards, again with the written side upwards. He did so thrice and asked Noolkar each time "What is this?" Noolkar replied "Baba, This is a guinea". Baba then asked him "What is it worth?" and he replied "It is worth fifteen rupees". Then Baba returned the coin to me saying "I do not want this. Keep it and give me fifteen rupees." I put the coin into my purse. But Noolkar was anxious that I should not mix up the coin touched and returned by Baba, with other coins and asked me to keep it apart as a sacred possession. Of course I did so." I then gave Baba fifteen silver rupees. Then Baba took the fifteen, counted them over and over and professed to find only ten rupees in what I gave and said "Here is only 10 Rs. Give me 5 more." This was really testing my faith in him. A lawyer accustomed to combat and criticise would naturally defend himself against the aspersion that he gave only ten when asserting that he paid a larger sum. But my faith had come up to the mark. I meekly accepted Baba's declaration and without any inclination to dispute Baba's words gladly gave him the other 5 Rupees in my pocket. Baba was obviously aware that the 20 Rupees in my pocket was intended for him and expressly got to be paid to him; and under colour of wrong calculation was carrying out my intention to place that sum at his feet. After I gave him the 20 Rupees on that occasion he did not

ask for more, though I had a lot more in notes with me. Then I left him.

When I went to him next, he was giving udhi to a number of devotees crowding round him. He caught sight of me as I stood at a distance, beckoned to me to draw near, addressed me as Bhavu (as he did ever afterwards) and said "It will be alright in 2 or 4 days". Then he gave me udhi and I left the mosque. Persons who were present at such deep interest of Baba in me and his regard for me, like Mr. Noolkar and Mrs. Jog, came to me. Noolkar embraced me. Mrs. Jog wanted to know from me what sacred reading I went on with (to find out how I should deserve the विलक्षण marked treatment accorded to me by Baba). Baba, every one knew, did not care for mere wealth, gold, or family position. I humbly admitted to Mrs. Jog that I could boast of little sacred study, Pothi &c.,

I thought I would return by the next day. But when leave was asked. Baba declined it in his characteristic fashion by saying. "Go tomorrow". He did so on succeeding days and kept me there for eight days.

I was arranging for a special dinner or Biksha to Baba the next day and requested him to inform me who were to be invited and what the menu was to be. Of course, Puranpoli was to be the crown of the dinner; and for guests, he said I was to invite Babu (the nephew of Dada Kelkar), who was Baba's favourite, and Baba. He said 'I also will come' "मीहि ये ईन्" before I invited him,

The next day, the dinner was prepared as directed and plates were served. Babu was invited and sat at one plate. Another was served and set apart for Baba.

A crow came and lifted a puran poli off the plate and carried it away. All hailed it with delight, as evidence that Baba was coming in that form to take away his own.

That afternoon, Baba touched his limbs on one side and said, 'On this side of my body, there is excruciating pain". But he added "It will be alright in 2 or 4 days." Baba really appeared healthy, in spite of those words, and what he meant to convey by his words escaped our powers of understanding at that time.

On a Thursday, during that period, Baba was preparing food in a "Handi" (i. e., pot) to feed large numbers. He drove away every one from the Masjid and was alone with his handi. At that time, to the great surprise and alarm of the spectators, myself and the two sons of Chandorkar went in. Baba far from being angry, received us very well, as though he had intended the expulstion of others for the very purpose of granting us a wholly private interview. Then after a little while Baba appeared to be singing out something. At least I thought it to be so. But I found that when he repeated the words for the third time, they were "कायरे आपला काय ह्मणावें श्रीराम जयराम जय जय राम". At once, on hearing these words I was overcome with emotion and I placed my head on Baba's feet and tears flowed freely. These words were the guru mantra that I had received from my family guru Haribua (whose grandfather Atmaram Bua who has a temple built for his worship in Thakurdwar Bombay, was the guru of my great grand father). And Baba was so kindly reviving my interest in and regard for that guru mantra in this fashion for my benefit. Baba was attending to my spiritual benefit without any question from me and his loving interest

in me was too deep for me to return and too great to acknowledge except through tears of gratitude and joy. At the "handi", I noticed with wonder that when the contents of the cauldron were boiling, Baba used his own bare palm and not a spoon nor a ladle to stir the contents thoroughly to secure even and uniform consistency in the food or *Sira*. His hand was not scalded or swollen by such use. Thence suddenly at noon, he took us three to the *lendi* a very unusual hour for him to visit the lendi; and there he dug into the earth small hollows, gave me some corn and made me sow that corn in those hollows. Then after turning up some earth to cover the seeds, he made me water the patches sown; and then we returned to the mosque. It is that lendi garden which 7 or 8 years later (i e. immediately after he passed away) I have purchased.

After detaining us for a week, Baba gave us permission to go away. At that time Babu Chandorkar placed a plate under Baba's feet and pouring water on them collected the water to be used at home. That was a departure in the traditions of Shirdi. Till then only udhi was allowed to be taken away; and Pada-Tirtha was immediately used up at the Arathi or at any rate at Shirdi. I took my cue from Babu and took Baba's Padatirtha home for the use of my mother and others.

On our way, at Manmad we had only 3rd class tickets; and under the Railway rules then obtaining we could only board a later train but not the Punjab Mail. But by a happy thought we rushed in and contrary to the rules, got into that mail and reached home 4 or 5 hours earlier than if we had conformed to the rules. These 4 or 5 hours I discovered were specially valuable

and it was obviously Baba's grace that enabled us to be so early.

As soon as I reached home, I learnt that my mother had an attack of Paralysis. She was having the attack of hemiplegia in our house at Bombay, when Baba was saying "My side is giving me excruciating pain". Doctors had been brought in. My sister and other relations were discussing if I should be informed at Shirdi about the event. Mr. Chandorkar who was then present, remarked, it seems, that it was needless and that everything would be safe for my mother so long as I stayed with Baba and that Baba would himself send me back, if and when there was need. On the night when we were starting from Shirdi the attendant doctor noting the high temperature, the constricted state of the bowels and her restlessness declared that her condition was critical, and that if however the bowels should move in the course of the night the situation would be more hopeful. It was that very night about 4-30 or 5 A.M. I reached my mother's place. At once I gave her Baba's udhi and tirtha. She then got somnolent and sometime later, her bowels moved and consequently her temperature fell. The doctor came and found that there was improvement and that things had taken a favourable turn. Quite obviously our timely dismissal from Shirdi, with Baba's tirtha and udhi, our timely catching the Punjab Mail and arrival on the critical night were all seen or foreseen and willed by Baba and the favourable turn was what he intended and foretold when he said to me at Shirdi 'In 2 or 4 days it will be alright." Truly,

Sai moves in a mysterious way.
His wonders to perform.

My mother recovered full health soon and lived four years thereafter. Two years before her death, she went to Shirdi and had Baba's darsan and blessing.

Without exception all members of my family got to Baba and got his blessing. I shall mention how my wife and sister got to Baba and how my wife got a special blessing from Baba.

One night, Das Ganu Maharaj, performed his splendid Kirtan (always in praise of Baba, whatever the main and express theme of his Kirtan may be) at my mother's place. Then I invited him and Mr. Chandorkar and all the friends then present to go over to Santa Cruz for rest. They all came with the entire musical accompaniments and set. It was suggested that they should proceed with a fresh Kirtan here at my house. That went on from 2 A.M to 5 A.M. the most impressionable hours of the night. My wife listening to the Kirtan got a burning desire to visit Shirdi. Baba came to her in a dream she told me; and this she considered as a sufficient indication that she should be taken to Shirdi. 'But what of my मेहूणी or sister-in-law, who still seemed to be in advanced pregnancy'. I thought over it. My wife and sister-in-law were prepared to take the risk of labour pains en-route. I engaged a special second class railway car, paying the price of 12 tickets and arranged that the same car should be taken on via Manmad to Kopergaon and taken off to a lay-by there. We all started and throughout the journey there was not the least trouble. When we were nearing Kopergaon, my wife said that Mr. Chandorkar would perhaps be at the station to receive us. I replied that it was impossible, though I had intimated our starting to him. Yet strangely that very thing happened.

Mr. Chandorkar had gone to Shirdi on account of his ill health. He was getting fever every alternate day and the day of our arrival was the day on which he would get fever in the usual course. Yet he got my letter and asked Baba for permission to receive us at Kopergaon. Baba gave it readily. When H. S. Dixit objected and went to Baba mentioning the alternate day's fever as a reason why he should go to Kopergaon instead of Chandorkar, Baba gruffly sent him back and said that Chandorkar and Chandorkar alone should go. Mr. C. came, and made grand and excellent arrangements for our reception and for the comfort of the ladies and all our holy baths at Godaveri; and we all reached Shirdi safe. Mr. C. was not a whit the worse for his journey and was free from fever.

His fever then left him for good.

On the day, we reached Shirdi, Baba said to Madhava Rao Deshpande, pointing to my wife. "This is the mother of my Babu".*

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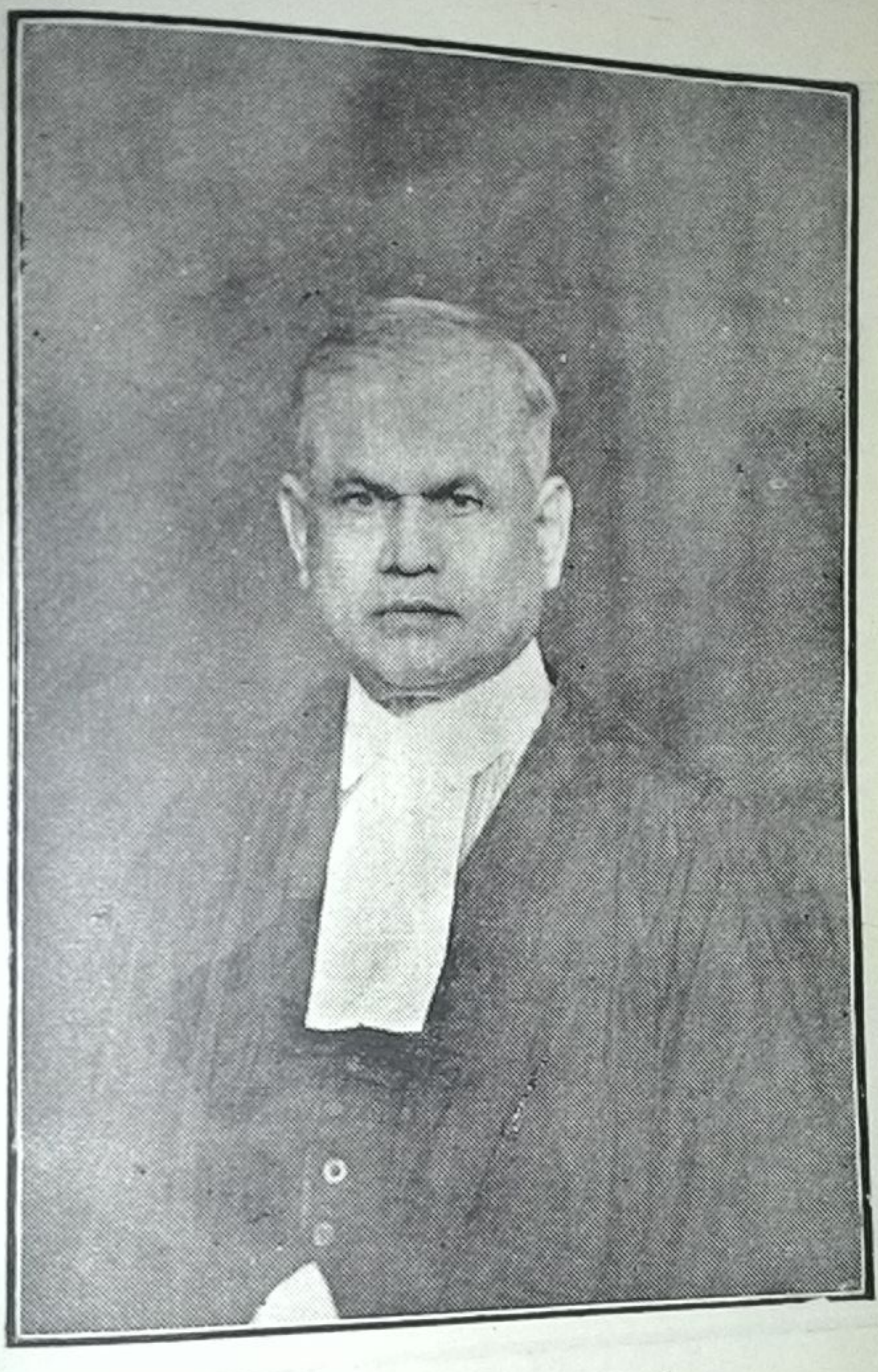
* *Re. Babu.*—(1) See R. Bahadur Sathe's Statement showing how fond Baba was of Babu and how sad he was at his death.

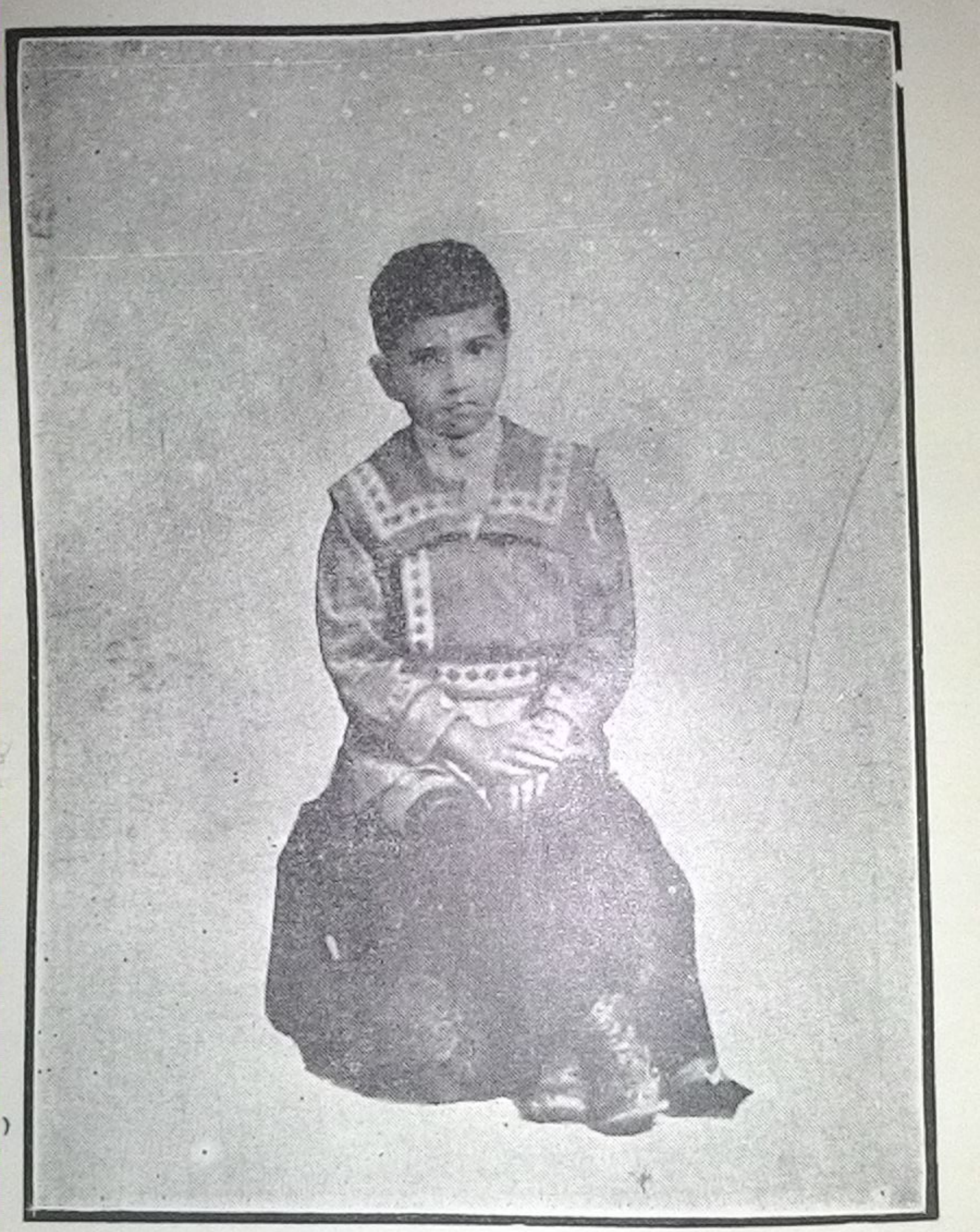
S. L. M. III (4) 345, Baba describes before G S. K. the past and later lives of "Babu", thus:—

At Shirdi, there was an old man of great piety for over 12 years. His wife and grown up sons were at Jalna and they repeatedly entreated him to go back. Atlast he went on horse back and I (Baba) accompanied him in a cart.

After a time, this old man married a young girl the daughter of his own brother and had by her a little boy. The old man died when that boy was 6 years old. The boy was later poisoned by Biradars and was born as *Babu*, and again Babu after his death is *now born again in Bombay.*



Rao Bahadur. M. W. Pradhan



Babu Pradhan

Mr. Chandorkar thought it must refer obviously to my sister-in-law who was believed to be pregnant and asked Baba, pointing to my sister-in-law. "This is the lady, is it not?" Baba replied..." No. It isthis" and he again pointed to my wife.

Exactly twelve months from that date my wife was delivered of a male child and we have named that son "**Babu**" (the name used by Baba). At the ' Christening" (**नामकरण**), Das Ganu, Mr. Chandorkar and all were present, and it was a grand and joyous occasion reminding us of Baba's kindness and greatness.

At my first, visit there was severe storm and rain for quarter of an hour when I was with Baba at the masjid. I then thought that if the rains beat like that, streams would swell, and getting back to my place at Bombay would be difficult and Baba would not grant me early leave to go away. Baba then looked at the sky and said.

अरे अल्ला अबीबरसात पुरा कर. मेरे बालबच्चे घरे जानेवाले है. उनकू सुखसे जानेदे.

"Oh God! Enough, stop the rain. My children have to go back home. Let them go back without difficulty." As he spoke, the rains became gentler and feebler. I felt that Baba knew my innermost thoughts. Then he gave me leave to go and I caught the Punjab Mail and took udhi and tirtha to my mother as stated above. III (IV) 359. The night after my return my sister-in-law dreamt that a fakir robed in a Kupni and wearing a towel on his head was in our house. This I felt was proving what Baba said "**I will accompany you home**". Baba is in our house.

II

Santa Cruz.
19-10-1936.

Baba's kindness to my family was, I repeat, very great. When my wife begot "Babu", she resolved to make Baba, her father-in-law's household God. It is our custom for a lady that begets a child, when she goes to her husband's house, to fill up one end of her cloth with some wheat, coconut and fruits, tie them into a knot and unburden herself of these before her father-in-law or his Gods i. e. domestic Images. My wife tied up these articles and carried these, as also Babu when he was four months old, to Sai Baba at Shirdi. Baba readily received the articles on a plate and took up Babu in his arms. He then endearingly addressed Babu thus "बाबू कोटें गेला होतास् मला कंटालास् होतास् काय्" i. e. "Babu, where had you been? Were you vexed with, or aweary of me?". To mark the joyous arrival of Babu at Shirdi, Baba pulled out two rupees from his own pocket, got *burfi* (sweets) for that amount and distributed it exactly, as they do, on the occasion of a son's birth. This was in 1912.

On this occasion, Baba pointed to the village wall stone arch and said "Whoever rebuilds this, will get blessings. My wife asked him for permission to rebuild it; and he gave it. Then I paid Rs. 600 to N. Chandorkar to rebuild it.

On this occasion, Baba said "Babu's bungalow is beautiful and ready". I guessed that Baba meant that I should buy the Bungalow I now live in. So within two

months, I got a lease of it and occupied it; and in six months thereafter I bought it. Baba's words thus were fulfilled by my purchase and Babu had a beautiful bungalow in 1913.

Babu was again taken to Baba for his first birthday and Baba again commemorated it, by buying 2 Rs. worth of sweets (Burfi) and distributing it to all. On this occasion, Baba asked very significantly about Babu "Has he no brother and no sisters?" My wife, with some degree of bashfulness answered "You gave us this Babu only". In fact, we had a daughter at that time. Baba's words were construed as a blessing that we would get one more son and one more daughter. That is exactly what happened.

To commemorate Babu's first birthday at Shirdi, a grand dinner was prepared at Madhav Rao Deshpande's residence and all were invited. That was a Thursday. Bala Saheb Bhate excused himself from attending it on the ground that on a Thursday his rule was to avoid dining out. But when he went to Baba that day, Sai Baba asked him:-

S. B:—Have you dined at Bhao's (i. e. Pradhan's,) place?

B. B:—Baba, today is Thursday.

S. B:—What if?

B. B:—I do not dine out on Thursdays. That is my rule.

S. B:—To please whom do you observe this rule?

B. B:—To please you.

S. B:—Then I tell you to go and dine at Bhao's.

Though it was 4 p. m., Balasaheb Bhate came up to me, told me what Baba had said and dined with us

Next my wife had a dream here at Santa Cruz of Baba's appearing before her and receiving **Pada Pooja** from her. Mr. N. G. Chandorkar interpreted it to mean that Baba wanted her to start regular **Pada Pooja** of Baba at home and so bade her go to Shirdi with two silver Padukas. She did so. When she went up to Baba, the latter who was sitting with legs folded stretched out his legs of his own accord and said "Place the Padukas on these and do Pooja". Then my wife placed each of her Padukas on each foot of Baba and worshipped them. Baba then said to Nana Saheb "**नाना हिने माझे पाय पहा कापून नेले**" i. e. "See, Mother has cut off and carried away my feet" and himself picked up the two Padukas and handed them over to my wife. Ever since that date, she is daily worshipping these Padukas.

Ever since my first visit, I was having my dinner at the Mosque with Baba. Baba with his own hand stuffed all food into our plates and cups in such large quantity. Instead of throwing away such valuable prasad I asked my niece to come up and take away about 3/4th of what was served to me, and that sufficed to feed my family. Yet what I ate warded off all hunger or appetite for a night meal. Baba almost invariably gave dessert (i. e. fruits & c.) at the end of the meal. But when I went up with Babu, Baba noticed that Babu did not care for cooked food and served mangoes and fruits first, so that Babu might have a full meal. When other children were born, I would take the three children with me including Babu, to the Mosque to dine with Baba.

My last visit to Baba was in May 1918. I had taken with me 3800 Rs. and overstayed my intended period, on account of Baba's insistence. Baba's unuttered but

evident practice with those whom he loved was to deplete their resources. "**यस्यानुग्रहमिच्छामि तस्य वित्तं हराम्यहम**" "I take away the wealth of those I love". So when I returned from Shirdi after the month's stay, my money was reduced to minus 1200 Rs. In fact, I had borrowed that sum from an acquaintance, a veterinary Doctor of Poona and returned it to him after coming home.

An incident relating to Babu's illness as an infant ought chronologically to be placed before this. When Babu was 3 or 4 years old, he had serious illness. We had Madhava Bhat a learned and pious (and on the whole well-to-do) Telugu priest at home, who was greatly attached to the family and carried on Mantra Japa and Pooja in our house for our benefit. He noticed Babu's serious illness with concern. He had first no sympathy with our worship of Baba. He fancied that Babu's illness was due to our worshipping a Moslem Saint Viz. Sai Baba but he dared not give utterance to his thought.

One night he had a dream. He saw a figure (which from the photo we had, he recognised to be Sai Baba) sitting on the top of the staircase, holding a baton (Sota) in one hand. That figure (Baba) told him "**What do you mean? I am the Lord of this house**". The priest kept this dream to himself for a time. (He had asked us to go and make a vow to Datta for the child's cure; but he had been told that Baba was Datta himself).

Later Babu's condition was much worse than before. The priest noted it with concern. He ran up at once to Baba's photo and loudly prayed thus "If the child should improve sufficiently by 4 p. m. so as to be brought downstairs, then I will agree that you are

Datta". Within a short time of this prayer, the child's temperature was getting lower and by 4 p.m. he wanted to be carried down for amusement and his mother took him downstairs. Madhav Bhat was converted and felt that Sai Baba was really Datta And he vowed he would pay him a dakshina of 120 Rs. and paid it.

