

*Heritage of  
Shirdi Sai*



## 'PRABHU-MATTA' (GOD INTOXICATED)

The second type is the God —intoxicated ones, fortified with Divine Power. They remain in the state of divine intoxication ('Unmatta Sthiti), at home, in the forest or in solitude. Oblivious of the society, of the surroundings or of his own self, he laughs at times or he weeps at times. – (123 & 124)

In a moment, he is united with God, in another moment he is anguished with a sense of separation. Like an insane person, he roams about in lanes and by lanes with unsteady steps. The condition of the 'Prabhu-Matta' (God intoxicated) is like a person fully intoxicated even without having taken any alcohol. One who is God-intoxicated becomes a subject of ridicule in the society. – (125 & 126)

After death, they are welcomed in the abode of God. One who is a servant of God, what harm can the world cause to him! He gets food platters from some, whereas from others he only gets rebukes and rebuffs. One whose mind is absorbed in God, for him it is all the same. – (127 & 128)

When in a state of God intoxication, tears start rolling-down from the eyes (of the devotee). Compassionate blessing of the Guru fills him with strong confidence. His actions are invariably for the welfare of the living beings. Even if he utters rude language, it becomes a blessing in disguise. – (129 & 130)

Everywhere he experiences God and His Divine sports ('Leela'), both in living and non-living. He only sees the divine form ('Swaroop') of God and his (Yogi's) soul becomes all- pervading. At times he talks incoherently (as if in a delirium). He talks with animals. They abundantly water the trees and creepers with lot of love and affection. – (131 & 132)

In order to stay secluded, such Yogis resort to various pretexts. Sometimes they create deliberate nuisance and sometimes they pelt stones (at others). Since such Yogis appear to be extremely dangerous, others observe them from a distance, but only a few (dare to) approach them. – (133 & 134)

Only the one who is in search of his Guru will approach them without fear. Devotees with a pure mind (also) visit such places. Even when tolerating the rebukes and physical assaults, a Pure devotee serves the Yogi happily (without regrets). They even carryout the toughest orders of the Yogi. – (135 & 136)

Intoxicated in Prabhu-Prem (love of God), the Yogi becomes oblivious of the world. Absorbed in Brahmanand (Divine Bliss), he becomes the Seer of the Divine sports of God (Prabhu-Leela). – (137)

To be continued...

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You may have given many different gifts to your friends and loved ones, but giving a subscription of "Heritage of Shirdi Sai" magazine would be a unique gift as it connects the people you love with SADGURU SHIRDI SAI and brings His blessings with the gift.

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# Editorial

Our readers will be delighted to find that our Guru Pournima issue includes a very special review of Satpathyji's latest book by Antonio Rigopoulos, Professor of Sanskrit Language and Literature and author of *The Life and Teachings of Sai Baba of Shirdi* published in 1993 by State University of New York Press. He describes New Findings on Shirdi Sai Baba by Satpathyji as a welcome addition to the scholarly literature on Shirdi Sai Baba as it is based on "painstakingly discovered" hitherto unknown primary sources. He notes that it offers "a wealth of data, while at the same time reassessing previous interpretations with rare balance and breaking new grounds for future studies" and congratulates him for writing this book which, true to its title, brings to light new findings on Shirdi Sai Baba.

In his Guru Pournima Message, Satpathyji explains that Sai devotees, who voice concerns regarding Sai Baba not helping them out of their problems, must know that our Sadguru never leaves His devotees and is extremely sensitive to their pain. However, the "obstructions created by the impurities of the mind and body need to be removed before the divine can permeate the inner recesses of consciousness". Hence, "To those of whom, I bestow the pure essence, I will first redeem from all that is impure." Divine grace "is not a matter of demand it is bestowed on a devotee when the Guru's heart is filled with compassion for him". Therefore we need to ask ourselves if we have truly surrendered to Sai Baba and are "qualified to receive His grace.

In his article on Upanishadic world view and Sai, Nandaji tells us Sai Baba liked His devotees to read spiritual literature with devotion to evolve spiritually. He also explains that the imprint of the Upanishadic teachings is very vivid in Sai Baba's long discourse on Brahm-gnana that contains ten qualifications to attain this knowledge. Shyam Besen draws a connection between Baba tying his sleeping plank to rafters and being constantly watchful of Maya and conscious of the ultimate reality. For this, a devotee has to cultivate incessantly the four basic qualities as 'Shraddha' (heart's natural love), 'Virya' (moral courage), 'Smriti' (memory of one's divinity) and 'Samadhi' (true concentration).

N.C.B. Nath reminds us that Sai Baba instructed His devotees to read the Eknathi Bhagavata and then tells us that the final instruction in both Bhagavadgita and Uddhavagita is the same: surrender to the Godhead. He also tells us that Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti are inter-connected. For instance, Jnana leads to Bhakti, which in turn, reinforces Jnana. In addition to our regular features and poems, Your Views are on "The Importance of Celebrating Ram Navami". S.C. Dhingra discusses the importance of the letters A, U and M in Aum while Vandana Ritik reminds us that Baba said we should look within and recognise the real Sai, seated in the heart of every living organism.

All of us face ups and downs throughout our lives. Some of the challenges are minor glitches or disappointments and we can tackle these on our own. However, there are times when our problems are so severe that we are devastated. It is at these times that we cry out aloud from the depths of our despair (*cheekh pukar*) and ask our Sadguru why He is not helping us. Whether we know it or not, our Sadguru is always with us. However, progress on the spiritual path requires that we get rid of our negative baggage. Hence, like gold, we are put through fire to separate us from our impurities, for only after we get "the right bhava or devotion" will divine grace follow.