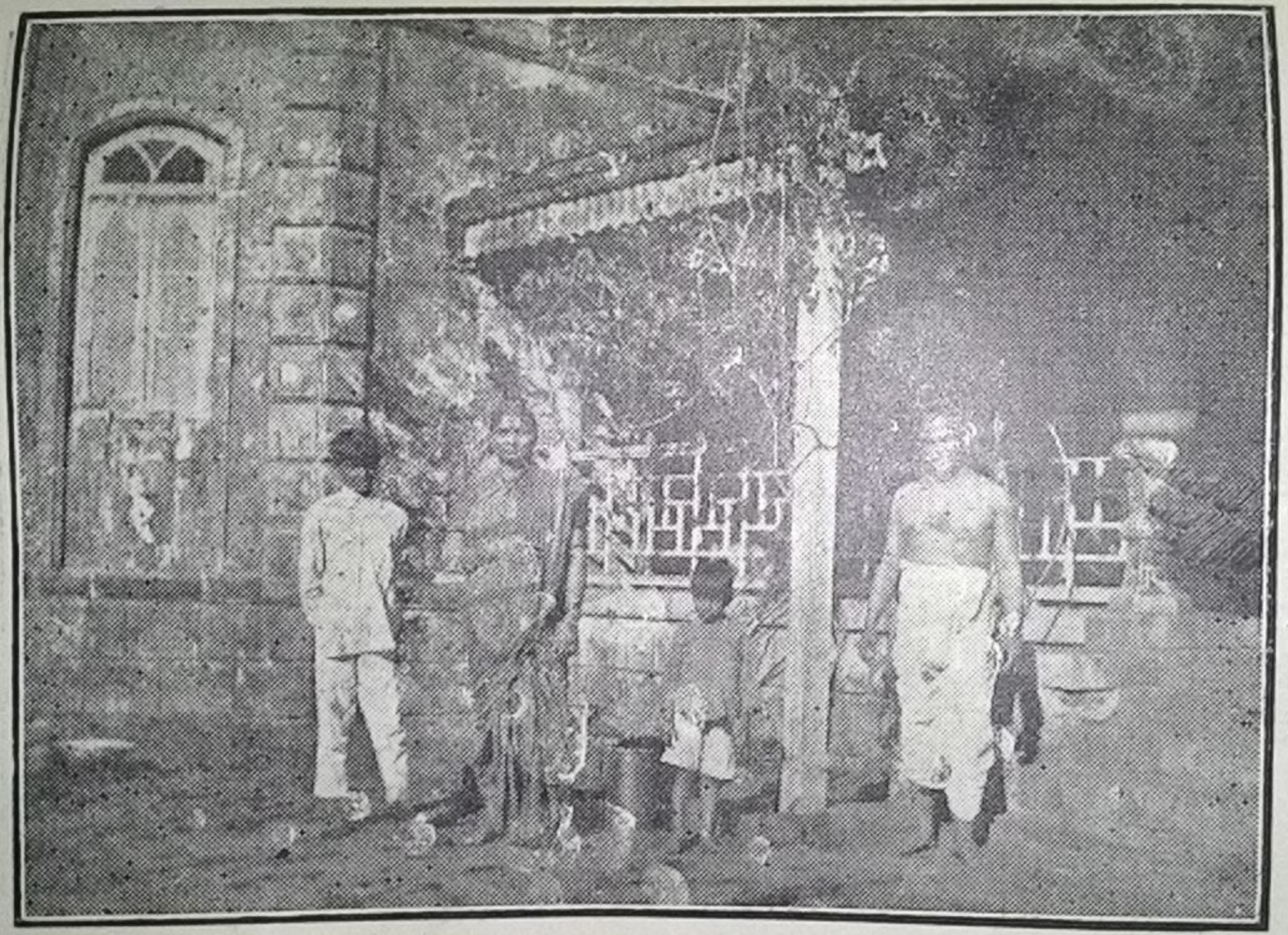
The Pandit wanted to get a son and vowed he would pay 108 Rs. if he got one. He got one and then paid Rs. 108 to Baba. But at that very time, the Pandit vowed he would pay 1008 Rs. if my (i. e. Pradhan's) ambition should be achieved. When Mr. Deshpande referred to the gift of Rs. 108 as large, Baba belittled it and said "He is giving me much more" evidently referring to the vow of Rs. 1008.

Baba gave some words of advice to my wife, (1) e. g. "If anyone talks ten words at us, let us reply with one word...if we reply at all". (2) "कोणी कोणाची वरो वरी करूं नये" i. e. Do not quarrel or vie with any one not to be outdone. Early during the 32 days of my last stay with Baba, in 1918, all of us escorted him, with umbrella and all paraphernalia to the lendi, we all left him there and retreated. But me alone he recalled to himself and put his palm over my head and said "Bhav, will you do what I ask you to do?" I said 'yes'. Then he said "Pay me 100 Rs. Bring it in a bag and deliver it to me at the Masjid quietly". In this way he made me give him all the sums I brought and the extra sums I borrowed.

Then he made some signs which were not clear. They seemed to mean "Even if the heavens tumble down over you, do not fear. I am with you". Baba at my first visit said that for the previous six years, had been



Rao Bahadur. H. V. Sathe



Mrs. & Mr. M. W. Pradhan (at Sai Pradhan Baug)

smoking the chilm that I had given him. I could not make out his meaning.

Sri Buty's second-marriage took place at Shirdi in 1916 and I was present.

When we left Shirdi Baba said, "तु इ्या बरं. वर मी ये ईन—" i.e. that he would accompany us. Physically and with a visible body he did not accompany us. But our journey was pleasant and free from danger. That indicated that he accompanied us with his invisible body and warded off all danger and trouble.

After Baba blessed me and passed away, I had the following benefits. I was appointed 2nd Class Magistrate of South Salsette for 1920-1926 and am a J. P. since 1926. I was elected for Thana as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council and sat during 1921-1923. I was made a Rao Bahadur in 1927.

S. L. M. I (8) 65. When M. W. Pradhan fainted in the High Court thinking of Baba, Baba at Shirdi asked H. S. D. "Is Pradhan come?" H. S. D. said "No. Shall I send for him?". Baba said Alright.

S. L. M. III (4) 357-360. Account of M. W. P's trips and experiences.

III

Mrs. M.W Pradhan's account of experiences is found in 321. (1) All my children took ill of measles. The doctor despaired of young Babu. All were hopeless. I prayed to Sri Sai Baba. He appeared and said "Why weep? The child is alright". Give him at 6 or 6-30 a. m. a good feed". The child began to play in the morning. The doctor came and saw it with surprise and said 'Give him no food'. But the child ate everything and digested it.

323. (2) One night at 11 p. m, Baba appeared to me as I slept and said 'Are you sleeping? Get up. Your boy will have convulsions'. I got up. I looked at the boy. He had no fever or convulsions. But 'Forewarned is forearmed!' So, I got ready hot-water, fire, eau de cologne etc. About 2 a. m. the boy woke up and had convulsions—All our children have convulsions occasionally. I got everything ready. In half an hour, the fit passed off. Baba saved us from sorrow and danger by his forewarning. He did so often.

324. (3) Baba appeared in my dream and told me to place turmeric and saffron on his foot. I worshipped them in the dream. I told N. G. C. of the dream and he said, take silver padukas to Shirdi, place them before Baba and get them for worship. So I did. Baba himself stretched out both legs and asked me to place each Paduka on each foot and worship. I did so. He handed them over to me, telling N. G. C. "**नाना हिने माझे पाय पहा कापून नले**".

325. I feared once Baba would shout and get angry at the Masjid. That day Baba did no such thing and said "See, I didnot shout against anyone, Is it not so?" Once,

at pooja at the Mosque, Baba knew of my baby crying in our wada, and in the middle of the pooja sent me away saying "Go home". I went and pacified the child and returned. "**Now**", said Baba "do your pooja".

Once the doctor said that a typhoid convalescent baby should not be taken to Shirdi. But we did take him. He was ill in the train. I feared that people would laugh at me for my madness. The child had to lie down and could not even sit up. As soon as we went to Baba, the child stood up before Baba; and Baba said, 'People will not laugh now'. He knew of course our thoughts in the train.

328. On 18-10-1918, i-e, the night after Baba's departure, I saw his body in a dying condition - in my dream and said 'Baba is dying'. Baba replied 'People do not talk of saints as dying, but as taking **Samadhi'.** His body was still. People were mourning. Such was the dream. I felt sad. I woke up at 12-30 midnight. In the morning we got from Anna Chinchinikar, a card that Baba passed away at 3 P.M. on Dusserah 18-10-1918.

329. On that i-e, 19th night I dreamed that Baba came and gave me 3 rupees, and that I felt distressed, as dream receipts of rupees are not auspicious. Baba said 'Receive, Receive it and give me all the money you have stored up in your box'. I woke up and sent up all that money for the ceremonies.

The same night, Baba appeared in my sister-in-law's dream and asked her to send up a yellow **'Pitambar'** to be placed on the Samadhi. That also was done.

S L M (III (4) 353: - I was in an advanced stage of pregnancy at Santacruz. A mid-wife and nurse attended on me. Four days of difficult labour made the nurse

despair of my case and she went and told my sister that Mr. Pradhan must send for a doctor at once. But my sister began at once to pray before Baba's portrait with the nurse by her side. As she prayed, the child was delivered at once without anyone's help. I wondered and the nurse wondered, how great were Baba's power and mercy.

III (5) 381-384. Mrs. Pradhan's account of experiences about the change in Telungi Sastri.

We had a Telungi Sastri, Madhav Bhatji of advanced age, a Karmata, worshipping Sankara night and day with 'Rudrabisheka' etc.' In 1912 or so, our child Babu was 1 year old and got ill. Bhatji thought it might be due to worshipping a Mussalman at home and thus rousing the ire of Shiva. One night Babu was very ill and we wanted to rouse up the Bhatji. But just then he himself came up and sat before Baba's picture and he prayed "If the dream or vision I got be true, let the child's temperature go down in 5 minutes and let him play from tomorrow and let the doctor declare that he is alright; Then I will agree that you are a Siddha, I will bow down and in 15 days go to Shirdi and pay 108 Rs. **Dakshina**." His dream, he said, was this "A Moslem clad as in Baba's picture, with **Sota** (ie a small club) in hand, came near my cot and roused me and then went up the steps of the storey saying 'What do you know?' This house is mine. This child I have given. You think you make the child improve. The boy is mine and I will show it to you." He went up. I woke up, and so at once came up and prayed. If he cures Babu at once, I will take Baba for a Siddha Purusha and worship him. In one hour, Babu's fever stopped and

he became active. His coughing etc., also ceased. So the Brahmin fell prostrate before Baba and later went to Shirdi. Then Baba looking at him said, This man calls me dog, cat and Moslem. At once Bhatji recognised his **Antarsakshitwa** and bowed at his feet. Baba said to Shama, How often does this Bhat worship me everyday! Then Bhat prayed (1) that he should be blessed with a son and that he would pay 108 Rs; (2) that if his master should attain his ambition he would pay ten times more. When he went in the afternoon Baba asked him **dakshina**. Shama said he had paid it in the morning. Baba said "He gave me very little in the morning. He is to give ample dakshina." Bhatji said, Baba knew his inmost thoughts. In one year, Bhat got a son and he paid 108 Rs. to Baba. Then he put up Baba's picture for worship in a Datta temple, which his brother constructed in his own village.

IV

Rao Bahadur HARI VINAYAK SATHE,
Retired Deputy Collector, Deccani,
Brahmin, Aged 81 (born 1855)
Residing at 108, Shukrawar Peth,
Poona.

I had a daughter by my first wife. I then became a widower before my fortyfourth year.

Many friends and acquaintances were pressing me to get married, e-g. Mr. Barve Mamletdar of Kopergaon. I was declining to take the extraordinary step of marrying at about fifty, though I was no doubt anxious to have a son to continue my line. But what guarantee or probability was there of one getting a son so late in life? So I told my importunate friends that I would wed if and only if a great Saint should so advise me.

In or about April 1904, I went with Mr. Barve to see Sai Baba at the Mosque. Then after a short time, I took leave of Baba and had got down the steps of the Mosque. Then Mr. Barve told Baba, "Saheb (that is how Baba called me or referred to me always) has no son" Then Baba replied :—"**षादी करेंगा तो अल्ला बच्छा देंगा**" "**If he marries, then God will give him a son**". I heard these words myself and Barve and others began to press me again to marry. But the question of the choice of a bride would take time.

I went back to Ahmednagar which was then my headquarters. About the end of that year, I learnt that

an able astrologer had arrived at Poona. I consulted that man and found that his reading of the facts about my past and my daughter's past were really correct. He said that my horoscope showed that I was to have male progeny after my fiftieth year. That further strengthened my idea of marrying.

In a few months, I was transferred to Ahmedabed. When I was there, Dada Kelkar (i. e. Ganesh Damodar Kelkar) wrote to me that he had a daughter of marriageble age and wanted to know if a bridegroom could be found there. As none could be found there, perhaps the writer of the letter might have sent it as a feeler to sound my views and see if I would offer myself as the bridegroom. I thought that the letter might by prompted by Sai Baba's unseen influence and I wrote to D. K. that no bridegroom could be found or expected at that distant place and that if he meant the offer to be for myself, he should consider my age, my prospects &c. i. e. all the pros and cons and then make the proposal. He wrote that he had considered the pros and cons and would be glad to have me for his son-in-law. Then I wrote to him that in that case, he should take the girl with him from his village and go to Shirdi and request Baba to say if he approved of the match-as unless Baba approved of the choice, I would not marry her. D. K. was then hostile to Baba in his views and suggested other alternatives viz: consulting a Brahmin Saint at Wye (who was his brother-in-law); he was afraid that Baba might not approve of the proposal of my marriage with his daughter and it would have to be dropped. But I insisted that he should go and find if Baba approved. So, after all D. K. had to go to Shirdi with his girl and

await with Madhav Rao's aid, Baba's orders. When D.K. went to Baba, Baba at once told him "**Send the girl to Ahmebabad**" i.e. to me. Baba's approval was communicated to me and then I married D. K's daughter in 1905 i.e. in my fiftieth year. I have sons and some daughters by that marriage.

Sathe Wada

Near Baba's favourite margosa tree, there were the remants of the old village wall. Baba told me "**Pull down the village wall and build.**" I took this to be an order that I should rebuild the village wall. Then I said to myself, I am not a prince or ruler to put up a huge village wall or restore it, and I kept quiet. Finally I found that Baba's suggestion was far more modest and was only for building residential quarters there and for including the village wall, in the construction. So I bought the land there and using the remnants of the village wall built up a Wada enclosing or surrounding the Margosa tree. Baba told me that the **Tomb** close to that tree over which now a part of the building has been erected (leaving only a small niche for worshipping it) was that of his **Guru.** He gave me his Guru's name. It ended with "**Shah**" or "Sa". I have forgotten the rest of the name. It might be "Venkusa".

I went and resided at Shirdi for sometime.

Baba's Arati and Pooja on ordinary days was started but for some time there was no celebration of **Guru Purnima** by special worship of Baba on that day. Baba himself sent for my father-in-law and said "Do you not know that this is Guru Poornima. **Bring your worship** materials and do your **Guru Puja.** Then we had Guru Pooja on that day and this practice of celebrating Guru

Poornima by all the devotees worshipping Baba then begun, has continued upto-date.

Baba never called me "Hariba" &c. He always called me and referred to me as "Saheb". The account in the Santkathamrit that in the presence of myself and some others Baba went into a long disquisition on the nature of God and Sadhana Chatushtaya, defining or describing Viveka-Vyragya, Samadishatka and mumukshutwa, Brahma Satchidanand etc. is not correct. Baba never talked of such subjects in my presence. I do not know if he addressed others on those matters.

The account given in Bhaktililamrit chapter 31, verses 219-236 regarding my marriage etc. are very inaccurate. These were not written after consulting me and they were not shown to me even after being written. The correct account is what I have given above.

Baba was indeed the cause of my marriage and of the great change in me since 1905 and he is the controller of my fortunes and destiny ever since. I place my entire trust in him and seek his guidance and protection in all matters, temporal, religious, official and domestic. When I built a wada at Shirdi and lived or made my father-in-law live there with my family i. e. between 1906-1916 we incurred the jealousy, resentment and hostility of various people amongst whom we had to live. We could not have got on as we did, despite all that, without Baba's perpetual and vigilant care for us.

His active interference helped me miraculously in numerous instances. I will give a few examples.

About 1909 or **1910** I was on a committee along with the Revenue Commissioner Mr. Curtis and the Collector; and we were to meet at Manmad on a parti-

cular date and move from there to other camps. On the previous day I was at Shirdi, and I wanted to take formal permission of Sai Baba to leave Shirdi, expecting that it would be granted as a matter of course. My father-in-law went and asked Baba for leave. Baba refused leave and my father-in-law came and told me of the refusal; but I told him that I could not trifle with such important official engagements except at the risk of being turned out of Government Service. He again went to Baba to make further representations and intercede on my behalf. But Baba did not grant leave. He on the other hand told my father-in-law to prevent my starting by actually **confining me in my room.**

Even on the days following the particular date, I was not allowed to go. After three days, I was made to start for Manmad. When I reached that station, I found that the other members of the Committee had not gone to Manmad on the appointed date, that the original programme had been altered and that the committee's meeting had been postponed. I had ordered, on the faith of the old programme my tent and articles to be sent from Manmad to the other fixed camps. By a strange inadvertence on the part of the Railway authorities, my articles had not been sent away from Manmad. If they bad been sent, great inconvenience would have been caused to me to hunt them up and retransport them. So by my detention at Shirdi I lost absolutely nothing except my peace of mind, and I was saved a lot of unnecessary trouble, and enabled to spend more time with my family and with Sai Baba. Of course Sai Baba knew all things and arranged all things. But in my ignorance, I felt my position at Shirdi to be very delicate

and risky. Such instances **strengthen one's faith** in and reliance on Baba.

In my official career, I was getting dissatisfied at not getting the **promotion** I deserved. My disgust I revealed to Baba and told him that I would even resign service on that account. But Baba forbad my resignation of service and said that I would **get promotion.** Sometime later, I was promoted over the head of some seniors in service and posted to Kolhapur as Ag. Superintendant of Land Records. I got a 100 Rs. increase in pay - and eventually a higher pension than those seniors.

About pension also, there waa some trouble. The pension department at first, treated my last permanent place as the Deputy Collectorship and ignored my *subprotem* higher post. So they cut off 50 Rs. from the pension which I expected as due to me. I appealed in due course and I went to Sai Baba and told him that I would forego the whole pension rather then accept it with the curtailment of 50 Rs. He said that I would **get the 50 Rs.** also, that **Allah would help me.** So I put my case in appeal before the Revenue Commissioner Mr. Curtis and with his note, I got the proper pension without any curtailment.

Sai Baba controls minds and moulds events.

Re Megha.

Megha was a very simple yet very devout brahmin whom I found living at Viramgaon, when I was Deputy Collector there. He would simply repeat **नमः शिवाय** always. But he did not know Gayatri, much less the whole *sandhya* mantra. I got interested in his welfare, and got him taught *Sandhya* and Gayatri. I sent him to Broach to worship Siva there, and paid him 8 Rs.for his

fare and expenses. He would worship Siva standing on one leg only all the time. Then I told him that Shirdi Sai Baba was really the embodied form of God Siva and made him start for Shirdi. At the Broach Railway Station he learnt that Sai Baba was a moslem and his extremely orthodox and simple mind was highly perturbed at the prospect of bowing to a Moslem and he prayed me at the station not to send him to Shirdi. I however insisted and gave him a letter to my father-in-law at Shirdi to introduce him to Baba. When he went to Shirdi mosque Baba was indignant and would not allow him to go into the mosque. 'Kick out that rascal' he cried at the very sight of him and he was also angry that I should have sent him a man with such hopelessly crude ideas. Megha then went to Trimbak and worshipped at 'Gangadhwar' for a year or a year and a half. Then again he came to Shirdi. This time at the intercession of my father-in-law he was allowed to go to the mosque and stay at Shirdi.

Sai Baba's help to Megha was not through any oral instruction. He worked upon Megha internally i. e mentally. Megha was considerably changed and benefitted. When he died (in 1912) at Shirdi after continuous service of Baba doing regular daily Arati service, (noon and evening) Baba passed his hands over his corpse and said "**This was a true devotee of mine**". Baba ordered that, at his own expense, the **usual funeral dinner to Brahmins should** be given and BhaoSaheb Dixit carried this order out.

Leaving Shirdi.

In the durbar of Sri Sai Baba and when he issued out in solemn pomp, I carried the mace before him.

Many were jealous of me on account of the distinction I enjoyed. These and the villagers leagued together and used Nana Wali to molest me and drive me away from Shirdi. Once as I was carrying the mace before Baba, Nana Wali came up and scratched the back of my head with the sharp point of broken glass. In self-defence, I had to seize him and press him down on a pile of logs lying on the roadside. Sai Baba cried out "**Saheb, do not do so**". I noticed how the wind was blowing at Shirdi and kept careful watch. One day, as I intended to go to the Mosque to take Naivedya to Baba, very early (as I had to proceed on a particular trip) my father in-law rushed in and abjured me to desist from going to the Mosque, as Nana Wali was standing at the entrance, hatchet in hand, with deadly intention, and as he would make short work of me. So without taking any leave, I went away and left Shirdi for good. Evidently Sai Baba did not want me to reside there at Shirdi any longer. As Sai Baba did not protect me from the attack of Nana Wali, some people called upon me to give up my faith in Baba. But I pointed out that the same argument could be used against Vittal of Pandharpur. Gangadhar Shastri the lawyer of Gaekwad was a Vithal Bhakta and sought help and refuge in the Temple of Vithal. But there right in the Temple itself, before the face of Vithal, he was murdered by his enemy. I find that leaving Shirdi and settling here at Poona ultimately have been for my good. Sai Baba is protecting me here as he did at Shirdi.

Once about 1916 or so, in pitching a tent for me, at Kothrud (a suburb of Poona) certain **Mangs** (untouchables) went and put it up under a sacred Audambar tree, touching it & tying ropes to it. I did not know it then.

Finding that I was having mishaps thereafter I enquired into the cause and learnt of that regrettable incident. I prayed to Sai Baba to help me and he advised me in a dream to get a Brahmin first to perform the purification ceremony of that tree and next to instal Datta Paduka there. I have done both and I am maintaining a Pujari and conducting Pooja through him of the Paduka (at Kothrud), twice every day.

Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe (continued on 6-8-1936 and 21-8-1936)

Baba expressed my nature aptly by saying **साहेब फार भोळा आहे** i. e Saheb is quite simple and **unsophisticated**· And as that was his view, he never beat or abused me, though he beat and abused others. Only once he threatened to beat me, and I knew that I was then at fault. It was a Dhanur Masa celebration at my Shirdi lodgings and I, living away from my father-in-law as we were not on the best of terms, then invited others for the ceremony but not my father-in-law. I went however to invite Baba. Then he cried "**Fetch that stick.**" I stood quiet. His mood changed at once, and he said "Never mind. I will come." There was another fault committed by me that day, which also would account for Baba's displeasure. That day I had gone to a Marwadi to intercede in one of his affairs or disputes. Baba did not like that.

When I had boasted that I was the only devotee of Baba who had not got a beating at his hands, Madhav Rao Deshphande communicated this to Baba in my presence and asked him the reason. Baba said "**Why should I beat him? There is his father-in-law to beat him**". Baba evidently conveyed thereby the idea

that I was being constantly "Fined" by my father-in-law's excessive demands and collections of money from me.

Baba's help to me on the spiritual side was often to keep me off from vanity, pomp or sin in thought or action. Here are some instances.

At the time, when in the Wada (i. e. Sathe wada). the foundation stone was laid, there was no previous intimation of the date to me. It was however on a Poornima day. Myself and Bere started the previous day to go to Shirdi without previously intimating our intention to go there. At Kopergaon which we reached in the evening, Bere induced me to halt for the night, as Baba could not easily be visited by us at night. Next morning we went to Shirdi. Baba was then coming from the Lendi. There was a crowd of 80 to 90 spectators waiting to see him. We also went and prostrated. Baba told me" You have come just in time. The foundation stone is to be laid." I fancied that I must go through the pompous ceremony in high style. I took up a hatchet, to dig up a bit of the foundation and lay the foundation stone. Baba stopped me at once and said "Why do **you** go there? What have we to do with all this? The **masons** and other workmen **-will do it.**" So no formal ceremony of laying the foundation stone was gone through. My father-in-law told me that he knew the previous day that I was arriving at Shirdi on the Poornima day and so fixed up that date for the laying of the foundation stone. When asked how he knew of it, he said that Baba was saying the previous day "Saheb is coming tomorrow. The washer-woman told me of this, as Saheb's tent had come to her for washing". In fact, there was no tent sent and no washerwoman could have

got intimation of our arrival. Bere's stopping me at Kopergaon was useful. That night (unknown to me, though it was) was the tenth night of the death of an agnatic relation of my father-in-law and his house was under pollution and resounding with wailing and there was none even to cook and offer unpolluted food for me then, had I gone.

On one occasion, Baba, who was ever watchful over his childrens' actions in sight or out of sight, saved me from plunging headlong into passian and head strong **cruelty**. The facts are these. My father-in-law wanted me to buy some land 20 acres of agricultural land at or near Shirdi and I sent him 1200 Rupees and the land was purchased. One day when I was there, I desired to go and see the land. My father-in law would not accompany me and was placing obstacles in the way of my visiting the land. His reason was that his brother's son (Babu) had left a widow, who was living with him and she would come to know of the land and claim a share therein. I however insisted that we should go and ordered Tatya Patel's cart to be brought up and wanted my wife to go with me. She had first consented to go; but finally under instructions from her father, she declined to accompany me. I was wroth. I seized the whip from the cartman and was intending to chastise her for her disobedience to my orders. Lo suddenly Megha rushed into my Wada and said that **Baba wanted me urgently** to proceed at once to the Mosque to see him. I went up. Baba asked me "**What is the matter? What is it that has happened?** I saw that he knew everything and felt ashamed of myself. Then Baba added evidently to explain and justify the conduct and attitude of my wife and father-in-law, "**Your land is there. Where is**

the necessity to go and see it ?" How watchful he was over my conduct and welfare!

Another instance of his watchfulness over my conscience and morals was this. I was once proposing to visit for the first time the residence of a female devotee of Baba out of mere curiosity. Just before the visit, Baba asked me if I had gone to such & such a place. I did not understand the names of places and missed the point of his question. Baba then dropped the subject. I then went to her lodgings and was engaged in some conversation. Very soon evil thoughts began to invade my brain. Suddenly Baba appeared in front of that house and pushed open the door which had been closed but not bolted. He made some **ironical signs** to me to convey the idea "**What an excellent thing you are now launching into!**" and disappeared. His timely interference before any evil was definitely lodged in my mind or could take shape in action saved the situation. Conscience asserted itself; tendencies to evil were definitely checked; and I retreated from the place at once and never visited it again. Some time thereafter, I learnt that the place I visited was locally known by the very name mentioned by Baba in his question that day.

Baba's help to me came in family affairs, official matters, dealings with **Sants**, other spiritual matters etc.

Family affairs:

Baba said in 1904 just before my second marriage that God would bless me with a son if I married and he approved of the match in 1905. Then my father-in-law

Dada Kelkar (or Damodar Kelkar) became deeply devoted to him and made Shirdi his permanent residence. I built the Wada here at Baba's bidding **"गांव कुस बांधा"** in 1908 or so; and my father-in-law with my wife and family (and I also sometimes) lived there though its chief use was for the visitors that came to Baba. There was no other lodging (except the village Chavadi) available for respectable visitors. The foundation stone laying has already been mentioned. When the construction was to go on, the walls had to be raised and some of the branches of the Neem tree (under which Baba had practised his early Sadhana or penance) had to be lopped off. As the tree was held sacred by all, none dared to cut the branches and Baba was approached. He then said "Cut off so much as interferes with the construction. **Even if our own foetus lies athwart the womb, we must cut it".**

But even with his permission, the workmen feared to cut it, as it seemed so sacrilegious. Then Baba himself came and cut off the obstruction. Later the steps for going up-stairs and a niche over Baba's Guru's Tomb were put up. Baba made me spend monies in this and in other matters also so as to help on religion and charity e. g. when Das Ganu had his "Lives of the Saints" ready for printing, Baba made me pay 75 Rs. towards the expenses.

The first two children born of this second marriage were girls. My father-in law and mother-in-law then approached Baba with the prayer that the promised **son** should be born and asked him "When are we to have a grand-son," Baba then answered **"I am requesting Allah. He will comply with my request".** A year or two later (i. e. in 1913) my son was born. That boy is

with me here (by Baba's grace) hale and hearty and the prop of my age.

I have already stated how Baba directed me to behave in relation to my father-in-law and wife. I shall mention his kindly interest in one more family affair of mine. Sometime after I retired, my financial circumstances were declining. On one occasion, I sold a jewel of my wife. Baba then addressed my father-in-law and said "**Why does that fool of a Saheb sell my daughter's jewel?**".

Baba was greatly attracted to Dada Kelkar's (i. e. my father-in-law's, nephew.—Babu. He was a measurer under my assistant, Limaye (I was then Assistant Superintendent of Revenue Survey of Kopergaon and Yeola). But instead of paying due attention to his official work, he would go and stay away at Shirdi, doing service to Baba. My Assistant complained to me that my brother-in-law (Babu) was always going away to Shirdi and neglecting his work. I communicated this to Kelkar and he said "What is to be done? He is guided and ordered by Baba." In fact, Baba, knowing evidently what was happening to Babu very shortly, made light of his service and said "Blast the service. **Let him serve me.**" Babu was always attending on Baba and rendering as much service as he could; and Baba would always see that Babu got the choicest delicacies whenever they were available. So Limaye let him do as he liked. Babu's end was drawing near in 1910. He ate of mangoes (which were always pouring in upon Baba since 1910) rather too freely. Baba warned Kelkar and told him to have some care of his nephew's health "**बाबू कडे लक्ष ठेवा**—" he said. Babu contracted fever and as he was nearing death, Baba asked Kelkar "**अरे तो आहे काय?**" Is he alive? "In a few

days Babu passed away (1910) aged only 22 leaving an issueless widow.

In religious and temporal affairs, I never took any serious step without consulting Babu, (either through my father-in-law or otherwise).

Religious matters.

Baba never gave Upadesa or initiation to anyone. So I did not apply to him for initiation. But on several occasions I was invited to get **Upadesha from others**, e. g. Upasani Baba who offered to explain Panchadasi to me (in 1915 or 1917), after his return to Shirdi from Kharagpur and Miraj. People from Kharagpur and Nagpur were going to him to get Upadesha. The question was whether I also should go to him for that purpose. There was a lady Athabai of Sangola who had given Upadesa to my first wife. There was also the Ganapati Upasaka and Yogi of Moregaon named Vinyak Phatak Maharaj. These offered me Upadesha. In each of these cases, I referred the question to Baba (personally to Baba in the first case and through my father-in-law, in the latter cases) and Baba gave a **negative** reply.

Though there was no formal initiation by Baba, he wished me to look to him alone with undeviating attention (**अनन्यचिन्ता**) and he was quite powerful enough and willing to look after my interests temporal and spiritual.

Religious matters:

Baba in the early days of my moving with him, at times favoured the extension of his worship and at times did not. He made me and my father-in-law start the

group or congregational worship of Baba as Guru by all the devotees on Guru Poornima Day as I have stated already But when I tried to do Pooja to him as Mahadeva or Siva on "Shivaratri" midnight, he did not favour the proposal. When he was first asked for permission that day he said, No Then, we (i. e. myself and Megha) thought over it, took some Bilwa leaves and wished to do silent Pooja of the steps of the Mosque at midnight (which is the time observed in all Siva Temples). When we went there, Tatya from inside the Mosque waved his hand warning us off. But as Baba seemed to be asleep, we dared to put some sandal and Bel on the steps in silence. Baba at once got up and hurled wild abuse without naming any one as the object of his abuse. The whole village was roused and they flocked to the Mosque and blamed us for trying to steal a march over the rest of the devotees and in defiance of Baba's wishes to obtain clandestine Punya by midnight worship at the steps of the Mosque.

Though Baba did not want me to take Upadesha from others he yet desired that I should show due respect and hospitality to Sants (saints). In fact, he made one Sant go to me.

Kaka Maharaj of Dhopeshwar (near Rajapur) was a well known Sant. Some 25 years ago, he visited Poona and lodged with one Devle. He was beseiged by a crowd of devotees inviting him to their place for meal &c; and I also made the same request. He regretted his inability to comply with my request. This was in the morning. Later at about noon of the same day, when I was at my office, I was surprised to learn that the Maharaj had sent word to say that he would visit my house and so I sent him my tonga and went home to receive him.

When I met him, I asked him how he happened to change his mind so suddenly since morning. Pointing to Sai Baba's portrait on my wall, the Maharaj replied. "He would not allow me to rest till I came and saw you."

Shortly before this Maharaj passed away, he had given leave to my son-in-law's brother Hari Gangadhar Joshi (pleader, Thana) and another to go to Sai Baba and pay their respects. They started to Shirdi, after Kaka Maharaj passed away. When they arrived at the Mosque, Baba was in a towering passion, in one of his fits of rage that seemed so ungovernable. But as soon as Baba saw these two arrivals standing outside the Mosque, he ordered them to be brought to him. When they went up, he had sufficiently cooled down and they took darshan without any trepidation or uneasiness. Later, Baba started out for Bhiksha. Then he said to them "**You have killed that old man** (i. e. Kaka Maharaj) and **come here,** eh?" Though he had not been told of the Maharaja's permission or his death, he knew the facts and thus revealed to them at once, his knowledge of the facts and his fellow feeling with that Maharaj.

(As you find from Vaman Rao Patel's Guru Smriti) Baba showed a bit of his **chamatkar** to my son-in-law Mr. Joshi, at Shirdi. When the latter asked for **Udhi,** Baba told him that he would get it later; and in point of fact as Joshi travelled by train, a fellow passenger gave him **Udhi,** given by Baba.

Dakshina Bhiksha Samstha.

In December 1915, I got a call from Baba, when I was at Poona, and at his bidding I helped in forming the above Society. I was made the President of it. We ran the Journal "Sainath Prabha" as its organ. This was

not read to Baba previoualy or submitted for his approval.

It had a short career and was a failure. Hardly any copies are traceable. Parts 1 and 2 which alone are now available, give some account of the state of affairs that prevailed at Shirdi Samsthan in 1915 to 1917 or 1918. The attempt to control monetary matters led to increased bitterness against me, resulting in Nanawali's action that drove me away from Shirdi and even led to issue of legal notices. Sometime after the formation of the Sabha (say some 11 months) Radhakrishna Ayi died. She had been in charge of all stores used for purposes of Sai Samsthan. When she died, as she was an intestate Brahmin widow without heirs, the Police came and took possession of all the properties in her custody. Then we had on behalf of the Sabha to apply for the return of all the articles, for the Samsthan from the Kopergaon 1st Class Magistrate. On the strength of local Mahajars also, he passed orders (M. E. R. 23 N2 1916) handing over Samsthan properties to the Samsthan i.e. Sabha on behalf of the Smasthan; yet internecine bickerings continued. Some misguided devotees made use of the loss of a few silver appendages to the samasthan horse trappings (worth very little after all) to issue a lawyer's notice to me in January 1918. I consulted Baba and he told me to give a reply and I gave it in the terms mentioned by Baba himself. Baba told me that he would protect me and that no proceedings would be taken. That proved to be true and no proceedings were taken against me or the sabha.

I do not know what has become of Mr. Sunder Rao Narayan who was the Editor and soul of "Sai Nath

Prabha." It is he who signs his "apothegms" and his "vision" in Part I under the **Nomde plume** "Ramagir"

Baba and other sants: His Antarjnana.

When I was at Shirdi, one day, Baba was at the Mosque. The time for his moving on to Lendi had arrived and yet he was not inclined to move out. He lay stretched beside the Mosque wall. When he had thus delayed his visit to the Lendi by one hour, we asked him "It is high time for you to go to the Lendi. Why do you not go?" Then Baba answered "**अरे माझा गजानन गेला**" i. e. "Hallo! **My Gajanan is gone.**" Some one wrote that day from Shirdi to Shegaon to ascertain how Gajanan Maharaj, the famous Saint of that place was doing. The answer came that he expired on the very day when Baba apprised us of the sad event.

Baba's prophecy:

Some-time in 1917, Baba said "**Tilak is coming here.**" As there seemed to be nothing to induce Lokamanya to visit him, I thought Baba was referring to Tilak Maharaj i. e. Vaman Maharaj Tilak. In fact, however, Lokamanya visited him soon after (i. e. on **19-5-1917**).

Baba's activities:

Though Baba either out of humility or out of policy ascribed all beneficent things done for his visitors and devotees to God, he disclosed in many cases his own authorship by his words. e. g.

(1) About my pension he said (in pungent slang) that he would force the Authorities to pay me my full pension.

(2) Another instance comes to my mind now. Daji Hari Lele (Dt. Inspecter of Land Records at Nasik) was proceeding to Shirdi to see Baba. On the way he went to the Library at Kopergaon and saw the Gazette. Therein, he discovered that he had been promoted from 125 Rs. to 150 Rs. Then he came to Shirdi and bowed to Baba. Baba told him "Bring me 15 Rupees" The man said he had no money. Baba retorted "**It is only yesterday I gave you Rs. 25** Go and bring the money." Lele then came to my wada, informed me of all the facts and borrowed the money to pay Baba.

Baba's talks (Goshties):

(1) Baba said once that as a boy he was weaving shawls, that his father was once so pleased with his handiwork that he gave him a pecuniary present of some 5 Rs. or so.

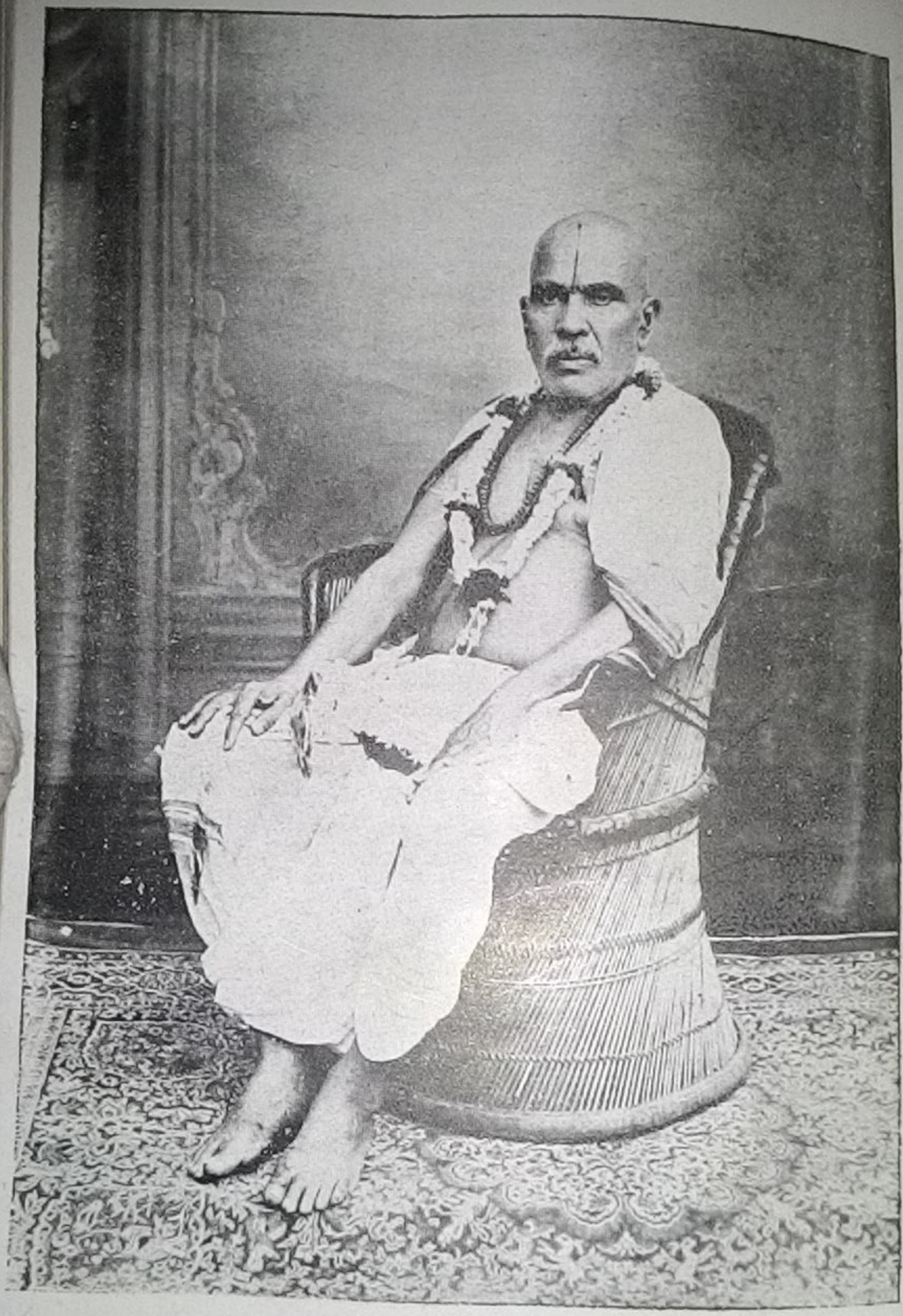
(2) Once Baba said that he was 'eating food' (i. e. living) at the East Coast i. e. **Coromandal coast.**

(3) Once he said Pshaw, What of **Akbar** ! I have protected him in his infancy. He stood in fear of me.

(4) The brahmin of Paithan (evidently referring to Eknath) I knew. Brahmins of such excellent sort are not now a days seen.

(5) Chanbai Patel came to me and asked me about his horse. He said " where did you drive my horse?" I replied. Why do you charge me? Go and see; Your horse is grazing by the hedge.

This was all that issued from the mouth of Baba. I used my imagination and built a story on these and wrote my "Sai Katha Karandaka." It was written without previous infimation to or obtaining the approval of Baba. Baba's ulterances were short. He abruptly stopped many of his stories.



DAS GANU MAHARAJ.

DAS GANU MAHARAJ

June 1936, Poona.

i.e.

Ganpatro Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe,
Brahmin, Kirtankar, aged about 78,
Residing generally at Nanded.
(Nizam's State)

Says;—

I have known Sri Sai Baba for a long time, and I have given some account of him in my books (1) Bhakti Saramrita Ch 26, 65, 66 & 67 (1925) (2) Bhakta Lilamrita Ch 31 (1906) and Ch 32 & 33 and (3) Santakatamrita Ch 57. Ch 31 of No. 2 & Ch 57 of No. 3 were published Baba's lifetime.

Some facts i.e. autobiographical reminiscences came from Baba's own mouth. But they were very few. Besides, I had not spent much time with Baba. I rarely saw him. When I was at Shirdi, Baba did not allow me to stay long at the masjid. He made me go away to the Vittal temple where I stayed, to write lives of saints, or to spend my time in repetition of Vishnu Sahasranama &c. I made some inquiries about Baba also before writing these works. Some facts were within my personal knowledge. I was in active (Police) service as a Havildar. I had however my literary and histrionic leanings. I took great interest in Tamashas (village plays) and took part in them. I composed poems impromptu, in lavani and other metres. While I was in service and Nana Saheb Chandorkar was D.C. or Collector's chitnis, he took me to Sai Baba. Even from the

outset Sai Baba foresaw my future and wanted to save me from my own ways and choice of profession and pastime. He told Nana Saheb even in my presence, "**This man is fond of Tamashas, and of his service. Let him give it all up**". He told me the same and Nana Saheb, also.

But I liked my pastimes and service. Gradually I gave up taking part in Tamashas i.e. Village plays. As for service, I could not think of giving it up. Each time I was advised to give up service, I said "I will see." Baba then said that only by sheer compulsion *i.* e. by being impaled I could be made to quit service. So for about 10 years, Baba went on dinning into me, directly and indirectly, that I should give up service. I shall mention later how in 1903 I was reduced to giving up service after several disasters in which Baba's grace saved me from punishment, disgrace, trouble of various sorts, and even death.

First I shall narrate how some facts about Baba's antecedents were revealed at an examination of Baba as a witness. There was a thief charged with theft &c. of jewels in the Dhulia Tahsildar Magistrate's Court. The accused pleaded that Sai Baba of Shirdi had given him the jewels and cited Baba as a witness. Summons came. Baba refused to receive it and had it thrown into his **dhuni**, (fire). Anyhow the report was sent that summons had been served on Baba. But Baba did not go to Dhulia for the trial. So a warrant was issued by the Dhulia Court for producing Sai Baba to give evidence, at Dhulia. The warrant came to Ganpatramji, the chief Constable of Kopergaon. He brought the warrant to Baba and informed him of its contents and requested Baba to go with him to Dhulia. Of course

he had not the courage to arrest Baba. Baba was defiant. He cursed and swore and asked the constable to throw the warrant into some foul place. The constable was perplexed. I was there and told him to consult Baba's devotee Nana Saheb Chandorkar, then Dep. Collector at Ahmednagar. N. S.—C. was consulted and he said that if Sai Baba and the devotees disliked his going to Dhulia, the people should get a Mahazar prepared and get numerous signatures to it and send it up to Dhulia. This was done. The Mahazar stated that Sai Baba of Shirdi was an extra ordinary person, worshipped as God by vast numbers of devotees, that the enforcement of ordinary Court's process against him was neither proper nor desirable in view of the consequenses that might follow &c. and that if his evidence was necessary, a Commissioner might be sent to Shirdi to take his evidence. The Dhulia Court then sent a Commission. One Nana Joshi, 1st class Magistrate, Assistant Collector came down to Shirdi to take the evidence of Baba. Three hours before his arrival, Baba had sent for chairs and a table and improvised a Court at the Mosque. The Commissioner came and began Sai Baba's examination; and an extraordinary examination it was.

Commr :—What is your name?

Baba :—They call me Sai Baba.

C:—Your father's name?

B:—Also Sai Baba.

C:--Your Guru's name?

B:—**Venkusa.**

C:—Creed or Religion?

B.—Kabir.

C:—Caste or race?

B:—**Parvardigar** (i.e. God).

C:—Age, please?
B:—Lakhs of years.
C:—Will you solemnly affirm that what you are going to say is the truth.?
B:—Truth.
C:—Do you know the accused, so & so?
B:—Yes, I know him and I know every one.
C:—The man says he is your devotee and that he lived with you. Is that so?
B:—Yes. I live with every one. All are mine.
C:—Did you give him jewels as alleged by him?
B:—Yes I gave him. Who gives what to whom?
C:—If you gave him the jewels, how did you get them and become possessed of them?
B:—Everything is mine.
C:—Baba, here is a serious charge of theft. That man says that you delivered the jewels to him.
B:—What is all this? What the d - l have I to do with all that?

The commissioner was floored by such answers. He did not know what to take down. Baba was mostly in a mood to say yes to every qustion. Then it was suggested that the best course would be to send for the village diary. The arrival of every stranger and the dates of his stay in the village are duly noted in it If the accused who was, of course a stranger to the village was not there at or about the time of his alleged receipt from Baba, that might be taken down. The diaries were sent for and they showed that no such person like the accused was at Shirdi at the time in question. Of course, it was well known that Baba never left Shirdi or its

neighbourhood. Then the Commissioner put it to Baba, that no such person was in the village of Shirdi and with Baba at Shirdi at the time in question and that Baba gave him no jewels and Baba said that was so and this was Baba's final statement. The examination was then over. Baba was not asked to sign or put his mark. The Commission evidence was sent to Dhulia. The accused was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment.

Baba's age is a thing one cannot fix. Nor can his race, and parentage be easily fixed. Forty years back I saw an old lady Salubai Shelke of Shirdi then aged 65 or 70. She told me that when she was married and that was in her 8th or tenth year, Baba came to Shirdi, looking as he looked, when we saw him (1895) i e. 40 or 50 years old. Another old lady Sai Bai said, Baba came to Shirdi as a lad. This seems to make Baba's age over 100 at his Mahasmadhi. Who dare ask Baba about his age and antecedents ? So nothing definite is known.

Baba however himself spoke about his earlier years occasionally. About his Guru, Baba has several times said that "**Venkusa**" (This is found in Bhaktalilamrita Ch 31) was his Guru and that by the grace of **'Venkusa', Baba had attained to his position.**

Most things about him were mysterious. Some of his miracles etc. were witnessed by me and some mentioned to me by others.

Baba's converting water into oil and burning his lamps for a whole night with water alone was reported to me by numerous villagers who had seen it. Pemchand Marwadi was one of those who refused to supply him that day with oil.

I myself saw Baba sleeping on a **plank** suspended form the ceiling by a few slender shreds of torn cloth.

The wonder was how he got up that plank suspended so high i.e. 7 or 8 feet above the level of the floor and 1 or 1½ cubits below the roof. Four lamps were on it. People watched to see how he got up or climbed down but could never discover either or how it supported him.

The passages 121 to 141 in **Bhakta Lilamrit** about Mr. Pense were mentioned to me by him.

These three Chapters 31, 32 and 33 of the book were read as Pothi (i. e. holy scripture) at the mosque before Baba; and he said " It is Alright ", when Nana Saheb Chandorkar gave him the book.

Baba did not say his five Namaz or even one Namaz, as Moslems do. When Fatia had to be done he generally ordered it to be pronounced by some one present. Sometimes he uttered the **Fatia**. He occasionally repeated parts of Quoran.

The instruction given to N. G. Chandorkar by Baba was mentioned to me by N. G. C. I expanded it with my own learning and gave it its present shape. But the kernel of it was given by N. G. C. Baba has several times talked Advaitic philosophy in my persence.

'I am God.' 'You are God' 'All are God.' He has said this many times. There is **nothing Baba did not know.**

Baba was not explicit about what he did mostly. Here is an instance.

One Valembi Master was Ry. Station Master at Kopergaon. He had no faith in Baba. He told me and other devotees " Baba is a mad man. Why do you all lionise him ?" I however persuaded V. M. to go with me to see Baba at Shirdi. When we saw Baba, he was



NANA G. CHANDORKAR

washing pots and placing them on the floor, mouth down and bottom upside. V. M. asked Baba, What is all this? Baba said "Every pot coming to me comes with mouth down wards" i.e. not to receive what could be put into them but in an unreceptive fashion like pots with their mouths downwards.

There was at about 1898 or 1899 a notorious dacoit named Kana Bhil who was robbing British and Native states, in parts of Ahmednagar and Bid Districts. For 3 years the Police were on his track, but could not catch him. I was only a havildar (Co.) at the time. But I and three others were put on special detective duty & directed to watch and report his movements. K. Bhil was so cunning and desparate and his C I D was so perfect that he spotted the three men and killed them one after another. I had done little work and my inspector reported that I was useless and I had to put forward strenuous efforts. All that time I was passing for a Ramadasi and doing Kirtans in the Ram Temple at Loni Varni, the headman (Patil) of which was a friend of and receiving visits from K. Bhil. K. Bhil found out all about me, my name, number (727) station etc. and came one day to shoot me. I went and bowed to Sri Ram and prayed for life. The dacoit left the place with a warning to me that I was watched. I was really watched by his men and I could not leave the place. Again I got information from the village boys as to the programme and movements of K. Bhil and communicated it to the police. The police came and put a cordon round the hill in which K. Bhil was hiding but he escaped after a severe battle with guns etc. in which a number of police were shot down.

I got a certificate of heart disease and escaped further detective duty. Then Rale, Mamletdar tried the villagers of Loni Varni for harbouring a dacoit. I gave evidence in favour of the Patil that he helped me with information and he was acquitted.

Absent from my jurisdictoin without leave, I visited a holy place and returned up to Godavari and there I prayed and vowed to Baba holding Godavari water in my hands that if he would save me I would give up service. Then I discovered a gang in H. S. there with some booty and I got an excuse for my visit. The situation was saved miraculously. Still the ambition to become a Fouzdar was dominating me. I appeared for an examination and passed it, to qualify myself. Baba told me that I was not going to get the fouzdari post.

I was posted to some place and I had to cross Shirdi on my way-but I did not wish to call on Baba, as he would not approve of my continuence in service. So I was simply marching straight (and without turning in to the village in the interior of which was the Mosque) on the main road touching Shirdi. Then as fate or Sai Baba would have it, he came to the main road near the Lendi just as I came there and so I got down from my horse and fell at his feet. He then asked me to go over to the Masjid. At the Masjid, he asked me, Ganu! who took the vow taking a palmful of Godavari water in hand?" I answered "What harm is there? I am really going to resign." Baba said "Wait. You will not listen to me while things are thus (i. e. smooth running)".

Then I got into another scrape - without any fault of mine. A convict's fine - 32 Rs. was realised and sent

up to my station to be credited to Govt. That was received by my Assistant in my absence and he quietly pocketed it. Later, the man not being released, a complaint was made and inquiry followed. I was suspended. Punishment seemed imminent. I vowed that I would leave service if I escaped and then left service in 1903.

I had composed in 1898 a poem on Sivaji, which became a matter of enquiry. My defence was that I was an improptu poet and this was my improptu. I was not punished. Baba repeatedly told me when telling me to retire "Go and settle at Nanded."

I : - Which Nanded ?

B :—Nanded in Nizam States.

I .—How am I to get **bread ?**

B :—**I will provide for you.**

So I went on retirement to Nanded and there spent my time in performing Kirtans. I got food thereby.

I went on a pilgrimage to Puri and on the way, one Tembe Swami (Vasudevanand Saraswathi) whom I had known already met me and asked me if I was going to Shirdi. I said "Yes, not immediately but a few months later". Then he gave me a cocoanut saying, "Present this as mine to Sai Baba." I took it and kept it in my bag. During my further travels, my companions took it out and then ate it up. When I went to Shirdi, as soon as I approached Sai Baba he said " Here is the thief. Where is the cocoanut given by my brother ?"

A friend gave me plots of cultivable land for a very nominal price. They yield me enough to live upon. These are now maintaining me. Bere's tonga escaping

highway robbery which is described in B. S. is personally known to me. I went in that tonga with Bere.

I receive no money for my Kirtans. I never did. The hat was not and is not sent round either before or at or after my Kirtan for contributions. My bhaktas write and invite me to their abodes in various parts of the country. I go and stay with them and perform Kirtans and write books etc. I am a single individual without any family and my needs are few. I was not one of those, who got moneys from Baba. Several of those that he was regularly paying every day were subjected to Income-Tax. After Lokamanya Tilak visited Baba (19-5-1917),the Income-Tax department directed its attention to the Shirdi Samasthan. Some officer came to Shirdi and watched the income. They wanted first to tax Sai Baba, but (perhaps seeing that he had little left with him to proceed upon) they taxed his regular donees: *Viz.*, Tatya Patel, Bade Baba, Bagia and Bayyaji Patel. For me as for Mahlasapathy, Baba took care to see that we were not pestered with money and its cares. He has given me spiritual benefit, far superior to monetary gifts. He has **created and confirmed my faith** in various ways. He has taught me valuable lessons and given me precious experience.

Once for Mahashivaratri, I was at Shirdi and I wanted to have "Gangasnan" (*i.e.*, a dip in the river Godavari) at Singaba (three miles off Shirdi) that day. Megha daily brought that water for sprinkling or pouring (Abhisheka) over Baba—as Ganga must naturally fall on Mahadeva's head. But Baba did not allow me to go. He said "Ganga is here at my feet. Do not go". I felt a bit depressed. Theoretically, I knew that he was God

Narayana and that Ganga flowed from Narayan's feet. But that was a poor weak faith insufficient to give my heart the pleasure which a tangible Ganges bath would give me. Baba knew my mentality and asked me to approach his feet and **hold my palm** near the feet. Then at once water began to flow from both his feet. It was not a few drops like perspiration. It was rather a **slow and thin current.** In a short time -say a few minutes, I had collected a palmful of that water. Here was Ganga and I was delighted. I bathed *i.e.*, sprinkled the water over my head. I did not drink this water. Usually I **do not drink the Tirtha** offered at Baba's Arati. On one occasion, Jog complained to Baba about it. Baba then said that I should abide by my own convictions, and sampradaya and that Jog should not trouble me.

But Baba did **not always respect orthodoxy**—at least in some matters. My orthodoxy keeps me off from eating onions in any form. Baba, on the other hand liked onions and would seldom have a meal without onions. He told me to prepare **Pitla** *i.e.*, sauce of onions, give part to him and eat part of it. I prepared it and brought it to him. He asked me, if I ate it at my lodgings. I said yes. But really what I did there was to touch the onion dish with a finger tip and touch my chin with it and draw a line from my chin to the nether lip—as a token of my tasting it and I would wash my hand and face thereafter. Baba knew (what is it he did not know?) how I practised this trick and he showed others how I did the trick. "He **pretends he eats** but only touches it with his finger and applies the finger over the chin" was what he said and showed. Then he told me that I should really eat onion. **He had a high opinion**

of onion as an item of the daily fare—though orthodoxy rejects it, chiefly on the grounds of its immediate and ultimate odour and its aphrodisiac properties. "But if one digests it *i.e.*, overcomes its injurious *i.e.*, lust producing tendencies, it does no harm but good" was what Baba said. So, at Shirdi, as long as Baba was alive, I would take onion—except on Ekadashi days.

Q.: Did Baba rub coins smooth with mantra?

Baba occasionally smashed my programmes for visiting holy places like Pandharpur. I was keen on Bhadrabad and Aswin months—especially Aswin Ekadashi at Pandharpur. In 1916, I met Nanasaheb Chandorkar at Manmad and told him I was going to Pandharpur as Bhadrapad was about to begin. He took me however with him to Shirdi and Baba made me do 'Saptha' and Keertan there for a week. When I originally began Keertans it was at the bidding of Nanasaheb Chandorkar and in Baba's Samasthan at Shirdi. In fact I had started it, in the usual fashionable dress—(*i.e.* head gear) etc., of Keertankars and shone in borrowed plumes—borrowed from Chandorkar. But Baba at once objected to my adopting that dress and made me doff it. I am doing Keertans since then in Orthodox "Dotar." (*i.e.* nether cloth). I was thus detained for over one month at Shirdi. Bhadrapad was gone and Aswin was to begin. I felt chagrined at being detained from going to Pandharpur even in Ashwin. N. G. Chandorkar wanted to detain me even then. I said within myself " How is he (*i.e.*, Baba) a Guru, who blocks my way to God (of Pandharpur)"? Baba of course read my mind and told me to go away at once to Pandharpur and told N. G. C. not to stop me. So I gladly went to Pandharpur and was there for Ashwin.

Baba did not grant me some of my spiritual prayers. I wanted to get **Sakshatkar** (*i.e.* vision) of the God that I worship—just as Namdev and others got. So I went to Baba several times with the request that he should give me Sakshatkar. He was saying each time "Wait" "Wait." Finally (probably in 1916, the above period) I asked him " Baba you have been long putting off my request. When will you give me Sakshatkar ? " Then he said " **You see me. That is Sakshatkar. I am God.**" I replied that I expected that he would say so ; but that **I was not satisfied** with that. I consoled myself with the explanation that my destiny did not provide for my getting Sakshatkar and that **Saints could not overcome destiny.**

After Baba passed away, I have been seeing several Saints. But hardly any of them satisfied me. There was one that specially impressed me.

Near my place—Nanded, in 1919, there was a Virakta Brahmachari staying **on a rock** having no possessions and caring for nothing. I saw him first, when I was performing my wife's ceremony and was powerfully attracted. As I went there, to take his Darshan, he turned away from me and prevented my taking Darshan.

This happened thrice. I was deeply disappointed, nay mortified. Anyhow, let me have the merit of feeding him, I thought, and went home. I sent up a man to that Brahmachari with food. I was agreeably surprised to learn that he accepted it. Then I was emboldened to go to him once again and I asked him why he would not permit me to bow to him and to take Darshan. He said in reply.

"You call yourself a Kirtankar. Have you left off Ahankar *i.e.*, Egotism?

I:—No. How can I? Each man has Ahankar.

He:—Did you not feel Ahankar, when sending me food, feeling that it was **you** that were sending food etc.,

I:—But Ahankar being of three sorts Satwik, Rajasic and Tamasic some sort of **Ahankar** would underlie all action; only the worst forms are to be shunned.

He was not of that opinion. He wanted me to drown my Ego completely. He was always reading my mind. He gave me some samples of his power.

He:—Are you not engaged in writing the lives of Saints?

I:—Yes.

Then he quoted a few lines of verse that I had just composed six days previously and not published in any way. I was taken aback by this Antaryamitva of his.

Again he asked me,

Did you not get Ganga water from the feet of Sai Baba?

I:— Yes.

He:— What did you do with it?

I: — I sprinkled it over my head.

He:—And you did not drink it, because you thought **you** were a brahmin and would be polluted by drinking it. Look at your Egotism.

Seeing his nature and powers, I daily spent three or four hours alone with him at night. Some of those, who were going to me and having a good opinion of me and a poor opinion of that Brahmachari wondered at my conduct, and one of them (let us merely give him some

random name) Beake began to heckle me about it. I told him that the Brahmachari had psychic power and could even know the contents of other minds. Beake doubted my veracity and I had to take him once to the Brahmachari and tell the latter of Beake's unbelief. Then followed a very interesting conversation

Br: —(to me) What'? You want to make an exhibition of me, as tho' I were a monkey!!

I. —No. But this person is full of unbelief.

Br: —(to Beake) Shall I tell you some facts then about yourself ?

Beake: — Yes.

Br: — Had you not immoral relations with Z ?

Beake:— No.

Br:— Was it not Z that was maintaining you and supporting you for a long time ?

Beake:— No.

Then the Brahmachari clinched the whole matter of his truthfulness and his powers by immediate proof.

Br ·—Shall I tell you what is in your pocket ?

Beake: - Yes.

Br:—You have a letter from the Raja of Kolhapur about the affairs of 'Satya samaj', which you are supporting. Take the letter out and give it to Maharaj (i. e-me D. G.) (That was done).

Then, Brahmachari gave full details of the contents of the letter.

My friend was flabbergasted. He had placed the letter in my hand. Every word spoken of it by the Saint was true, and it proved that, consequently, what was said about Z also must be true. As my friend felt humi

liated and would make some progress if I left him alone with the Saint, I left him there and went away. My friend did improve in giving up his bad associations and his other bad habits.

The Saint's name and fame spread so quickly that the Tahsildar insisted on my producing him one evening for delivering a Pravachan. The Tahsildar, the Autocrat or Cham of that Taluk, of course, believed that the Saint could not decline to go to the meeting, nor decline to speak. But before the day fixed for the meeting, it was discovered that the Saint left that place. He left it for good and was never again seen or heard of.

The books I wrote about Sai Baba are:—

I. Santakathamrita-first. This was written bit by bit when I was in service i.e. before 1903 both the portions about Baba and about others. But it was printed in 1903. Baba blessed the effort. None of my books was read to Baba. Nor was Baba asked beforehand to give the information for writing the books. What he spoke of his own accord was picked up. Baba had talked of his "Selu" antecedents and I made inquiries at Selu about Baba's antecedents. Baba said about each book when placed in his hand. "That is alright." I do not know whether Baba knew how to write, read or even to sign his name.

II. Next came Bhakti Lilamrita. This was published in Baba's lifetime 1906;

III. Lastly came the Bhakti Saramrita. The two chapters viz: **52-53** therein relating to Baba were placed in his hands and he said "**alright**". But other chapters

were composed later from time to time mostly after **1918**. In **1925**, this book was printed as a whole.

The account given in it (in chapter 28) about Baba's antecedents at Selu is based partly on Baba's statements and partly on what the villagers of Selu told me. The only thing Baba said of Selu and the Selu period was that **he come from Selu.** So I started while I was in service and went to Selu to make enquiries. I cannot specify any villager as having told me anything in partficular. My inquiry was 35 years back. The villagers said that there was an old Saint, that a young Fakir boy was being trained by him, that some got vexed with the Saint and threw stones at him and killed him and that the boy escaped and that all this took place **100** years previously. Sai Baba told me, in the presence of Chandorkar that the brick he used as a pillow at Shirdi and which is still retained as a relic of Baba at Shirdi was given by his Guru to him, that his Guru was "**Venkusa**". The version about Baba's telling Chandorkar is my own, as I wished to avoid dragging my own name into my own work and figuring in it too priminently. **Chandorkar did not tell me what is written of him in Ch 53.** I do not know if he maintained a diary or note of his experiences.

As for Ratanji incident, it was a small affair. He invited me to tea and then the Nanded Moulvi came in also. Nice dishes of almonds, pistachio etc. were suppli ed. The cost of all would not be very great, say anything more than 3 or 4 Rupees. Then Ratanji went to Shirdi. Baba told him that Baba had already received this amount and asked him for the balance. When Ratanji came back to Nanded, he narrated these facts

and wondered what Baba meant by saying that he had received the sum. I asked him to see the amount entered in his accounts on the evening of the tea given to the Moulvi. The exact amount entered in that account (viz 3-12-0) was what Baba said had been given. This is the truth. The rest is all elaborated out of this.

The Tomb referred to is that of Sai Baba's guru and was not visible when we saw it first. It was merely land and underneath it was the tomb. Sathe saheb built a flight of steps over it leaving a niche for worshipping that guru.

When I first went with Nana G. Chandorkar to see Sai Baba, that was out of a desire to ingratiate myself with N. G. C. and with no particular desire to see Sai Baba or esteem for him. I had no spiritual or other temporal desire or object in seeing Baba. One year later, I chanced to see Vaman Sashi **Islampurkar,** an old Brahmin of Islampur near Osmanabad (N. S.) a graduate (of the Madras University) and a married man. I had to attend upon him at Saigonda in obedience to my superior's orders Finding him to be highly devout and spiritually advanced and believing that a Guru was necessary to obtain Moksha, I asked him to give me Upadesh and he agreed. He gave me Siva Mantra Upadesh as desired by me, for then I was an out and out Shivbhakta. He told me to go on with my Mantra. I then asked him as I was visiting Sai, whether that was harmful He said that no harm could arise if one was firm in his faith, whatever Saints he visited. I asked him what sort of person Sai Baba was and he replied that he had himself visited Shirdi and stayed with Baba for three days, that **Baba was a great** Saint

and Ramabhakta, whom, none had yet properly understood and that people would get to know and appreciate him later on. With this estimation in my view I had more regard for Baba and I went to him with more faith.

Two years after my Mantropadesh, I received a letter from my Guru that I should proceed to Bhusaval to meet him. There he told me that he was proceeding to Kasi where he would have his final Samadhi six months later i.e., on the following Jyeshta Vadya Ekadashi. His object in sending for me was that I should perform his funeral rites. The Guru shed tears, as he said this. I came home and found that the Guru had sent me 500 Rupees Notes by insured post intended for the celebration of the funerals etc., and a letter containing his last Will and Testament. On the Ekadashi day in question, I got a wire from Kasi mentioning the Guru's death on that day. From that date, I am performing that Guru's anniversary on that Tithi. I told Sai Baba of it and he approved.

Baba and Orthodox Moslems

Baba sometimes came into some conflict with the local Mussalmans, as very often his acts and ideas did not agree with their Orthodoxy.

Bade Baba and others once asked Sai Baba to go outside the town for saying the Kutba prayers. Baba said "Yes, Let us go;" at first; but when they finally came to take him, he declined to go.

Another time, they came up and offered prayers inside the Mosque. But Baba did not join them in that group prayer.

At Moharram, some local Moslems came up to Baba and said they wanted to bring into the Mosque a Tajia.

Then they constructed a Tajia and brought it and installed it on the fifth of Moharram at the Mosque.

Baba allowed it to remain there for a couple of days and then dragged it out and placed it on his fire saying "I do not want a corpse in the Mosque." The Moslems, who were working up their Tajia dared not do anything against this powerful Baha.

An Orthodox Moslem brought a **"Sera"** i.e., an ornamental arrangement of flowers, to decorate the niche in the Mosque and wanted Baba's permission.

Baba said "Take it and **put it on Hanuman.**" The Moslem replied that he was a Mahomedan and could not decorate a Hindoo idol. Baba fulminated some foul abuse (in which Hanuman was depicted as superior to Allah) and the Sera was taken away.

Baba's respect for Hanuman or Maruti :—There was a small image of this God in a corner of the upper platform of a chavadi. Baba was in the lower platform; and when showers began to drive into it, some one told Baba that he should go up into the upper platform. Baba refused to do so saying "**How can we be seated on the same level as God?**"

Fakir Baba *alias* Bade Baba brought up a recent convert from Hinduism to Islam to the Mosque. Baba slapped that convert and taunted him with the remark "**You have changed your father.**"

Even towards Hindu Gods as to Allah, he would use uncomplementary expressions in some moods. People occasionally asked him for permission to go to Pandharpur and he would reply "Go" but would add some abuse. On the other hand, when Arati was sung of

Jnanadev or Tukaram, he would sit up and fold his palms in reverence.

Baba's treatment of **Advaitism** is not easy to make out. He never expressly dealt with it. It was implied in a stray or sporadic remark. He would say "**I am God**" "**God is in all etc.**" He was really Advaita personified. He was sitting up still whatever went on. Thirty two dancing girls would come and play before him daily; he would never care to look at them. He never cared for anything. He was detached and in his Ananda state once a devotee asked him "**What is God (Brahma) like?**" Baba did not reply to him but sent some one to Bagchand Marwadi for 100 rupees. That man did not give it but sent his Namaskar to Baba. He sent the man to another person with the same negative result. Baba then sent for Nana Saheb Chandorkar and asked him for 100 rupees. Nana Saheb Chandorkar sent a chit to the said Bagchand Marwadi and the latter sent 100 rupees at once. Baba merely remarked "All is like this in the world." The questioner asked me later on privately, why Baba gave no answer. I explained that the demands for dakshina and the response thereto were the reply to the questioner. When others asked for money, it was not forthcoming. But when Nana Saheb Chandorkar wanted it, it came at once. Similarly the man who merely wants to know Brahma does not get it. It is he who is qualified to know it that gets it. The lesson is "**Deserve before you desire** (Brahman)"

As for miracles, I have hardly seen any of Baba. I saw him about 1898 sleeping on a plank suspended about 7 or 8 feet above the ground. The wonder was how he got into or out of it, without a ladder. How he could

swing himself up or down, none saw..... The supporting threads were weak and lamps were loosely placed on it. They would fall down if one swings into it. When I went to see him as he lay on it, he got angry and drove me off.

Baba was occasionally doing something strange between 1 P.M. and 2 P.M. at the mosque with a cloth screen in front of him and when he was alone. He would take out of a pouch 10 or 15 **old coins.** They were of various values and descriptions i.e., 0-0-3, 0-0-6, 0-1-0, 0-2-0, 0-4-0, 0-8-0, 1-0-0.

He would rub his finger tips constantly yet gently against their surface (whether with or without mantra, I cannot say) Their surfaces had all become worn out and smooth. He would say, as he rubbed his finger against the coins, "This is Nana's, this is Bapu's, this is Kaka's etc," If any one approached, he would gather the coins, put them back in the pouch and hide them.

Baba spoke thousands of "**goshties.**" I will narrate a few. Once he said "I was at Punthamba. There was a struggle there between two parties. I wondered why they fought. I found near them a potful of coins. That was the bone of contention between them. Then I quietly moved up and carried it away. They found that their wealth was gone and began to mourn and lament. I was saying to myself. Who am I? What is this wealth? Whose is it? What confusion and struggle for this? The pot is mine and I am the pot's."

Baba once spoke thus:—"My mother was greatly rejoicing that she had got a son (i.e., me.) I was for my part wondering at her conduct. When did she beget me?

Was I begotten at all? Have I not been already in existence? Why is she rejoicing over this?

Once at Shirdi, some body had prepared "Sira" i.e., sweetened semolina pudding). Baba asked me if I had been given "Sira." I then said that I was not on good terms with B.....and that I had not been given "Sira." Baba then gave me instruction. "Who gives what to whom? What is this "Sira."? Who eats it? **Do not say of anyone than he is inimical. Who is whose enemy? Do not entertain any ill feelings towards anyone. All are one and the same."** That idea is brought out at the end of Ch. II of my commentary on Amritanubhava.

A religious person of Satara once offered to teach me Vedanta but I said that I could rely on Sai Baba's help in that matter. Then that person jeered at Baba and said that as a Moslem he knew nothing and could teach nothing of Vedanta. I did not waver in my faith and so I went to Sai Baba and told him that I wished to write a commentary on well-known Vedantic work, Amritanubhava. Baba placed his hand on my head, blessed me and gave me permission to write. I found that the numerous goshties I had heard from Baba furnished me with fresh analogies and similies to embellish my commentary with and avoid a repetition of the stock similies.

Baba occasionally **sang Musalmani songs** that I could not understand.

I have composed numerous Kirtans and Stotras and written other works. A list of them is given in Ch. 63 of Bhakti Saramrita P. 333 including Manache Sloka-Jalada Dhus.

VI

May, 1936.

DATTATREYA DAMODAR RASANE
alias NANA SAHIB RASANE (or DAULAT SHAH)
Son of Damodar (or Anna) Savalram Rasane
Kasar, aged 40 Ravivarpet Poona.

SAYS:—

My father is an old devotee of Sai Baba. He went to Baba about the time Nana Sahib Chandorkar went to him. Then my father had no issue, and wanted to go to Baba to get his blessings for obtaining issue. About 1900, a devotee had sent Baba a parcel of excellent Goa mangoes Of these he kept apart six and distributed the rest as **prasad** to persons present. They wanted him to distribute the remaining six also. But Baba said he had reserved some for Damya (i.e., my father). 'But' they replied 'Damya is not here.' "He has arrived at Koper-gaon and will be here soon" said Baba. Soon after that, my father went to Baba, and presented him with flower garlands, chadar etc. Then Baba said **"Damya! Take these fruits now. Eat and die."** My father was frightened at these words. But Mahalsapatti who was there told him that it was a blessing to die at Baba's feet. Thus encouraged, my father thought he would eat the fruit. But Baba came to his relief with these words. "Do not eat the fruits yourself. But **give them to your junior wife.** You will have two sons first. You should name the first Daulat Shah and the second Thana Shah" etc. My father returned to his home at Ahmadnagar and gave the fruit to his junior wife. He then noted the names to be given to the promised sons in a note book.

One year after that, I was born. When I was 15 months old. my father took me to Sai Baba at Shirdi for darsan, and he then asked Baba "How shall I name this child?" Baba replied "Have you forgotten what I told you? You have written it at page 3 of your note book. Did I not say that he should be named Daulat Shah?"

In my fifth year (i.e., in 1906) I was taken to Shirdi for my tuft ceremony and given my first initiation into the mysteries of the Alphabet. Sai Baba held my hand and wrote on the slate हरि: etc. Thereafter I was taken to the school at Shirdi.

When I was to be married, four girls were offered to me. My father never acted in any serious matter without previously consulting and getting the sanction of Baba. He went to Sai Baba and placed before him all the four horoscopes (i.e., of the offered girls) one of which had 2,500 or 3,000 rupees dowry and asked him which was to be chosen. Baba selected a poor girl's horoscope and gave it into the hands of my father. That was the girl I married. My father invited Baba to attend the marriage which was to take place at Pandharpur. But Baba replied "**I am with you. Do not fear. Wherever you think of me, there I am with you.**" My father pressed him further to attend the marriage. Baba however declined the invitation with these words, "**Without God's permission nothing can be done by me.** I will send Shama (i.e., Madhav Rao) to attend it as my deputy." And Shama attended it at Pandharpur.

I have a younger brother and he was named according to the directions of Baba.

As for the issue of my marriage, two girls and a boy were born but expired within a few months of their

birth owing to fits. The male child died in 1926; my wife's health was bad and I was in great depression of spirits; and in that state of mind I went to the Samadhi of Sai Baba; and there I prayed to Him thus-"Instead of giving me many babes that die quickly, give me at least one good child that will live long." When I was sleeping there at Shirdi, Baba appeared in my dream and said that the male child I was grieving over was born in **Moola** Nakshatra (i.e., under the constellation Moola) and that was harmful to the parents I saw in that dream a bright circle like the Sun on Baba's breast. Or rather inside the Sun, Baba was sitting with my deceased child on his lap, and he said "I took away this dangerous child from you. I will give you a good child. Do not fear." When I went home-before this time our family had migrated from Ahmadnagar to Poona-I looked up the dead child's horoscope and noticed that **Moola** was really the constellation under which the child was born. In fifteen months of that visit I got a son who is still alive. This was in 1928

My faith in Sai Baba increased. I look upon other Saints as Sai Baba and when I bow to them, I say either expressly or within myself "I bow to Sadguru Samartha Sainath." In **1927** I visited Khedgaonbet and bowed to **Narayan Maharaj** with this thought or these words. He told me "**Your guru is Paramaguru**. He is of a higher sort than myself. Why did you come here? Your prarabdha-Sanchita is there. Your choice is excellent. **Go there and you will achieve your purpose.**" This was before the birth of the son I referred to in the last paragraph.

In 1927 my stars were not auspicious and my health was bad. I went up to the temple of Sitaram Uttareswar

(i.e., Siva) 2 miles off **Junner**, (about 40 miles from Poona) and worshipped the God every Sunday. One Sunday at 9 P.M. when I placed flowers on the God with the words "Namaskar (i.e., Salutation) to Sai Baba." I saw a light at the image of the God and in that light the form of Sai Baba, whom I am always thinking of. Then my health improved and my drooping spirits revived. A saint, **Janaki Das** is living there. Every Sunday I went and bowed to him also with Sai Baba's name on my lips. He then told me. "You have resorted to a **great saint.** Why do you come to a poor saint like me? People like **myself seize the feet of Sai Baba.**" Then I went to my lodgings and slept. Sai Baba appeared in my dream as a fakir and said "You are full of anxiety. Give me biksha- **your entire body and mind as biksha.**"

I :—I will give this biksha and then inform my father.

Baba :—How can you do it without consulting your father ?

:—I am master of my life. My father has other sons and he will not object. You gave the children and there can be no objection to my being given to you.

Then Sai Baba took my body up in his palm and put me into his breast pocket. I was filled with **bliss** at the thought that he was so kind to me as to put me near his heart. When I woke up I found myself happy and my mind at once attained indifference, Udasinatha or Vairagya. Things did not attract me and hold my mind as they did formerly.

Two or three months later i.e., in 1928 (Phalgun Vadya) a son was born to me at Pandharpur. Fifteen months later, when I and my father went to Shirdi, he prayed to Baba that I should have one more son. In

1931 I got another son, and that child was named Saidas. On the second day of its birth, it had high fever. Baba's **udhi and tirtha** were given to it, and cloth relics of Baba were enclosed in a **Tayith** and tied to it. It recovered and got alright. When it completed its first year, it was taken to Shirdi; **abhishek** was done, clothes presented to Samadhi; and brahmins were fed.

In 1931 I was placed in charge of the bangle business. I insisted that it should be named after Baba. It is called (after getting Baba's permission by casting lots before his picture) Sri Samartha Sainath & Co. It is conducted on lines of probity and good conscience.

Any udhi and Tirtha that I give in Sai Baba's name cure and bless the person that receives these.

On 1-9-1932 I was on pilgrimage at Muttra and had an attack of cholera. Death appeared imminent. My father asked me what were my last wishes. I said I merely wanted to be taken to Shirdi, to be burnt there if I die as Sai Baba was my Krishna. But with Baba's photo placed over my head (Udbatti being burnt before it) and with the frequent application of Baba's udhi and Tirtha at **Muttra,** I was somehow pulling on. At midnight, my sister-in-law Subadrabai who was there had an **avesam**. That is, the spirit of Miradatar a saint of Unava (in Gujerat near Sidpur) spoke through her mouth. Miradatar was a renowned Mohammadan Wali (i.e., Saint), and spoke thus (through her) "You are calling on Sai. He is old and cannot easily move. He is my uncle (Kaka). On his behalf and as he sent me, I have come. Have no fears. You will have his blessings. You will see him in spirit tomorrow. Prepare a cup of

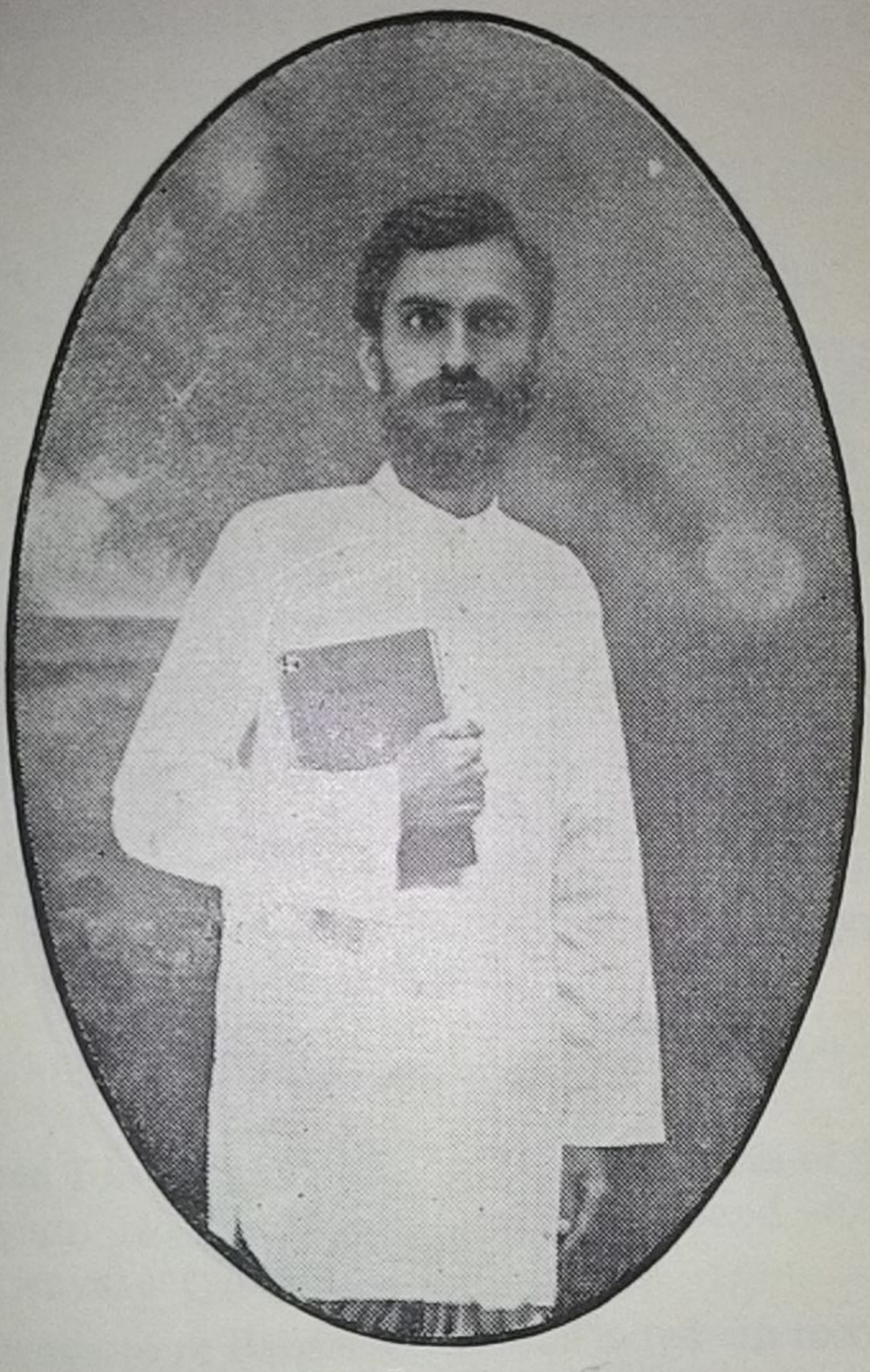
coffee and give it to the patient." Coffee waa prepared and I took it with a little of Baba's udhi in it. There after fever ceased and I had no more motions. The cure was so sudden as to surprise the doctor whom I went to see the next day. "Yesterday, this man was at the point of death; and how does he get so quickly cured as to come here to-day?" was his question. I replied that Sai is a doctor of doctors; and that his sacred udhi saved me.

When I was young, say seven years old, I went to Shirdi and was massaging Baba's foot; At that time Baba began the distribution of sweets with his own hand to the children present. Naturally my attention turned to the sweets and I grew slack in massaging. My mother was at my side and she beat me saying "You are thinking of sweets and neglect the service of Baba." "You, old woman" cried Baba, "Why do you beat the boy?" My mother requested him to give me a good desire to perform service to Baba. Baba answered "The boy will serve me well. God will endow him with pure desires. Do not fear. Do not beat him."

When I was twelve years, I went with an elder cousin to Shirdi. We had 100 rupees with us. Baba asked for dakshina, 10 rupees once, 15 rupees another time etc. Only 25 rupees were left with my cousin, in his pocket and we at once wrote home to Ahmadnagar for more money-to give Baba and for our return journey. That evening Baba asked my cousin for 25 rupees, and he replied that our money had been exhausted and that we required money for our return journey. Baba's retort was quick. "Why talk all this humbug? You have got **25 rupees in a corner of your pocket.** The M. O.

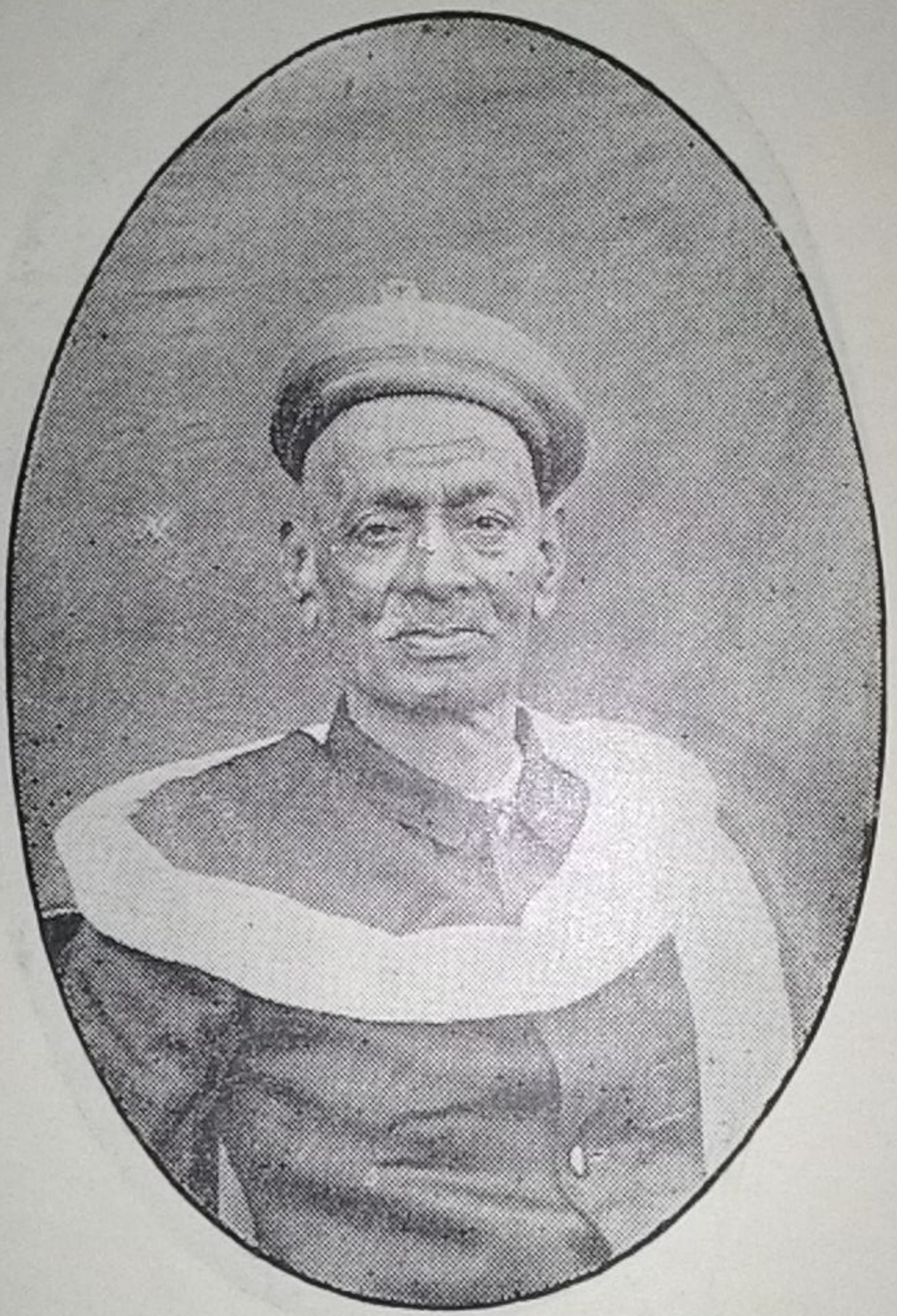
you have written for **will come here tomorrow**. Do not fear:" My cousin paid up the 25 rupees at once.

Baba used to say "**Who gives me one, to him I give two**. Who gives two, to him I give five. Who gives me five, I give him ten." There was, besides the obvious meaning of God's or Baba's returning one's gift manifold, an esoteric meaning in these words.



Dattatreya D. Rasane

(Nana Saheb or Daulatshah)



Damodar S. Rasane

VII

DAMODAR SAVALRAM RASANE, KASAR, (*alias* Anna Rasni) S/o Savalram Rasni formerly of Ahmadnagar now at Poona,

Says:—

What my son said is true about his birth. When I went to Baba, desirous of issue, he was kind enough to remember me and give me his blessings. When I was still on my way to Shirdi, passing through Kopergaon station, he mentioned at Shirdi that I was coming and reserved mango fruits for me. He gave me those fruits with the blessing that I should give them to my junior wife and that she would bring forth two sons first. She ate the fruit and gave birth to two sons, one **fifteen months after my visit**, the other years later and he gave names to both in advance. I noted those names in my note book (page 3) and these children bear those names also, in addition to the usual Hindu names I have given them.

I prayed to Baba for a second grandson at his samadhi and he was born.

When I first went to Baba, one Bala Patel of Nevasa or Seagaon was sweeping the masjid and doing (in various ways) service to Baba.

I always took Baba's advice and acted up to it; and the results were always satisfactory.

Once I had an appeal in the High court, and the lawyer had written to me to go to Bombay. Then Baba detained me and prevented me from going. Yet the result of the appeal was in my favour.

Nanasaheb Dengle brought a big silver plate full of various dainties and begged Sai Baba to eat. Baba shouted out. **A black dog** ran up and licked up some of the food. Nanasaheb Dengle who was standing near looked at it with disgust. "Is it for this pariah dog that I prepared all this", he thought within hereself. Baba at once flung away the plate with its contents towards him and said "**Take it away**". I was present then.

I remembered always Baba's treatment of **low creatures** and men of low position as his equals or as himself. Once when I went to Baba and knowing that he would not care to go to my lodgings and have his dinner there, requested that he might send Bala Patel to be my guest. Bala Patel was of a **low caste.** So Baba in granting my request said "Don't cry Dhut Dhut at him" *i. e.* do not humiliate the guest by giving him a place far away from your own place of eating. I agreed. When I had prepared sumptuous meals, I spread one plate for Baba and filled it with all eatables and then called out "Baba, come!" A black dog came in and ate from the plate. I waited reverently till it finished its meal and then gave meals to others and took my own. I gave Bala a plate and made him sit near me and not outside the house.

My mind **is always dwelling on Baba, and often I see him here.** Sometimes Baba **abused me and beat me** even fiercely. But I knew that as with Akkalkote Maharaj, blows and abuse have an auspicious ending. So I never resented or grumbled and I never gave up my attachment to him.

He has asked Muslims to do their namaz and then go to him, to read their Quran; he has talked with moulvis on their religion.

I was not asked by nor have I given any information regarding my experience to Das Ganu Maharaj or Dabholkar. I went to Baba for the first time about 1895. In the year after I went Ramanavami Utsav celebration began and for these 40 years, I have provided one ornamental standard for that occasion every year. That was before Nana was born.

The statement I had three wives is wrong. I had two both living when I went to Baba. I had consulted astrology. Ketu was in the fifth place in my horoscope and so there was the difficulty of getting issue. But Baba a Sat Purush overcame all that. He anticipated and provided for the issue of so many years. He said 8 children will be born to my younger wife, to whom I was to give the four mango fruits he gave me.

As for business consultations with Baba, the proposal about speculating at Bombáy in cotton was from a broker. He was not to be partner. I was to be the sole venturer.

I went to Baba, thinking I would allot a share to him in the profits, and I was massaging his feet. Then Mahlsapathy, I and Baba alone were the three present. Baba replied expressly that he did **not wish to get involved** in any Samsara (like sharing profits). So I gave up that idea. On another occasion, I went to Shirdi and there I expressly asked Baba if I could trade in grain, wheat etc. He said that the **prices would fall,** and that I **would have to sell at a lower price** than the price at which I bought- I gave up that proposal. But when I mentioned the prophecy of Baba to a merchant-friend, he showed me how the prophecy was falsified by the steady rise in prices for many days. But Srawan came

and there were good rains. The prices suddenly fell and the grain storers had a serious loss. Baba saved me from that fate.

I never started any transaction without getting sanction from Baba. When he was in the flesh, I went to Shirdi and asked him mentally. After 1918, I still consult him, by chits etc. and **he guides me still.** Once when I sat at his feet along with many others, I had two **questions in my mind** and he gave answers to both.

I. There are so **many crowding** to Sai Baba. **Do they all get** benefit from him ?

To this. he replied orally. "Look at the mango-tree in blossom. If all flowers turned fruit what a splendid crop it would be. . But do they ? **Most fall off** (either as flowers or as unripe fruits, by wind etc.) Very few remain.

II. My second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how am I to fare then ? To this, Baba answered that he **would be with me whenever I thought of him where ever I thought of him.** That promise he has kept up **before 1918 and after 1918. He is still with me. He is still guiding me.** This was about 1910-1911 when my brothers had separated from me and my sister died and there was a theft and Police enquiry- all of which incidents upset me very much.

(These are mentioned in S. L. M. III (5) 368 & 369). *

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* When my sister died, my mind was much upset. I did not care for life and enjoyments. When I went to Baba, he pacified me with Upadesa and made me eat a feast of Pooran Poli at Appakulkarni's and get pasted with sandal.

There was a theft in my house. A thirty years friend of mine stole my wife's jewel box including her auspicious नथी. I wept before Baba's photo. The next day, the man returned the jewel box and prayed for pardon.

VIII

8-12-1936.

ABDUL Son of SULTAN,
of NANDED in KHANDESH,
Aged about 65, Mussulman, residing at Shirdi.

I came to Shirdi 45 years ago (1889) from Nanded on the banks of Tapti. I was under the care of Fakir Amiruddin of Nanded. Sai Baba appeared in the dream of that Fakir and delivering two mangoes to him directed him to give those fruits to me and to send me to Shirdi. Accordingly the Fakir told me of his dream, gave me the fruits and bade me go to Sai Baba at Shirdi. I came here in my twentieth year. Even Nana Sahib Chandorkar had not then come to Baba. Baba welcomed me saying मेरा कावला आल्या i.e., "My crow is come." Baba directed me to devote myself entirely to his service. From the beginning, I lighted and fed with oil five perpetual lamps, i.e., those at Lendi, Masjid, Chavadi etc. As for Food, Baba was not giving me or any one else, food. I got some food somehow and lived 5 or 6 years in what is now the stable.

I was always by Baba's side rendering service I read Koran near him at the mosque. Baba occasionally opened the Koran and made me read the passages at which he opened the book. He occasionally quoted passages from the Koran. I went on writing down what Baba was uttering. This is the book (in Mahratti and Modi script) which contains the gracious utterences of Baba. Everything which fell from his lips is sacred.

I make use of this record in the following way. By Baba's blessings, I have full faith in what he has said guiding me and every one aright. When any one wishes to know about the future or other unseen and unknown matter, he comes to me and states the problem. Then I reverently consult this book of Baba's utterances and the answer that comes out of the page opened comes out correctly. This has been tried and proved many times. This gift of propecy is due to Baba's grace. I shall give two instances of such consultation. When the well in in the Sai Mandir was dug, the water proved brackish. Baba had attained Mahasamadhi at that time. I consulted his utterance book. Baba's reply was that as a result of deeper digging the well water would become sweeter. I dug the well deeper by two feet and the well water was no more brackish. A second instance is Barrister Gadgil's. He wanted to know if his son would return from England. I said he would; and he did.

I use this manuscript book of Baba's utterances along with and just like the Koran. I go on reading it reverently, getting absorbed in it and go on rolling my beads at the same time.

Baba sat behind the small pedestel or pillar like structure at the Lendi in which a "**Nanda deepam**" or Perpetual lamp was kept up. I found generally that Baba sat behind the Lendi pillar which enclosed the lamp and not in front. From there the lamp was not visible to him. I never saw him gazing at that lamp. I was the person to do the required service at the Lendi and at other places for Baba. I used to fill pots with water and place them near Baba at the Lendi lamp Pillar. He would sit near two such potsful of water; and he would go on pouring out the water in various directions.

What that was for and whether he would say any mantra while doing so, I can not say. Except me none else was present when he poured out water as stated above.

I do not think that any other Mahommedan except myself was reading Koran or other Holy books sitting by Baba's side. Baba would occasionally go on speaking out sacred words and I have noted them down in this note book. By Baba's order or permission I have taken all this down. The writing can be read by you or other devotees. The script is either Devanagari or modi.

(N.B. Abdul hands over the note books to B. V. N. who finds they are in Mahratti language. There are prayers to Maruti in those reports of speeches of Baba. There are recitals of the Avatars of God dovetailing Mahommed and numerous others with the Hindu Dasa Avatar. Quite obviously, Sri Sai Baba and following him, Abdul revere the Hindu Avatars, Maruti etc., and pray to them).

As stated already I use these books not merely for daily reading but also as "Sortes Virgiliani" for purposes of prophecy.

10-3-1038,
Shirdi.

No Mussalmans came and read books like Koran and Shariff to Baba or asked him for explanation.

Several Fakirs and Saints came here. But I do not know if he talked with them on Koran and Shariff.

I was busy with activities (physical) in the service of Baba, sweeping and scavenging all streets here, and then read Koran etc., near Baba, keeping awake all night, Baba's practical advice to me was that I should not go to sleep over my Koran reading. He said "Eat very little. Do not go in for variety of estables. A single sort i.e., dish will suffice. Do not sleep much."

I followed the advice. I ate very little. I kept awake all night and in a kneeling posture was going on repeating the Koran etc., near Baba or meditating. Baba told me to have Dhyan on what I read. "Think of **11 a.m.**" he said to me.

One night I was tired and tried to sleep, holding my palms in front of me to rest my drowsy head. Then Baba said "Are you trying to see the moon?" That night I fell asleep and fell upon Baba and his gadi in that sleeping condition. Baba gently stroked my feet and I awoke. Next day, strange to say, when I took water in my palms and looked, there was a big moon in that water. It was 2 P.M. This was what Baba had spoken of. I used to look after the Lendi place and its light i e, the ever burning light maintained by Baba there. It was in those days, placed in a hallow in the earth, scooped out to the depth of about 2 feet and protected with a cover to save the light from being blown out. There

was a pandal. A Zinc sheet was the top of the pandal. Some 20 curtains of cloth were tied all round, to form something like a tent. I remained in it and looked after the lamp in the centre of it. That light has been shifted from its place now, very slightly, and is put in a raised pillar of bricks and mortar containing an enclosed chamber for the lamp. When Baba sat near the lendi, he would sit close to the light. I filled two buckets with water and placed them near him. This water he would scatter all round that lamp. He would get up from the lendi and walk a few yards in each direction and go on gazing at that direction.

My service to Sai Baba was service to him and to all. I washed Baba's clothes in the streamlet (odai) flowing at the village boundary. I swept the mosque, the chavadi and surrounding places and lit the lamps in these places and fed them and the lendi lamp with oil. I not merely swept the village streets but also removed the night soil. Baba called me Halalkoor (=Scavenger) and "my miriambi". I fetched water and did sundry services.

Ayi during the early years of her stay did part of the street sweeping work. Even then, my work supplemented hers.

Baba protected me and protects me by giving me the needed food and ensuring my safety and progress.

About 1927 *i.e.* after Ayi and Baba passed away, I was in Ayi's **sala**, reciting Quran. The three walls of that dilapidated mud building suddenly collapsed and I was buried waist deep in the **debris.** But Baba saved me from any hurt.

Baba has given me his blessings and kept me with him. First my Guru himself directed me to be with and serve Baba, and I did so. But later my guru came to Shirdi and wanted me to go away, with him. I replied that I could do so, if Baba so ordered. But no such order having been issued I stayed on with Baba and my former Guru went away from Shirdi.

Baba's blessings to me were strange and sometimes concealed in abuse and violence. He has beaten me and Jog many times. He said to me.

(*) (1) तेरेकु दरियाकु पार उत्तार दिया
(2) तेरे मट्टी सुन्ना बना दिया
(3) क्या बडी माडी बांधीया

Like this, he uttered blessings and prophecies, seated before me in the morning at the chavadi and then started for the mosque.

Baba was constantly saying many things about Avatars etc. These have been written down in this note book.

(Here Abdul takes out and shows an old book parts of which are written in Devanagari character, parts in Modi and parts in Urdu. He does not wish to say who wrote out these pages. His own knowledge of these scripts, according to some of his fellow devotees is too poor to enable him to write these well. But he went on, at the request of this writer to read out Baba's utterances from the book).

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* (3) Evidently refers prophetically to the buildings of Buty Wada, where Abdul was living for 8 or 9 years after Baba's demise.

(1 and 2) refer to Abdul's spiritual goal being achieved by Baba.

Baba said of the Avatars, what follows:—
Baba said, First was Omkar.

From Omkar

Bhavakar.

भवाकारसे आद, आदसे अलेक, अलेकसे निरंजन, निरंजनसे निराकार, निराकारसे नीळ, नीळसे अनीळ, अनीळसे सुन्ने.

केशव, अम्रू, उत्तर, पूर्व, पिर रक्ष पिर (i. e. thereafter) मत्स्यावतार, मनायत, अस्मिव जम्रिद, भगरिद (=भगीरथ?), उच्चायत देखायत्, भलिंतर, तिर्मक (Triambaka?) कच्छावतार, उच्चायत, देखायत, प्रजापत, उग्रसेन, कदिन, डाल्वारक्षर, वराहावतार, खलीपत्, गोवम् (Goutama?) विष्णु, हरितक, वज्रशेर.

नारसिंहावतार, सेजवार, रेवक, वन्दोपस्त्, वैंलचंद, कासिप (=काश्यप), वामनावतार.

शान, जान, स्यान, नूर, तेज, कमल, कादरम, अद्भुद्, गस्तत्वा, कव्वै, हरिपर्वा, अनार्ध, जयव्, अवि, आत्तस्त धर्म, मांधाता, विश्रण, जमदग्नि, परशुरामावतार, राजाजी जाती, कवादिक, राजा दशरथ, रामचंद्रजी अवतार, अंकुश, भग्ना पुरुष, हिरपाल, भजाल, पिर्तू (=पृथु), इदुरत, (यदु?), सूरसेन, वासुदेव, श्री कृष्णाजी अवतार, प्रतिमदन (=प्रद्युम्न), अनुरुदस (=अनिरुद्धा), इसितहर वद्धा (=बुद्धा?), जली अवतार (=कली).

ब्राह्मण हुवा, रजपुत हुवा, गौली हुवा, वाद मुसलमान हुवा, चतुर्युगमे चार अवतार निखाला (=Kritayuga?), तीर्थामे तीन अवतार (=Tretayuga?), द्वापरमे दोण, अथर्वणमे एक अवतार.

मत्स्य, कच्छ, वराह, नारसिंह, वामन्, परशुराम,(——) कृष्णजी, वोद्धो, भी, कलकी.

यांने इब्रहीम चार वेद किये
ए टेरावूकु वास्ते कलमू षारीफ उतारा हे.
खुदाकी खुदरत् खुदा ही जाने
हर वेदमे हजारो अवतार निकाले
मगर हर जमानेकी इवादत जुदा जुदा है
यूवी है हिंदुस्तान् गाढीपर आट वादशहा वादशही करेंगा.
ए कवर अटरा कुराणमे है,

* I take 3 baths a day.

Only if I see the face of a lady, I can say positively whether she will have issue or will get married. I have given out such prophecies and they have come right. I owe all this to Baba. I give Asirvad to those who come to me.

* [There is much more. But Abdul is slow to read and there is no time to read more].

IX

11-9-1936,
Thana.

ABDUL RAHIM SAMSUDDHIN RANGARI,
Mussulman, Painter, aged 65, residing at
Mahagiri, Thana.

Says:—

In 1913, there was plague at Thana and also, I believe, at Shirdi. My wife was then suffering for about a month from some disease. Her throat, cheek etc., were swollen and she could eat nothing. Medicines were tried in vain. A neighbour of mine Mr. R. G. Gupte, a local pleader advised me to take my wife to Sai Baba at Shirdi as that would cure her. So we went.

When the journey began, she was unable to eat anything. But as we went on, at Igatpuri, she was able to take tea and again at Nasik something more. This was an auspicious indication. She was fast improving. We went to Shirdi. Then I went into the Mosque and bowed to Sai Baba. He spoke to me in Hindustani.

Baba :— Whence are you coming ?

I :—Thana.

Baba :—What for?

I :—My wife has swelling in the throat etc.

Baba :—Ask her to come up the Mosque.

I took her up the steps and she bowed to Baba. He touched her head, and said "Khuda Achha Karega." (i.e. God will set matters right). I gave him rupee 1-4-0 without being asked; and he accepted it and gave me **Udhi.** I stayed two hours thereafter. Her swelling was fast subsiding. So we started back atonce without the

permission of Baba. He had told me to stay. But as a cure had been effected, I thought, we could start off. I did not like to stay in a strange place, unnecessarily, especially with my wife and a two year old son.

The tonga by which we came, was in the village. We took it and started off to Kopergaon. We went up half the distance, without any trouble. But there after, the axle of the tonga broke, and we were stranded on the road. It was about 10 P. M. No conveyances were available. We could neither walk back nor go on - so many miles at night. The road was a lonely road and we felt the great danger we were in - exposed to the inclemency of the night and the chances of molestation by high-waymen. Our predicament was unenviable. We repented the scant regard we had shown to Baba's words. Two hours passed in this condition. After midnight, we heard the rumble of some carriage and a voice crying out "Thanawalla, Thanawalla." Then a tonga came; it was the driver calling out "Thanawalla." I said I was 'Thanawalla" and asked him how he happened to know our plight and go there at a most unusual hour. He said that Sai Baba had sent him. "What for?" I asked. "To fetch you" was the reply. Then we took the tonga and went to Shirdi. It was about 1 or 2 A.M. when we reached it. Baba was waiting for us. When we reached the Mosque, Baba said "You went away without permission. So you fared in this way." I answered "Yes. I beg your pardon. This was my lot for having left without permission. "Then Baba made us stay near the Mosque for the rest of the night, and he went in and carried on his usual meditation. In the morning, he went out for his **Bhiksha** (i.e. to beg his bread and brought

bread and vegetables. After taking part of it, he gave us the remainder and asked us to eat it. We ate it. My wife was able to eat that solid food. Then he gave us leave to go. I went out, looked for a tonga and returned saying that no tonga was to be seen. Baba said "Go and see, there is a tonga." I turned and looked and found there was a tonga. How it suddenly happened to be there, we could not make out. Baba blessed us and we left. My wife retained her good health. She died seven years later. This was my only visit to Shirdi. But it gave me firm faith in Sai Baba. I remember him and other Saints when I go to bed. Whenever I think intently of Baba, I actually see him before me.

We had very little talk with Baba during our two hours stay in the day. I found Baba was smeared with sandal paste over his hand, face etc. Moslems do not smear themselves like this. I asked him how he put on all this. Baba said **जैसादेश तैसावेश** (i.e. Do at Rome as the Romans do). Instead of worshipping their own Gods, they worship me as their God. Why should I object and displease them? I myself am a devotee of God."

He added "If you had come yesterday, it would have been better."

I:—Why?

Baba.—There was music. I wept all night. They abused me."

I:—Why did they abuse you?

Baba:—When I say "abused," people do not understand. But you will understand.

I thought that "abused" was "amused" really.

[Some Saints show their indifference to their praise by speaking of it as "abuse." In the Bhajan referred to

above, Baba would have been highly praised and all the time he would treat it with the same indifference as if it were abuse. Again in the praise, melting music would be wedded to pathetic appeals to God. At these Baba would weep.]

I:—"One who loves God would weep, laugh or dance as the songs in praise of God go on."

Baba:—Just so. You are right. Have you your own Guru?

I.—Yes. Habee Baleeshah Chisthi Nizami.

Baba:—That is why you understand.

I remembered that my Guru (who had passed away 12 years before my visit to Shirdi) was generally accompanied by music when he went out.

X

26-9-1936.
Bandra.

RAJABALLI MOHAMMAD,
Khoja, Contractor, Turner Road, aged 49.

Says:—

I saw Sai Baba some eight years or so before he passed away. I went, as I had heard good accounts from people here.

I had work at Nasik and I went there. Some carts of tanning bark were being delayed delivery at Nasik, even after I went there. So I had nothing to do and I used my time by going to Baba. I regard him as a great saint with vast powers ("which are possible only to those who have Atmajnana") I went and presented him a cocoanut and sugar candy. I was not asked for dakshina and gave none. I asked leave to start the day of my reaching Shirdi or the following morning. But Baba said "that man is not yet ready to deliver your goods." I therefore had no object in wasting more time at Nasik and spent two or three days in Baba's company. I had nothing particular to ask of him. I wanted only increase of faith. I wanted that at my death, I may die possessed of full **Imam or faith** so that I may have a good end. I prayed to him (mentally) for that and asked for his blessings. He placed his hand on my hand and blessed me. From that moment his blessings have borne fruit. My **faith has steadily increased.** Besides that I have a great benefit from my faith in him and in his Udhi. For example five years back, my she buffaloe was in great travail, in trying to calve. Pained at her sufferings I

sent for the Veterinary Surgeon. He tried his best. Especially as I was the Chairman of the Sanitary Committee of the Municipality, he would be glad to help me in such a difficulty. But he could do nothing. Then I bethought myself of Baba's udhi. I placed some udhi on the head of the buffaloe and hoped that Baba would kindly come to its aid. In about ten minutes, she safely calved and there was no more trouble. There are numerous cases in which I have used Baba's **udhi, with signal success.** I take it myself in this way. Apply a bit of it over my chin, eyes, forehead and think of Baba. Then all my difficulties are overcome.

Baba is undoubtedly a saint of vast power. "Is' I say. Saints according to Islamic tradition do not die. They pass from one state to another. That is all. I have similarly visited tombs of other saints e.g. at Delhi. And I have gone to numerous living saints e.g. Tajuddin Baba of Nagpore, Baba Jan of Poona (1928) etc. I] have had numerous experiences. These give me earthly benefits here and strengthen my Iman or faith on which I have to rely at death. There is a saying, (which I firmly believe and act upon) that once being in the company of a saint is better than saying a hundred prayers by yourself.

I have here the porcelain statue and picture of Sai Baba. My family burn **udhbathi** before it on Thursdays

XI

15—12—1936.
Bandra.

ADAM DALALI,
Aged about 70.
Estate Broker,
Living near the Naupada Mosque, Bandra.

Says:—

I am an old bhakta of Sai Baba. My experiences are already found in Sai Lila Masik.

I have long been going to Sai Baba. He was so kind and generous. He has helped me on many occasions. I shall give a few striking instances.

My son had to be **married**. I intimated the fact to Baba and asked for his leave and sanction. Each time I asked, he put it off. I was writing also to him. Even then the reply sent usually back to me by Baba was his usual "Allah Malik Hai." At last after three years he replied that my son's marriage may be celebrated and he fixed a date for it and ordered me to celebrate it on that date. That was alright. But how were the funds to be provided by a poor man like myself? See how Baba provided for me! I had undertaken to pay the expenses of the bride's party also. I looked to Baba for aid. Some ten days prior to the date fixed, I got a sudden work entrusted to me and a sudden payment for it. Thus I got some relief. Then with similar accessions to my little marriage fund, I was able to celebrate the marriage on the date fixed by Baba (about 1913 or 1914.)

An other and later instance of his help was towards the close of Baba's career. I had acted as a broker between a Marwadi and the man who mortgaged a building

to him, giving him a title deed purporting to be issued by the Collector. This title deed was impugned and the police charge sheeted me and the mortgagor for using a fabricated document &c., I went to Baba and prayed for his help. He said "Do not fear." Everything will come right." Then I went to Mr. Tendulkar and entreated his wife to pray to Baba for me and say that I would be discharged. She said so. That day I was discharged and the others i. e. the Mortgagor were committed to the Sessions,wherein I was examined as a Prosecution witness.

I have had numerous experiences, I have forgotten them. But they were all about earthly i. e. worldly matters. I did not read Quran or ask for spiritual advice; nor did Baba ask me to read Quran or speak to me of spiritual matters.

Baba used to ask Bade Baba to go and read Quran or attend to his work. I do not now remember any prominent or scholarly moslem that went to Sai Baba.

He has come to me in other forms and dealt with me. e. g. Once he came as a Bramin and begged for something. I gave him two annas then. Once he came to me as a Marwadi and said he was hungry. I gave him four annas and asked him to go to a Marwadi's hotel to get his food. Then when I went to Shirdi, Baba dropped significant hints showing me that he had visited me in those forms e. g. on the latter occasion, he said of me (at Shirdi) to some one else " I went to this man, he sent me to the Marwadi hotel to eat." I always used his **Udhi** and Tirtha I have got his picture here at home and I burn **Udbathi** before it. Even in recent times, I have been going to Shirdi.

XII

8—12—1936.
Shirdi.

NANDARAM SIVARAM MARWADI,
s/o
"
Shroff, Merchant, Aged 70,
Residing at Shirdi.

Says :—

At the time of the second visit of Plague at Shirdi i. e. s. 1833 (1911 A.D.) the villagers were quickly leaving the village. Some men were seated one day at the Maruti temple and as I passed by remarked that my eyes were red (with fever) and that I was evidently to be struck down by Plague. I was startled to hear this. I got up on horseback and went to the Maruti temple. People advised me to pray to Maruti, with an offer of cocoanut and oil, to save me from death. I prayed and made those offerings. I thought I should fly from Shirdi and go to Ekruka. So I went to Baba for permission. Baba however dissuaded me from leaving the village. He assured me that I was not going to die. "I will not let you die, till I die", He said and gave me **Udhi**. I stayed on in the village and my fever abated and finally disappeared.

XIII

Nasik,
15-10-1936.

LAKSHMAN GOVIND MUNGE,
Petition Writer, aged 72,
43, Main Road, Nasik.

Says:—

I went to Baba over 46 years ago. I had relations (now dead) at Shirdi viz., Vamanrao Rangnath Vizapurkar and his brother Sakharam. I was a clerk under the Senior Mamalatdar, Chidambar Keshav Gadgil. That Mamlatdar went to see Baba, (as also Nana Saheb Nimonkar) and I accompanied him. They took darsan of Baba. I followed suit. Yet I wondered how Baba was being worshipped by Hindoos. When I was in this mental state, Baba told Mr. Gadgil "Give me **my** Karkya, **my** Udbattipoodi and **my** one rupee." This request for **my** rupee etc., at once arrested my attention. The previous night just before retiring to rest, when we three (I, Gadgil and Nana Nimonkar) were alone in our night's resting place, Gadgil set apart some dates (Kharka), one rupee, and a packet of scented sticks (Udbatti) saying these have to be given to the saint. Baba's calling for these showed his clairvoyance or omniscience (Antargnan). These were given to Baba and he accepted them. Then Nana Saheb Nimonkar voluntarily offered a ten rupee note to Baba. Baba declined the gift, however, saying "I am a fakir. I will not take this." Baba at once disposed of the above articles. The rupee was given to the oilmonger for supplying oil to light the mosque. The sticks were burnt and the dates were dis-

tributed to all. These facts were very striking and I felt that Baba's worship was proper.

I visited Baba in **1890** when I was aged 26. Sai Baba was then at the **Maruti Temple at Rahata.** I had gone to Rahata in order to get the help of my maternal aunt's husband at Rahata. My marriage was settled. But I had to get jewels to deck the bride with. I thought my uncle would help me in that and so went to Rahata. There finding Baba at the temple, I approached him. Baba welcomed me with these words "Come Child, I was thinking of you yesterday," and asked me too shampoo his leg. I did. Then he took up a mango and gave it to me to eat. I ate it. It was so very sweet. Then Baba asked me questions.

BABA:—"What for have you come?"

I:—"My marriage is settled. I have no jewels. I have come to borrow jewels."

BABA.—"Who is whose?"
Who gives? Who receives?
None will give timely help.
If you require Rs. 1,000 or 2,000.
(worth of ornaments) receive it from me.

I was looking at Baba as he sat robed in a sack cloth and holding a mere tin for his only utensil. "How will he give me all this?" was the thought that occurred to me. I went then to the house of my relation i.e. maternal aunt's husband and explained my need. He said that he had no jewels. I returned in a cheerless mood, as I felt that the marriage must fall through for the time being for want of jewels, and must be put off. Just at that juncture, a friend came to me and I told him of the exact situation. He at once came to my rescue and by his

introduction or intercession, a Gujerati Sowcar at Sinner lent me some anklets, a nose screw and he took out 30 tolas of gold which were converted into jewels in one day, which also were lent to me (on interest).

So Baba through this friend and the Gujerati fulfilled his promise and the marriage was duly celebrated without any postponement.

After this event, I paid my yearly visits to Baba. For some years I was getting children but they died after a very short life. In 1912 I went and cried before Baba about this misfortune of mine, and prayed that he would give me one son blest with longevity. Baba said to me. "Why do you ask me for one? **I will give you two.**" I have accordingly got now 2 sons (aged 13 and 10) and 2 daughters (aged 27 and 18). I worship Baba's picture at home, and pray to it. My prayers are granted. Here is an instance.

I had a guest and his daughter staying with me. The daughter fell ill. The case took a serious turn. She lost consciousness. Her life was despaired of. I took Baba's photo and Baba's udhi and placed the former at her head and applied the latter to her face and body at night. In the morning, consciousness was restored and the mother vowed to pay 10 rupees to Baba and that was paid.

XIV

29-11-1936

GANGADHAR VISHNU KSHIRSAGAR
(of Nevasa)
DESHASTHA BRAHMIN Aged 51.
Telegraph Head Signaller in the Irrigation Department.
Sonawadi, Kopergaon,

Says:—

I lost my father when I was 5 years old. We had lands. Bala Nevaskar "Jayagudi", Baba's devotee was our lessee. He claimed our land as his own. My maternal uncle our guardian represented us. Bala Nevaskar asked him to go with him to Shirdi and leave the settlement of our dispute to be done by Baba. They came here from Newasa with my mother. My uncle and mother were total strangers to Baba. As soon as they came to the Mosque (Dwarka Mayi), even before they bowed, Baba said to Bala Newaskar "**Hand over the lands to the children. Why trouble them?**" We went back to Newasa. But Bala refused and we got possession through the Court. Bala became mad at that time. I was then aged 16 (1901.) After madness, he did not return to Shirdi I never saw Baba. My mother and maternal uncle occasionally came here and saw him.

Two years ago, I got transferred to Sonawadi. Since then, I am visiting Shirdi and singing songs before Sai Mandir. On 27-6-1935, I had a dream. I saw Sai Baba standing before me and saying "To-day your house is decreed to you, why are you sleeping? There is jatra at Shirdi, Come and eat." He took me to the eating hall and I took food and bowed to him. I awoke. Four days later, I got a letter from my brother that on the date of my darsan (27-6-35) our case in appeal (about our house) in the Ahmednagar District Court was decided in our favour. My faith in Baba has been greatly increased thereby.

XV

Shirdi,
9-12-1936.

BAYYAJI APAJI PATEL,
Son of ,, ,, aged 47,
Mahratta, Land owner and Revenue and Police
Patel of Biragaon, residing at Shirdi.

Says:—

I knew Baba since my babyhood. My house was one of the few houses from which **Baba took his biksha** i. e. begged his bread from the beginning of his life here and up to the end. For some 3 years, Baba would go over about 8 times during the day to our house to beg for his bread. Next for 3 years he visited us for this purpose four times a day. For 12 years, he visited us twice a day and during the last 12 years he came to us for bread once a day only. From my 11th year, I used to serve Baba. In (1896 i.e.) my seventh year, the Ramanavami Urus celebration began. It was then that Baba began to allow Hindus to affix sandal or to do pooja to him and moslems to read Koran before him at the masjid. This urus was started by Appakulkarni out of gratitude to Baba for the acquittal in the embezzlment charge brought against him. When Hindus affixed sandal paste to Baba, the latter applied sandal marks with the hand (Punja marks) on the walls of the masjid and other moslems did the same. Baba then applied sandal paste to Mahalsapathy's forehead and to some moslems. Mahalsapathy applied it to Baba's forehead. Baba then allowed Nimaz to go on at the mosque and enjoined silence on all others while Nimaz was going on. Baba himself **recited the Nimaz** sometimes. That was only on

Saturdays. When Pedas or other sweets were brought to Baba, he uttered the **Kalam** (which is the same as **Fatia)** over the sweets etc., and then distributed them to all - Hindus and Moslems alike. Baba finding that Hindus and Moslems would have differences as to the way and manner of celebrating the Urus allowed Sandal Panja to be put on all - Hindus and Moslems alike. My father, Nana Sahib Chandorkar, Tatya Patel etc., all bore the expenses of the celebration.

One day, when I was 11 years old (1901-2) Baba stopped me from going away to send my cattle. Then he suddenly spoke angrily at me and others, and broke four mudpots. Then he blew "Bum Bum" on the back of his hand-indicating that death or inauspicious event was coming. This was at 9 A.M. or 9-30 A.M. That night my father's sister's son Daji Kote, aged 30 died of fever.

During the last 14 years of Baba's life, he gave me **daily 4 rupees.** Even on his last (Samadhi) day, he gave me four rupees. As to the use of his gift, Baba once told me neither to lend the moneys he gave, nor make a gift of them. "Do not eat and excrete this. Do not give it away to others." So I have invested it in purchases of land. I purchased 84 acres of land out of Baba's gifts. I have had already 10 or 11 acres of other land.

Baba has helped me with his wonderful knowledge of **the future.** (1) About my cultivation, there was the strong temptation to plant my lands with sugarcane as so many do. Baba's advice was "**Dont.**" But I yielded once to the temptation, despite this advice. A loss of 300 rupees in the money invested on sugarcane planting and the going without the usual supply of dry crops I would have got on the land, that was the result of disobe-

dience. (2) In 1913, my father who was over 70 years of age went out as usual on horse back and returned with a stroke of paralysis. I went to Baba and asked for his **Udi.** Baba said "I will not give **Udi.** Allah Malik Hai." I wept. On the 3rd day of the attack i.e. on **Kartik Sudha Ekadasi** Sunday - a specially holy day, my father breathed his last. Next day I went to the Masjid and massaged Baba's leg as usual. I used to boast and feel proud that I **had Bhima's strength.** So I tried to lift Baba up in my arms after the massage to carry him and place him before the fire. Many a day I have done so. That day I could not lift him. Baba laughed at me and he put down my pride. That was a Dwadasi day. Baba then taught me two lessons:—not to be proud, and the other not to feel grief for the death of my father. "**Why should you be sorry? In 5 months he** (i.e. my father) **will come back.**" Then my son was born. He is aged 22 years and 8 months.

Baba gave me his last instruction or moral lesson on the day he breathed his last. After sending away Kaka Dikshit he gave me a moral lesson and **enjoined silence** on me with these words. "If you reveal it to any one, you will die." He added **मी जातों मेरेकु वाडाकु उचलूंदे. सगळे ब्राह्मणा भेकमाश्या जवलूराहातील्.** i.e. "I am going. Carry me to Wada. All brahmins will be living near me." With these words, he breathed his last. After these words were spoken Nana Nimonkar poured water into his mouth but the water came out. I held my **hand** below his chin to catch the water. Baba leaned upon me and expired. When Baba expired there were troubles of sorts. Government took charge of all the properties. There was wrangling between two parties. Moslems said that Baba should be buried in a separate building to be

constructed at the expense of people who (like me) had been benefitting by his daily bounty. We stood out for burial in the Dagdi Wada in accordance with Baba's wishes. The Kopergaon Mamlatdar Mr. Kulkarni was on the spot and the Rahata Foujdar Chakra Narayana also. The Mamlatdar decided that the public including both Moslems and Hindus should express their views and he would agree that the wishes of the majority should be carried out. Moslems prepared a Mahajar with 100 or less of signatures. We prepared Mahajars and got numerous (over 200) signatures including prominent names e.g. H. S. Dixit, Bapu Saheb Jog, Bala Saheb Bhate etc. Therefore our view, being that of the majority prevailed and Baba's body was interred in the Dagdi Wada.

In 1910, Shirdi had its second visitation of plague.

Four years ago, Baba gave me timely intimation and help. At Shirdi, a bull was marked with a trident and being thus dedicated to God Shiva was freely grazing all over the village and near our Lendi garden. It was injuring our gardens and we all contributed some 3 rupees and odd for the expenses of sending it to a pinjrapole at Yeola. The bull was entrusted to Bhiku Marwadi with the money and he took it away to be left at the pinjrapole. He returned and told us that he had performed that duty. That night Baba appeared in my dream and said" कां सोता. मेरेकु कसाइके दारीं बांध्या i. e. "Are you sleeping? I **have been tied to the door of a butcher.**" I woke and consulted Tatya Patel and others. We concluded that the bull had been left with a butcher and not left at the pinjrapole at Yeola. So I started at once went to Yeola and searched for our bull at the two pinjrapoles there.

It was not there and we were informed that Bhikku had not brought our bull there. Then I went round and looked near the butcher's quarters. Our bull was lifting its head over a wall. It was in a butcher's place. It was to be cut up that very day by the butcher and he told us that he had purchased it for 14 rupees from Bhiku Marwadi. The animal was rescued and placed in the pinjrapole; and Bhiku was charged, convicted and sentenced to 2 month's imprisonment.

XVI

18-9-1936

RAMCHANDRA SITARAM DEV
alias, BALA BHAU OR BALABHAT Aged 59 (60)
Brahmin, Landlord, Varsova Road, Andheri,

SAYS:—

I saw Baba first in S. 1830 (i· e. 1908). I had already heard of him from Das Ganu Maharaj at his Kirtan at Kalyan. I knew Amir Sakkar Khatik i. e. butcher of Bandra. He also spoke highly of Baba and asked me to go and see him. So I went to Shirdi along with Sri Krishna Patil. Sathe's wada was the only resort in existence then. But we had our lodging at Ganapati Temple. On that day, there was no crowd of Bombay visitors but there were crowds of the locality and neighbourhood. I was intending to go to Akkalkote and Amir Sakkar said "Shirdi is on the way. Call there and then go to Akkalkote." So I wanted just to see Baba and start off for Akkalkote. When we saw Baba, he said **"I must go to Akkalkote."** thereby expressing the predominating idea in my mind. I was struck at once by his power to read what I had in my mind, and I decided to spend the day with him at Shirdi. But I had no end to achieve by my visit or stay, beyond the pleasure of being near a great soul. Next day, I went away, with his leave, to Akkalkote. I was being drawn to him. So I repeated my visits e. g. I went there next **Deepavali** At that time there were crowds from Bombay with Baba. There were 5 or 6 accompanying me. I sat up between 8 P. M. and midnight with Baba (at the Mosque) and I then asked him to give me Upadesh and be my Guru.

Baba:—"It is not essential that one should have a Guru. Everything is within us. **What you sow, you reap. What you give you get. There is no need for a Guru. आपला जवलच् आहे.**

It is all within you. Try to listen within and follow the direction you get. **आपण पहावा "We must look at ourself.** That is the monitor the Guru" **आपला आपण पहावा.**

At the time I approached Baba for Upadesh and even now, **I had and have my own Sampradai Guru at Ratnagiri.**

As my faith in Sai Baba grew, I gradually dropped my visits to Pandharpur and Akkalkote. I was doing two services, one was Asst. Master in a local fund Schoo and the other stamp vendor's work. Even the Shirdi visits dislocated my school work. **Baba detained me beyond my leave days.** The school authorities inquired where I was spending away my time and heckled me about it. I had to choose between Shirdi and school work. I gave up school teaching. But I retained the stamp vendor's work till five years ago and then got it transferred to my son. That gave me a net income of 20 to 25 Rs. *perdiem.*

When I gave up service, I was only 32. But I kept up my faith and my financial position was satisfactory. I attended each Shri Ramnavami of Baba. When Baba was in the flesh, he gave me personal directions. After he passed away, I get my guidance from him by casting **chits** before his picture and getting one picked out after prayer for guidance.

Later on, (while he was in the flesh) I got **afraid** when I saw that in my place Andheri, there was a terrible

robbery. I saw the inmates of the house that was robbed at the hospital with severe injuries inflicted by the robbers. I prayed to Baba in my own house to help me and save me and family from such misfortune. That night Baba appeared to me in a dream and said he had come with ten Pathans and that I need not fear. Just at that time, the washerman using B B & C I Rly property for their washing, were refused further access to their usual washing places. Ten of them came to me and wished to build huts for themselves on my land. I readily agreed. They still pay me monthly 200 rupees as rent besides giving me their company by which we are safe from robbers' attacks. The existing well had no sufficient supply of water for their purposes. I consulted Baba and acting on his advice, I dug a new well in the place approved of by Baba and there I had abundant supply of water.

In respect of this big building, I had to dig a well first and I went to Shirdi and asked Baba. Acting on his advice, I dug it and it has turned out into a very good well. Then I began the building, after getting Baba's personal sanction at Shirdi. When I went there, I had funds only for putting up 5 suites of rooms and wished to build only these. But Baba drew on the floor before him 25 lines and said "one rupee for each line i.e. each suite of rooms. Give 25 rupees." Though I was intending to build only 5, I paid 25 rupees. The work begun, suites were slowly being added on till in 1920, the total number of sets of rooms became 25. It still continues to be only 25 rooms

I regard and feel that Baba is still alive. Still he guides me. My sons also have the same faith. I have sent my account of experiences to the late Mr. Dabholkar.

XVII

Gadag,
10-12-1936.

D. M. MULKY,
M.B.B.S., Medical Practitioner,

It was in 1915 that a sad incident took place in my family. My eldest brother's son, a distinguished I Class B.A., aged only 18 with all bright prospects before him, suddenly became a convert to the Christian faith. The father, who doted on the boy, was simply stunned and could not find any solace, no matter who even it was who talked to him. It was then that the late Hon. Mr. Hari Sita Ram Dixit (Sri Sayi Maharaja's right hand practically) took my brother and the family to Shirdi and by His Grace, both the father and the mother found peace once again in life. Their another son, who is also a B. A. and is now in the G. I. P. Railway, service, was a patient of Chronic Osteonyetitis which was being treated by the best surgeons of Bombay then without any effect, and this boy's wound in the bone was fully healed by the Vibhooti of Sri Sayi Maharaj and His loving and merciful **dristhi** (glance) only. Somehow or other these people began Bhajan, Puja, off and on visiting Shirdi, and I had no idea of this at all. In 1916. I was posted to Bombay in the Government service attached the Parel Laboratory and I found that these things were going on in my brother's house - only more or less secretly. I had not even seen the photo of Shri Sai Baba till then; nor even later, till the next incident, which I mean to detail now.

It was in the month of October, 1916, that I fell very seriously ill and my temperature used to be ranging bet

ween 105 to 106 F without any intermission and the local doctors were doing their level best to relieve me. Unfortunately there was not the slightest improvement. After a week nearly, one Thursday evening at my brother's place, they performed the Puja in the evening and I heard the Bhajan etc., and this was very strange to me, because I had not seen such things there, and I confess I was also more or less atheistic in tendency - and I dont know it may be that or it may be that Shri Sai Maharaj - An Avatar of Gurunath wanted to save me from an atheistic doom. My temperature was about 104-6 ; and that night, I got a dream, wherein an old man with a long white kapni to cover his body and some white cloth tied over his head (after the fashion of what men and women do in South India after a headbath) appeared and said that I should not worry, that I should at once come to His darshan and that the fever would pass off at once if I promised to do so. This frightened me and I screamed and woke up at the sound of my own screaming; my sister-in-law - she was and is still more than a mother to me - ran up to my bedside, found me in horrible perspiration and in tears. I explained to her the dream and she at once brought a photo of Shri Sai Maharaj and asked me whether it was the same. I could at once recognise the old man of my dream and we at once decided that I should take the earliest opportunity to visit Him. The fever did not come on again; I was fully alright and went on with my duties; and being young and with all the temptations of a City life before me I did not go to Shirdi and entirely forgot about it.

All this while, I was doing my level best to get out of Bombay into Moffussil service and I could not succeed at all. In this way I was going on in Bombay.

About February, 1917 Shree Maharaj wanted to remind me about what I dreamt and how I was not keeping my word and He did it in such a kind way. I was transferred from Bombay to a place called Malegaon, a Taluka in Nasik District and the only way which took me there was Via Manmad, and Kopergaon is the station which takes me to Shri Shirdi. I went over to Malegaon, and then in my heavy work, I forgot to do the needful with the result that I was once again given a reminder. I was conducting a forceps delivery case, and some decomposed fluid from (the operated parts of)the woman jumped into my left eye, which I did not realise till too late. The eye was swollen and I was very bad. I was all alone there; and I prayed to Him probably never more seriously than at this time; and He heard my prayer without trying to admonish anybody. I have since then been of the firm conviction that Shri Guru cannot see His Bhaktas suffer whatever Chandalas they may be. What He wants is nothing but unadulterated Bhakthi entirely devoid of Egoism. The Civil Surgeon at Nasik was of the opinion that I would lose my eye, but thanks to Sai Baba, it got alright in a week's time. I got my wife there and both of us vowed that we would not return to Bombay without seeing Shri Maharaj and as this was on our way back, we thought that it would not be difficult.

At the end of a month, I was asked to go back to Bombay: and to act upto our vow, we came to Manmad a little early to catch the early morning train from Manmad to Dhond. While I was strolling on the platfrom a Deshastha Booking Clerk accosted me casually and we fell into general conversation. Some how I

mentioned to him the object of my staying at Manmad and then the fellow began a tirade against Shri Maharaj which attacked even His moral character and this dissuaded us from going to Shirdi and we caught the next immediate train to Bombay and ran away as we would from a serpent. I regret this even to this day, whenever I remember it.

After a month in Bombay, my sister-in-law did succeed in inducing us to go over to Shirdi and though there came some obstacles in the way. We never cared for them this time; and I thank God, that we remained firm and got the darshan. The station incident of a month previous was mentioned by Shri Maharaj; and I need not tell you that we were put to shame and tears for even thinking of having listened to that scoundrel

I was in Shirdi for 4 days and on the day that I went to ask His permission to go back, He told me that I should **read Janneshwari**, and that I would find an order on my table "transferred to Bijapur on promotion" I made my deep pranams and went away; and to my greatest pleasure, I found this order on my table. Again with His Kripa, I have been faithfully performing Janneshwari Saptha every year. I am not a Mahratti student. I could not read or write Mahratti characters. I belong to South Kanara District, Madras Presidency and my second language was Canarese for Matric and French for the Previous. You see even now when I read the Gita, I believe it is due to **His Kindness** that I am able to do so. From Bijapur I went on Field Service and after the war I have been in Gadag. Since the incident above related, I have been firmly convinced that Shri Guruji is always watching over us, and it is a pity that we are not able to recognise it. Various troubles arise, have arisen and will arise; but I know and believe that He will see me through.

D. M. Mulky.

XVIII

Shirdi.
1-12-1936.

NAGESH ATMARAM SAWANT,
Son of ,, ,, aged 42, Mahratta,
Police Sub-Inspector. Bombay City Police.

Says:—

I learnt of Sai Baba in 1922 December by reading Sai Lila Masik at Sawantwadi. His **Lilas** drew my attention. In 1923 December a lizard fell on my head and that has a very inauspicious significance. My wife was then pregnant at Pendur (Malwan Taluka).

In January, 1924, I went to Nasik for training at the Police School. My studies did not attract me. I was often thinking of Baba and hoped he would save me and I often prayed to him. I got a picture of Baba from a friend, P. Dev for worship.

I had failed in my departmental examination at Nasik. People who fail are not given a chance of becoming - S. I. I continued as acting S. I. for about five years. I was unwilling to go to Nasik again as it was financially ruinous and I was fully confident that Baba would make me permanent S. I. without my passing the Examination. From 1924, I began my regular annual visits to Shirdi for each Punya tithi (i.e. Dusserah).

In 1926, during Mohurrum, ordinarily leave would not be granted, but I was anxious to go to Shirdi for the Dusserah. Baba appeared in my dream then and I saw him sign some paper in that dream. I construed it to mean that I was to sign and send an application for leave. I did so and got leave without any hitch.

In 1929, February, there were Hindu Muslim riots at Bombay. I was on duty at Parel. Suddenly I had headache and fever. An European Police Officer (who was not of my division) came there to see the situation and he said to me " You do not look well." Then he went to my Superintendent, who was on the road and got oral leave for me to go. He took charge of my place. That was about 3-30 P.M. I went home. In an hour, I learnt that there was a riot in that very place which I had left and that the Europeon Officer was killed during that riot.

That sickness continued. I went to the Police Hospital and it was found to be typhoid. After 17 days, I dreamt one night that a big strong man with a black dress on his body and a black cloth on his head caught hold of me and was dragging me. I shouted out "Baba Baba." Immediately a white individual. in white dress appeared and struggled with the black man and I escaped from the clutches of the black man. I shouted " Baba and Datta Maharaj." Then suddenly, Baba appeared before me out of the frame of the picture that I worship and disappeared. The black man and the other man had already disappeared. I had at that time the smell of **Sabja, Udbhth** (i.e. Agarbatti). Since then, my fever left me.

In July, 1929, as a special case, I was exempted from the Examination and given a permanent appointment, as S. I.

When I was lying ill in the Hospital, my mother had a dream in our village, wherein some one appeared and told her 'Do not fear, I will bring your boy safe home, getting him leave." In a week's time, I got 3 months leave and went home.

Abba Savant, a friend of mine aged 44, is a Constable at Bombay living near my quarters. He reported to me that a fresh Sadi he had given to his wife one night was placed on a table. She had disbelief in Baba and told him (Abba) that night "You say this is Baba's gift. But you earned the money by your toil." Later on in the night or in the morning she again looked at the New Sadi. It had every appearance of being burnt in the middle - as though a hot coal had been placed in the middle of it on the topfold. All the folds had been burnt through, in the middle and the cloth was of no use. She said "Let us see if a new cloth would be given by Baba tomorrow," Abba suddenly got some money next day and bought her a sadi.

XIX

2-12-1936,
Sakori.

KASIBAI HANSRAJ widow of HANSRAJ, Caste Vani, age about 45, residence Sakori.

S a y s:—

I and my husband went to Shirdi 20 years ago. In Margasira about December, 1916, just after Radhakrishna Ayi died, we went and stayed for about 6 months. My husband had Asthma. Narasinga Baba Maharaj of Nasik had told him that as an evil spirit was obsessing his body, we got no issue and that he should go to Shirdi Sai Baba who would give him two slaps and exorcise it. That is why we came to Sai Baba. Baba gave my husband two slaps saying "**Evil spirit be off.**" From that time we lived there. My husband's Asthma abated. It was operating during the day but did not trouble him at night. Before we came to Shirdi, it troubled him day and night. Baba was coughing away at night when we lived there. At the end of our 6 months stay, Asthma ceased to trouble him by day even. Before I mention that, a chamatkar and Baba's part in healing him have to be mentioned. Soon after we settled here, Baba told my husband that he should be strict about his diet and avoid curds, and other acid and pungent articles of food. When it came to acting on this advice, my husband found it hard to follow it, as these were what he liked most. He did not relish his food without curds etc. He would sooner give up life than curds, he declared. So every day for two months we were trying to prepare curds at home for in this village curds are not easily to be had at noon. We kept milk heated and cooled for curdling every night and then we

would go and attend the Noon - Arati of Baba at the Mosque. Everyday almost for two months a cat would steal into our lodgings in our absence, jump up the sling in which the curdpot was kept and drink it off. As our meal had to be after Arati my husband found that there were no curds to take. One day he resolved to catch the thief in the very act and so stayed away from the Noon Arati. The cat came in. My husband allowed it to get in, to watch how it could possibly reach the curdpot which was kept so high in a sling. But it did. Anyhow the cat had dipped its mouth into the curdpot and the curds were not fit for use. He quietly watched its drinking and when it got down he used his stick severely on its back, by way of summary punishment for its larceny. In the afternoon, people resorted to Baba at the mosque and got udhi from his hands. We went there. Jog, Madhav Rao Deshpande, Kaka Dixit, Buty &c., were there. Baba addressing them referred to my husband and said. "There is an ऊर्पटिया (i.e. one who does the reverse of what he is asked to do) who wants to die by eating sour and pungent things. But I would not allow him to do that. Today I went to him in the form of a cat. That fellow has given me a caning on the back. See here." Then Baba exposed his back from under the **Kupni**; and there we could see a weal or stripe such as caning might cause. What a wonder.

Thereafter my husband wanted no more curds to be prepared and no more acids etc., to take. This accelerated his improvement very probably. Baba was not for giving him any medicines. First I gave my husband daily some medicine for the Asthma. Baba then said that he also had Asthma and that as I was giving medicine to

my husband he had thousands of women who would give him medicine. "But what is the use?" He added 'Allah Malik lhai' God is the Lord." So I stopped giving medicines. It is without resort to any medicine that Baba got my husband's Asthma cured.

That cure lasted for a year or so. Then my husband had again his Asthma. That was in 1918 or 1919 and then he was cured by Upasani Baba when the latter went to Sion.

Sai Baba used to say many things. I remember some. While he was all along living at Shirdi alone, he would suddenly declare "I have been to Kasi and had a bath and just now I have returned. Why do I want a bath here?" or "I have been to Kolhapur, or Audumbarwadi and I have just now returned."

Jog told me that Sai Baba gave him darsan of himself as Akkalkote Maharaj, at his (Jog's) request.

XX

26-9-1936,
Ville Parle.

DINKAR RAO JAIKER,
(Son of Syam Rao, Jaiker aged 28,)

S a y s :—

I have been with Sai Baba.

Once when I was in the Masjid with him, there was a severe storm howling, the wind and rain were fierce. After a few minutes, Sai Baba stepped on to the edge of the premises and cried out (evidently to the storm) जरा थांबा "Stop a bit."

Then the storm abated very quickly.

XXI

Shirdi,
2-12-1936.

BHIKUBAI

Wife of Bayyaji Patil Kothe, Caste Mahratti,
age about 42, residence Shirdi.

Says :—

My parental home is Ahmednagar. I knew Radhakrishnabai as a friend at Nagar. She had a photo of Baba and she told me about him there. She was worshipping him with Arati etc. She told me, she wanted to go to him. Her paternal grandfather was a lawyer there. Baba Saheb Ganesh was his name. She resided with him. I was wedded to one at Sangamner and he died and from there in my 14th year I came here, as Radhakrishna Ayi my friend was here serving Sai Baba (1908).

Gangagiri Baba of Vanjargaon was performing a huge Nama-Saptha under the tamarind trees here (near the Wada). There was a huge gathering every day and among many pilgrim groups that came, one was from Sangamner and when that returned to Sangamner, it brought from my friend R. Ayi a photo of Baba, a lot of **Burfi Prasad** and an invitation to me to go over to Shirdi and settle there. I accepted the invitation and came here without jewels and property. I then went and saw Baba. He told me to live with R. Ayi and be busy serving. About the end of 1916 i.e. 1 or 2 months after R. Ayi died, I had gone to Nagar to draw my pension as the widow of a man that died in the war at rupees 6 per month (which I still draw). On my way back, at Koper-gaon, near the banks of the Godavari, I was reminded of the fate of R. Ayi, who was burnt there. My mind was

all in a turmoil. I had brought over my garland to Shirdi for Baba. When I went to place it on Baba, he said "I don't want this garland of mental uneasiness **तळतळला हार मला नको.**" He did not receive it. H. S. Dixit requested him to take it as I had brought it from Ahmednagar for him with such great trouble, I then went near Baba lifting up the garland with both hands Then as I neared Baba, the garland somehow snapped into 3 parts; - one was left in each hand and one fell on the floor. How it got severed like that I could not discover. Baba was simply saying "I don't want it."

I had brought with me along with the garland a **टरबूज** water - melon and some **पेढे** milksweets; and I placed the Pedas and the cut fruit before Baba. Baba took them up and distributed them. Then I took a slice and cut off the outer skin and presented part to Baba and asked him to eat it. Dixit also requested him to eat it. Baba then said "This woman was weeping and shedding tears at Godavari and she has brought it with such a troubled heart and so I will not accept it. The fact was that at the river bank I was weeping and blaming Baba mentally for not having saved Radhakrishna Ayi i.e. for allowing her to die such a wretched death. Baba knew everything that was in my heart and hence his refusal to accept my present.

Baba at his noon - day meal daily gave me a vessel full of food which I took home.

On the day of Baba's expiry, I was greatly agitated at his leaving me desolate and I was weeping at about 10 P.M. in my house saying "Baba I can not see you again." I came out and outside my front - door I saw a serpent and felt that it was Baba and said "**I cannot recognize you in this serpent body.** I know only your Sai Baba form." The serpent disappeared.

XXII

3-12-1936,
Shirdi.

Mr. "CLERK,"
Parsi, aged 44, Clerk, Bombay Office.

Says:—

In 1913 I first came to Sai Baba at Shirdi. That was because some friends told me that my elder brother's lunacy which could not be cured by doctors could be removed by the grace of Sai Baba. So I brought him here. First he slightly improved and we were asked to go away. But his trouble resumed its vigour after we returned to Bombay and he began to give trouble to his mother and others. So I wrote to Baba and was directed to go again to Shirdi with my brother. I came with him and left him here. Mr. Amidas Mehta was looking after him (and I sent 30 rupees a month for his support). After some months stay, by merely attending Baba's Arati and taking his Asirvadh, udhi and thirtha my **brother's reason was restored.** This was remarkable - as all sorts of continued medical and other treatments had failed to cure him, while Baba's grace without any medicine cured him. Our faith in Baba became stronger and I was always having his small picture with me in my room. I occasionally visited Baba in his life time. But that was only for earthly benefits. I was much younger in those days. I was away at Basra first and then in 1917 and 1918 I was at Suez leading a merry and reckless life and had no serious thoughts. It is after Baba passed away that I am developing my attention to the inner and nobler life. I never asked Baba for help in the spiritual direction. First my brother's mental malady

and next the need to get my two younger sisters married &c., were obsessing my mind. It is for such things I sought Baba's help and I trusted in him fully and he was merciful enough to grant all I asked for and a great deal more. My sisters got married and as for myself I was never left in want.

In 1920 I got married and that was by Baba's grace. I was getting only 100 rupees (60 plus 40) and could hardly maintain a family. Yet by Baba's grace I got married. I have one son and one daughter. My wife is very sickly. I have constantly prayed to Baba for her. Recently one month back she was in so desperate condition that I intently prayed to Baba pleading that if she died, my mother, a poor old lady of 70 would die of the shock. By Baba's will my wife recovered; but my mother who had no visible illness at first except old age developed double pneumonia and passed away. My father passed away in 1904.

Baba used to come often in my dreams when I was 12 years old. (I was always looking at his picture and bowing to him). If he came in my dream, that was a sure indication to me that some evil or other that was afflicting me or about to befall me was removed or averted.

My experience with Baba was very happy. Whenever I went into his presence, I forgot everything. I had no trouble, no anxiety, no care, no fear. Everything was blotted out and I passed a blissful time in his company. That was most wonderful. Even now if he comes in dream vision, that effect is reproduced.

He was so kind and all knowing, as I may show even in his dakshina matters. I was very poor when I went to

him. At first in 1913 I was on 60 rupees. He would ask me for dakshina. At times he would take away all I had in my pocket. Once 8 rupees was the cash I had in my hand. He took it away as Dakshina. After I said that I had no objection to part with every pie, he did not go on asking any dakshinas from me. I never came to harm by giving away what I had. He blesses us by what he gives and even by what he takes away from us.

I spent very little time here and had so very few visits during his life time that I have no spiritual experiences.

I have not studied religious works. e.g., Gathas even now. I can not say how Baba would affect a learned Parsi versed in Parsi sacred works.

We have to know God and unite with him. So we must begin at the bottom with right thoughts which would lead to right actions and ultimately to God. We pray to God as symbolished by the Sun the Ocean and Fire standing before any of these three. Regard for Zoroaster does not conflict with worship of Sai Baba. Zoroaster merely organised a pre-existing faith and reformed it by removing the abuses which crept in by the remissness of priests.

We pray to Baba and get various earthly benefits. I do not know if there is anything in Parsi religion or religious books against this course being adopted by us.

6-9-1936.

SOMANATH SHANKAR DESHPANDE,
son of Shankar, "Nana Saheb Nimonkar"
Brahmin, Inspector of Police, aged 51,
376, Saniwar Peth, Poona.

Says:—

I am the son of Nana Saheb Nimonkar. Our place Nimon is 20 miles off Shirdi. There (at Nimon) we have our Vatan of Deshpande. Shirdi is on our way from or to Kopergaon. And at Shirdi we have relations. Balwantrao (father of Madhava Rao Deshpande Shyama) was my father's uncle and loved my father. Once he took my father to Sai Baba saying "People believe he is a mad fakir." I doubt if he is really mad, but you had better go with me, see him and give me your opinion." Whenever Balvant had gone to see Baba, the latter kept him at a distance by taking up a brickbat and either flinging it or threatening to fling it at him. Thus he kept away people from going into the Mosque where he stayed. But when my father went to see him, he flung no stones and they approached quite close to him. My father's heart was attracted to Sai as soon as he saw him and on his return home he assured his uncle that Baba was a Saint and not a mad man. The uncle wondered why stones were hurled when he went to Baba formerly but not on the present occasion. "That is because you doubted if he was mad, but I did not" said my father. Since then, my father paid annual and later biennial or more frequent visits to Baba - as his faith was steadliy increasing.

My father was an Honorary Magistrate of Sangamner and there he met Nana Saheb Chandorkar (the Collector's Chitnis) who also was an admirer of Baba and both would talk together about Baba.

When Nana Saheb Chandorkar started the idea of rebuilding Baba's Musjid and collected subscriptions, my father contributed his mite and what is more he supervised the building operations. Baba would not let the workmen go on with the work - as he complained of their work and undid their work. The building was long being prevented from completing even its foundation. Baba however had great trust in my father and my father hurried on the work all night when Baba slept at the chavadi.

Baba showed his faith in my father by making him his banker during the years (1916-18) that he stayed with Baba. As funds came, Baba would hand them over to my father. Even Madhav Rao mistook them for gifts. My father stood in no need of gifts. We had about 500 rupees per annum from our **Vatan** and I was sending him all moneys he required. Besides, my father also knew the truth of Baba's often repeated statement. "**Fakir's money is forced away.**" If one grasped at and swallowed a Fakir's money, he will in due course have to disgorge it all, to the last pie.

My father desired and got from Baba gifts superior to monetary gifts - i.e. our temporal and spiritual welfare. So my father paid up all the deposits for Baba's expenses. Baba himself frequently called upon him for these expenses - e g. (a) Burfi would have to be purchased and distributed as present (b) firewood on a large scale also had to be bought etc. We called my father

"Kaka,"; so did the villagers; and so also Baba called him "Kaka."

To illustrate the spiritual benefit received by my father, I will give an instance. My father wished to read "**Bhagwhat**" etc., in Sanskrit as "**Pothi**"- but his ignorance of the language stood in his way. Baba once said to him :—

S. B. :—" Kaka, " Why don't you read Pothi?"

N N. :—"I do not know Sanskrit."

S. B. :—"Never mind. Musjid Ai will teach you Sanskrit; and gradually you will learn. Begin."

Then with faith in Baba's words, my father began the daily reading of Shrimad Bhagwat and its commentary - both of them in Sanskrit - without understanding what he read. Gradually he began to understand all that he read; and he advanced so far as to proceed (at Baba's bidding) with the Gita and next with Jnaneshwari. All these he understood and when Kaka Saheb Dixit and Jog had doubts he cleared their doubts. They were learned scholars and had regularly studied Sanskrit. But my father had not, and so they said my father's understanding was inspired by Baba's grace. But Baba once stopped his further explaining things to others. "Why should we explain things to others? That will make us **puffed up** with self conceit."

As for quasi spiritual benefits derived by my father, instances will be given presently of the cures he effected when he spent his last two months with me here at Poona.

Temporal benefit may include not only the growing esteem in which he was held by all who knew him and

the consequent increase of his influence, but also the safe-guarding and advancement of the interests of all members of his family, including myself. I had been taken to Baba from my infancy by my father and Baba spoke to me and spoke of me always affectionately giving me the **sobriquet "Somniya."**

In 1912, I was a Police Sub-Inspector at Kopergaon; and Shirdi was within my jurisdiction. As soon as I got my first pay, I sent rupees two every month by M. O. to Baba. That was my father's order and possibly his vow. I continued that payment every month upto 1920 i.e. till shortly after my father's death. When I was at Kopergaon my father and I went down once to Shirdi. Then Baba asked me to pay a **dakshina** of **10 rupees** and I did. It appeared to have no significance at that time But about six months later, I got the order that my pay was increased by 10 rupees **from that date** (i.e. the date of my paying the dakshina). I got a transfer in 1912 from Kopergaon to Poona.

Another instance of Baba's care for me was mentioned by my father, even before I got my service. It seems that Baba, sitting at his Mosque, would take up **coins and be rubbing** them with his fingers saying "Kakacha" "Somyacha" etc. My father said that that showed that I was often in Baba's mind and that augured nothing but good for me.

Of numerous instances of Baba's taking all care of us, **योग क्षेमं वहाम्यहं**, the chief may be his looking after my father himself during the last 3 years of his life. In 1916, my wife was in the family way and we looked forward to my parents to come here, so that my mother may help in the delivery. We had no other help. My

father and mother left Nimon on that account to go to Poona. But as Shirdi is near and as there were rumours that Baba was passing away, they first visited Baba. Once they went to Baba, he detained them and did not give them leave to go away - either back to Nimon or forward to Poona. My father did not understand the reason for this refusal and Madhava Rao on his behalf asked Baba for leave.

S. B.:—Do you want to kill my people? Is Kaka eating away your father's property?

Madhav Rao:—But his daughter-in-law is pregnant and needs help.

S. B.:—Arre 'Kaka' **why are you anxious? God will help**, Baba also said to my father at that time "**Bury me and then go.**" When Baba detained my father, he tied a cloth bandage to his own arm - which he kept on for three years and removed only four days before his death. My father died four months thereafter. That is just what he anticipated and told Madhav Rao when he left Shirdi two or four days after Baba expired.

When my parents were being thus detained at Shirdi, we at Poona were relying solely on their going to us for the accouchement and made no other arrangements upto the last. Suddenly one night my wife told me "I feel that pains are coming." At once, I ordered a tonga and took her at 10 P.M. to the Poona Municipal Maternity Hospital and left her on a bed. The nurse that ought to have attended on her was talking with me in an adjoining room. It was about 11 P.M. At once we heard the cry of the new born child, a male child. The delivery was over and that without any help. It was a

safe delivery. At that time - or rather just before delivery, Baba said to my father at Shirdi :—

"There was a woman. She was taken to a place. There she was delivered safe, of a male child."

Soonafter the delivery, I sent my brother with "**Peda**"-which is usually presented to all on the birth of a child - to Baba and to my parents at Shirdi, requesting that my mother may go over and help us at Poona. Permission was not given to her to go. My father then told my brother of what Baba had said to him about the delivery on the very day of its birth. That was Bhadrapad, 1916.

Another -instance on Baba's care for our family is this. In December, 1917, plague was beginning its ravages at Poona; and during Xmas holidays, I started with my first son Gopal. then a child of 2 or 3 years to Nimon where my brother's wife had recently had a safe delivery. On the way, we halted at Shirdi. Baba in sending me away with the usual Udhi said पोराला जीव लाव which means "Save the child." Interpreting it as a mere blessing intended for my Gopal, I gave him the Udhi and started off in a tonga to Nimon. When we reached that place my brother's baby, 12 days' old was in a precarious condition. It had become cold and chill and the parents lost all hope and thought the child was dead. Then I bethought myself of Baba's words at parting and found that he must have referred to this child and not to my boy. I searched for the **Udhi** he had given me. But it had been lost during the journey. So I took the baby on my lap and sent up a fervent mental appeal with all my strength, with all my soul entreating Baba to save the child. In 15 minutes time, the child improved and

became alright gradually and is now called "Datta" i.e. God's gift, in consequence. Plague was still prevalent at Poona when I wanted to return. When I wanted to start from Shirdi back to Poona, Baba was loath to give me permission But I had no "leave" to stay and must rejoin duty on 3-1-1917. So my father put Udhi in Baba's hands and practically forced him to give me leave. So we returned on 3rd January. My landlord was there down with plague and on the 4th, my wife wasattacked. We could not escape elsewhere; myself, children and all stayed there. Baba saved her and saved us all. She i.e. my wife recovered her health-but her eye-sight was lost. At that time the question of leaving the town and going to a health-camp was mooted before Baba: but he did not permit it. "Why leave home?,' was what he said. We followed his guidance and were safe' When my wife was unwell, we had also requested my father to go to Poona. But Baba then told him again "Bury me and then go."

In March or April, 1917, I fell ill, it might be plague or Typhoid perhaps. Again I wrote to my father to go to Poona. Again Baba refused permission but said "Why are you anxious? Your Somniya will recover and come here to see us". I had twenty-one days continuous fever and lived on water alone. Then I recovered. I took leave for a period of two or three months for convalescence and went first with my family to Belapur where the Samadhi of Vidyanandswami (who gave me my regular initiation into my mantra and my bhakti marga) is. There I stayed for a while and my mother came there and took us all to Shirdi. I had improved very little at Belapur and was very weak. When I went to Shirdi, Baba said I should be given a

little Kichadi, thenceforward. That was done. I stayed there a month and picked up my health and strength.

I was with Baba some days before he passed away. He was ailing and people were anxious about him. When I wanted to start he was unwilling to permit me to go. But I had to go and I went away to Poona.

Some three days after Baba passed away, my father left for Nimon and then he went to Ahmednagar and thence at my request (as I had pain in my side) he came and stayed with us, at Poona. Here he continued till his death which was some two months after he came here.

My father had intense **dhyasa** of (i.e. absorption in) Baba during the closing days of his life and he treated (or looked on) all persons going to him as Sai Baba. He was a Rama bhakta all alone and he died with the words "Sri Ram" on his lips. Of course, Sai Baba and Sri Ram are not different.

I was privileged to serve Sai Baba during his life for four days. My father had been called away to give evidence at Ahmednagar and had to stay there four days. When he started for Nagar, he left me at Shirdi to do every service to Baba that he usually did. There was one difference however. He did the service sitting, being on old man. As a younger man, I did the service on my legs. I found the service was physically taxing all my energies to the uttermost. To be at the beck and call of Baba all day and till he retired to rest was no little effort. During those days, I had a blessed vision. I was at the Mosque. Baba was in his usual place and Madhav Rao near the steps. Suddenly, Baba appeared to me in the form of Maruti. There was no more Sai

Baba's usual figure. There was the Maruti body. Only I did not see if there was a tail. Seeing that form, I told Madhav Rao at once "Take his darshan." See, **he is Maruti.**" Baba was undoubtedly a Ramabhakata. Baba on Chavadi days would stop opposite to Maruti Temple and muttering something wave his arm towards Maruti fifteen or twenty times.

My usual current of thoughts was worldly. But as I stayed near Baba, my usual current of thoughts was switched off; and there was a new current of thoughts within me.

However, I had very little touch with Baba - unlike my father whose powers and nature seemed to have developed greatly by contact with Baba.

When my father was at Ahmadnagar about November, 1918, I was suffering from pain in my side - as though it was the commencement of Appendicitis. So I wrote to my father and he came and stayed with me at Poona. He came and applied Udhi to me and from the very next day, there was no more pain. My brother was with me and he was showing signs of incipient consumption. My father gave him Udhi and Tirtha and he recovered.

My nephew "Datta" had itch all over his head. My father gave him 'Udhi' and cured that itch.

My father was always orthodox and paying strict attention to his religious duties. Baba respected his orthodoxy and would not give him any prasad that an orthodox man should not take.

I noticed Baba's foot prints. There was a clear "Matsya" mark on one foot, and a clear "Dhanushya" on the other. Only great Saints can have such marks.

XXIV

9-3-1938.
Dixit Wada, Shirdi.

MADHAV RAO DESHPANDE alias SHAMA,
Brahmin, age about 80.

Says:—

Upasani Baba when he came to Shirdi first was sleeping and boarding here. He was still unwell. He cried in his sleep, "I am dead," and he asked me to request Sai Baba to help him. I told Sai Baba that Upasani Sastri was expecting death and getting frightened. Sai Baba replied **मारणकु नै तारणकु ए जागा** i.e. that this place Shirdi is for saving and not killing people. At first I (like others) took Upasani Maharaj for a detective. But he assured me he was not one. Sai Baba at the first visit asked him to stay on or return within eight days. Upasani did not agree and pleaded distance from Dhulia etc,, as his reasons. Finally he put up in this (Dixit) Wada for 2¼ years. Sai Baba told him to remain four years in Khandoba temple, and promised him Khandoba's grace at the end of that term. This was said by Baba about 15 days after his second arrival. G. S. Khaparade held his reading classes downstairs. Upasani Sastri etc., attended it. Upasani Sastri would spend much of his nights in talk upstairs, when he lived at Khandoba's.

Sai Baba's statement that he was four years younger than myself can not be understood as relating to this life. He looked my senior in point of age. He told me of my relations with him in previous births. Once he said to me "You and I were living in the same lane, in a former birth."

The little girl of three Santi Kirvandikar who fell into a well and was upheld by Baba's hand, slowly left in the water and thus saved from any hurt by Baba's grace and who called herself sister of Baba is now alive. Her father Baba Kirvandikar (now dead) was then living here. When she fell into the well, H. S. Dixit, G. M. Buty etc., were here. That might be about 1915. She is married and is now living with her husband at Malegaon, which is 30 miles off Manmad.

I was an Assistant teacher in a school which was located in the place where Baba's horse is now stabled. A window of that always looked on the adjoining mosque. Through that I occasionally watched Sai Baba who was taken by people to be a mad fakir. I had no regard for him then. I remained a teacher five or six years. I gave up the place, as I was transferred. Ganu Master then took my place. Nana Ratna Parkhe was my head master and superior. One Laxman Master was another teacher above me. Our family belonged to Nimon, where I was born. But my father came and settled here, when I was two years old. Ever since, I have continued here. I studied here. After resigning my place, I used to visit Sai Baba off and on. In five or six months there after, I was convinced that Sai Baba was God. How my faith grew even when I was a teacher I shall mention. I used to sleep in the school. Baba was the sole occupant of the mosque. Yet I could hear English, Hindi, many languages being spoken in the mosque (at night) evidently by Baba. I inferred that he had remarkable powers and began to have faith in him.

When I was still at School, **Chidambar Keshav Gadgil** came to Shirdi and asked me, "It is said a great

Sadhu is here. Where is he?" I replied that there was none at Shirdi and from the school I pointed to the mosque and told him, "There is only this mad Fakir." Mr. Gadgil went to the mosque. Sai Baba showered abuse on him. But the abuse was productive of faith and joy. Gadgil had worshipped or paid his respects to a saint living at **Bhima Shankar** temple at Poona. That saint had asked him to go and see the saint at Shirdi. That was why he had come to Shirdi. Now Sai in his abuse referred to Gadgil's being directed to see the saint at Shirdi. Gadgil felt sure that Sai Baba was a Gnani, a great saint. Thenceforward he frequently visited Baba and became his staunch devotee. At the first visit of Mr. Gadgil he was a Chitnis, and with him came Vaman, a Special Munsiff, and Sitaram Patwardhan, an Educational Officer, and a tongawalla. I went with these up to the steps of the mosque. Baba forbad us from climbing the steps and began his shower of abuse. Therein he said "I am a moslem. Go and fall at the foot of the Sadhu at Bhimashankar temple &c.,

Anandaswami (Anandanath is not the correct name) was a devotee of Akkalkote Maharaj (who passed away about 1878) and had established a mutt at Savargaon (6 miles off Yeola) where he lived. He was about 95 years old in **1885** when I and Nandram Marwadi &c, went to see him, at his mutt. He wore only a langoti and was a great **Sakshatkari**. At the close of our visit Anandaswami came with us to Shirdi to see Sai Baba. Sai Baba and he saw each other but exchanged no words. Thereafter Anandaswami returned and told us his opinion of Sri Sai in these words "Here is a diamond on a dung hill". Bala Chopdar (now aged 60) was then aged only 7 years.

Gangagir came to Shirdi and conducted a grand Saptha repeating with numerous people mantras &c., for 7 days with **Homa** and fed large numbers at the close of the Saptha. He did so only once. That was long after Anandaswami's visit. Gangagir also saw Sai Baba and expressed his very high opinion of Baba.

Nana Saheb Nimonkar, was older than myself by at least 5 or 6 years.

I shall recite Baba's strange goat purchase. Once a man had a number of goats &c., with him. Two of his goats were worth about Rs. 4/- each. Baba went to him, paid him 32 Rupees for them and bought them. I and Tatya Patel learning the price Baba had paid said that in the bargain, Baba had been duped, as the goats were worth only 4 Rs, each. Baba then got pulses &c., for about 1½ Rs. and fed the goats with the pulse &c. Then he explained why he acted like this. He found he said that the goats were looking at him entreatingly. Then Baba noticed them. They were in their previous birth two women that had served Baba. But they were fiercely quarrelling with each other and had killed each other. They took birth as goats. Baba then went and returned the goats to their owner.

Pishya was a Rohilla. Many Rohillas came here in Baba's time. At Neemgaon there were the landholders Baba Saheb Dengle and his younger brother Nana Saheb Dengle. Neither of them was an official. But they had much influence with officials. Nana Saheb Dengle came to Baba when I was a teacher at the school.

When Nana Saheb Nimonkar was staying at Shirdi, his son and daughter-in-law at Poona were attacked by plague. Mrs. and Mr. N wanted permission to go to Poona. Baba did not grant permission. Mrs. N. then

wept. Baba said to her "Why do you cry? In 15 day's time your son will come here." Accordingly the son and his wife recovered and the son came to Shirdi within the period fixed by Baba.

Sai Baba enabled people to escape the clutches of death in such "Ganda's." Compare this with the way in which Samartha Ramdas enabled one to escape such a Ganda. At a particular time death was to visit some one. Ramdas Swami asked that man to remain by his side and be vigorously holding on to the feet of Ramdas. The appointed time came and passed away. Death had been kept at bay by Ramdas; and his devotee escaped death on that occasion.

Nana Wali was 70 years old at the time of his death. He was Gurubandhu of Yeshwantrao, the departed Dev Mamlatdar of Nasik.

When our Nana Wali came, he was old. Baba encouraged him and said कुल्लुप लगा दिया किल्लि तेरे पास है. मेरेकु दगानै देंगा. मै दगा नै देंगा Nana Wali was a **Sakshatkari** Purusha, who had thorough Vairagya. He ate pig's filth. He kept scorpions in his mouth and also बटकुली. and उन्नीर Once he spat the उन्नीर on Sai Baba.

Ho wore no sacred thread.

'On the day Baba passed away, **Nana Wali** declared 'I will clear off" and he died some days thereafter.

XXV

26-9-1936.

Mr. KOLAMBO,
Gowd Saraswat, aged 57.

Says:—

Baba was smoking his **chilim** and passing it round among those near. I am a bidi smoker. I was some distance away from them being seated near the steps. I felt a desire to have a puff or two out of that chilim. As soon as the thought struck me, Baba called out. **अरे पोरा इकडेये. लांव कशाला बसला जवल ये चिलीं घ्या** (i.e. you boy come here. Why keep yourself so far! Come near. Have a smoke), and offered me the **chilim**. I joined the group and drew a few puffs. I was glad alike to see his knowledge of my desire and his kindness in graciously offering his chilim to me.

Besides smoking, I had a more dangerous habit - the habit of drinking. Baba came to me in a dream on 1-2-1917 and sat on my chest and said **पोरा काय कर्तं** i.e Boy! what are you doing? I promised to abstain from drink. From the very next day I rigorously abstained from touching any liquor. On 15-2-1917 came a test. The manager of my office was giving a send off to his children and I was of the party invited. He insisted on my taking a peg of whisky and soda. I pleaded that the doctor had advised me to abstain. I did not mention Baba's name in such light hearted company. He did not mind the objection and was still insisting. Then came miraculous help. The electric lights went out and my manager went away to find out how the accident happened. Just then my neighbour, the "mistry" drank off

my glass and I was counted by the manager who returned to me, soon after, as having complied with his request.

Baba's **dskshina** demands were often associated with moral lessons e.g. putting down boastfulness, cupidity, evasion of obligations etc. Some months after the above incident I was at Shirdi. Baba did not ask me for any dakshina at all, though he was asking others for it. I concluded that my having corrected my vice was, in his eyes, the great merit which was recognised or rewarded by immunity from paying dakshina. I was at the wada boasting of this immunity in the presence of friends. At once came a call from Baba, and when I went to the mosque, Baba asked me for 2 rupees dakshina and I paid it. There was another devotee who had gone to Shirdi, who had a balance of 18 rupees odd with him. He had handed it over to me in secret with the view that he might truthfully tell Baba that he had no money if Baba should ask him for dakshina. This man was at the Masjid when I went to the Masjid and paid my 2 rupees. Baba turned to him and asked for 2 rupees dakshina and in order to prevent his evasive excuses, added "Take it from this man" (pointing to me) "and give it." The man's device had been found out. He got 2 rupees from the deposit with me and paid it.

That man is (N.V.) a proprietor of a press, Mugabat, Bombay.

This was some time before Baba passed away.

We were there a few days before Baba passed away. When we went to take leave, we had no anticipation of the coming catastrophe. But Baba evidently knew of it. He said "You are coming from Bombay. You must go on hearing me speak. I should go on hearing you speak.

But you are going away." Well. Well. (i.e. with hesitation). Go. You are going to reach your destination tomorrow noon."

Anyhow leave was given that evening and we started by that night's train via Kopergaon, hoping as usual to reach Bombay (via Manmad) by 7-30 or 8 A M. But when we reached Manmad we learnt that the engine of a train had got out of order and there was a consequent delay of some four hours. As we reached Bombay, it struck twelve **noon**. Baba's anticipation or prediction was fulfilled. Baba passed away a few days later and we could then see why he was rather hesitating to give us leave. That was the final parting.

Some fourteen years ago, one night Baba came to me in a dream and said "Boy, you speak of me to others as **your Guru**. Have I given you Prasad i e. **initiation**? Then he made me wash my hands, and gave me a Mahratta **sloka** to repeat. I repeated it very well in my dream. This was my initiation. But when I woke, I remembered nothing of the sloka and even now I can not recall the sloka.

Two years ago, I completed my fiftyfifth year. According to the rules of our company, one should retire at 55. So I was getting ready to be relieved. But at that time, I had a dream. Our big boss, the director came in the dream, to me and made me understand that I should not bother about leaving the company. Upto this time none has asked me to retire.

I have heavy responsibilities to my family as I have 4 or 5 daughters and a son. Baba looks after all my affairs. I do not pray to him for anything. He knows what I require and it is up to him, to give us what we

need, if that be his wish. Why trouble him with request, as though he either did not know what we want, or knowing it would not give what is good unless pestered with requests?' We are content to let him do his will for us; and we are happy.

XXVI

9-12-1936,
Shirdi.

TUKARAM BARKU,
Aged 40,
Son of Mahar, Landholder, Shirdi.

Says:—

I have had some experience of Sai Baba personally In 1912, when water was first let into the Godaveri Canals here, I was starting for Karanjigaon, a village twenty miles off to get some work and thereby to maintain myself. At the very start when I was in this village on the Kopergaon road, Baba met me on his way to Lendi or back from Lendi garden. He put his arm round my neck and said "Do not go." I disregarded this advice and went to the said village. The day after I reached it, I had fever that continued for a long time. Working for bread was out of the question and I had to depend upon the kindness of some relations there to look after me. After 15 days of such fever, I felt strong enough to get back to Shirdi. But even here I was suffering from fever for about 45 days. Then I asked my mother to get me Baba's udhi. It was applied to me and the very next day the fever ceased.

XXVII

M. G. PRADHAN. 23-9-1936.

Clerk, Collector's Office, Revenue Department,
(Old Customs House) living at Venkateshwar Press,
Chawl, near Sandhurst Road, Bombay.

Says :—

I had heard of Sai Baba. I had lost my 7 years old son Dattatraya and was greatly upset. I was thinking that I should go and see Sai Baba.

One day, I had a dream in which I saw five Sadhus seated. I asked one of them "Which of these is Sai Baba?" And he pointed to one as Sai Baba.

Then I proceeded to (Sai Baba) Shirdi taking with me Sitaphal (custard apple), Ramphal etc., of my own garden at Janjira, and presented them to Baba, took darshan and sat before him.

The figure I had seen in my dream as Sai Baba was the very figure that I saw at Shirdi.

Baba began to fall foul of me and abuse me saying "Why does the fool go on lamenting the loss of a son? It is merely going to the earth. **The body must go to the earth. Why go on** lamenting for that?" Again he said "Scatter your Ramphal far and .wide" That (I learnt) meant, scatter knowledge, of course after obtaining it.

Then Baba began to describe to some-one present my house and my garden and state the exact number and locality of my Sitaphal and Ramphal trees etc,, with the accuracy and certainty of a neighbour, who had actually seen it often. He told others of me that I had lost my son **fifteen days** previously and was vainly lamenting over it.

He was going on removing my poignant grief and frotifying my faith in him, by abundant proof that he

knew everything about me and about every one that came to him. I stayed there for four days. During those days, many came to him and he told them facts about them which they mentioned to me and others, as remarkable proof of Baba's knowing everything.

This was the real starting of my faith which has proved a valuable asset for my spiritual and temporal life. Though I did not visit Shirdi again till 1935, I had got such intense faith that whenever I was in trouble, I beheld his person in dreams and he gave me help.

For the last two years, I have not had such visions or contacts. My faith had first got a start by the sudden and unexpected obtaining by me of leave, funds etc., for my first trip to Shirdi.

I noticed that during the 4 days, I stayed at Shirdi, Baba was full of **Udasinatha**. He rarely spoke. Mostly he remained absorbed in himself, and looked as immobile as one drunk or insane.

One grand instance of Baba's help to me (long after he left the body) may be now given. In 1932, my young son was attacked with severe fever. After 3 or 4 days of such fever, the pulse appeared to have failed. Our mdeical man **Mr. J.** M B., B.S. was brought down to see the boy. He said that the pulse had ceased and the child was **dead**. He began to console my wife. I was quite ruffled and unwilling to accept his view. I took up some Udhi of Baba and applied it to the child's face and had placed Baba's photo before the boy and I was intently praying to Baba. The medical man said I was **superstitious.** I declared that Baba was God and would save the boy. About **three fourths of an hour passed. Then the boy regained consciousness and actually got up and later began to play.**

ERRATA

PART II

Page.	*Line.*	*For.*	*Read.*
1.	(4)	Moreswar	Moreshwar
	(5)	High Court Pleader	Advocate OS
8.	(13) (18) (19) (27)	night	day
	(19)	5 A.M.	5 P.M.
9	(10.11)	my mother's place	a place in Santa cruz E
	(12)	Santa cruz	my house
13.	(9)	no brother and no sisters	no sister and no brother
	(11)	In fact we had a daughter at that time	omit
	(13)	more son daughter	daughter son
17.	(16)	1927	1925
65.	(1)	alread	already
66.	(12)	six	six (?) see p. 75
82.	(12)	सुनूना	सोना
100.	(24)	भेक माश्या	लोक माझा
134.	(23)	वटकुर्ला	frogs