*Happy Guru Pournima 2019!!!*

*– Aasha Kapur Mehta, New Delhi*





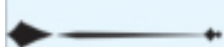
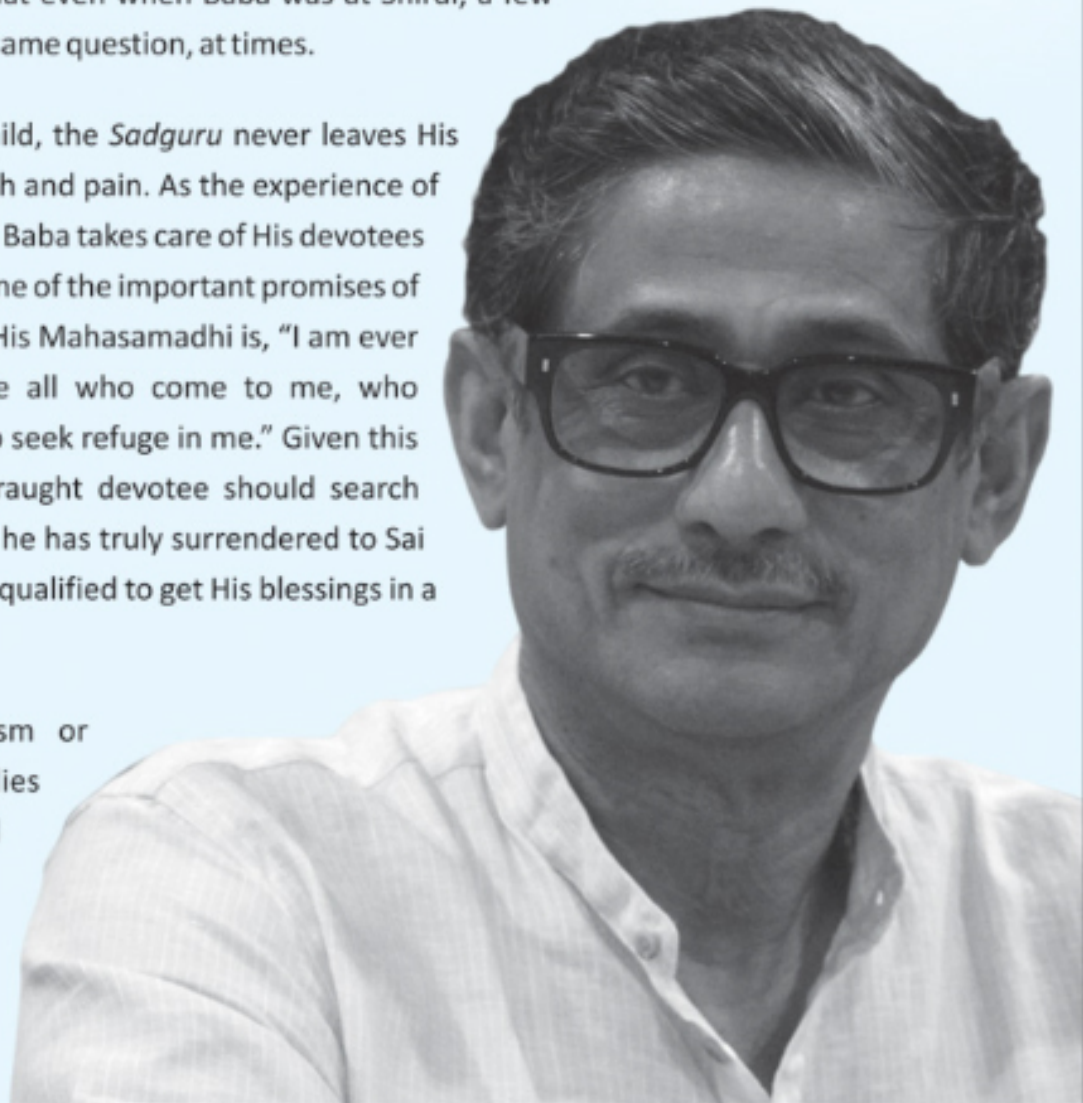


## Guru Poornima Message

Devotees often ask a question “Sai Baba has probably left me as I am not having the same intense feeling for Him as I used to have before”. Also, that “these days why is Sai Baba not helping me out of my problems if He has made a vow to take care of His devotees”. No wonder that even when Baba was at Shirdi, a few devotees used to ask the same question, at times.

Like a mother to a child, the *Sadguru* never leaves His devotees to suffer anguish and pain. As the experience of many devotees indicates, Baba takes care of His devotees in His inscrutable ways. One of the important promises of Baba before He entered His Mahasamadhi is, “I am ever living to help and guide all who come to me, who surrender to me and who seek refuge in me.” Given this promise of Baba, a distraught devotee should search within his heart to find if he has truly surrendered to Sai Baba. Is he prepared and qualified to get His blessings in a manner that he desires.

The word spiritualism or *adyakmikta*, truly implies the expansion and expression of one's spirit to evolve his



sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others. The *Sadgurus* are *adhyatmikta*, in the true sense of the term, as they are extremely sensitive to the pain of their devotees and others. When the devotees are in pain, they try their best to remove their problems so that the devotees can undertake spiritual and ethical practices in a peaceful condition. Umpteen number of anecdotes mentioned in Shri Sai Satcharita exemplify such acts of kindness of the *Sadguru*.

Divine love like, any other type of love, creates concerns about separation from the lover or beloved one. Such apprehension at times, takes the form of anguish and anxiety. This probably has been in the thoughts of the devotees who had put the questions as stated above.

The *Sadgurus* say: "To those of whom, I bestow the pure essence, I will first redeem from all that is impure." The obstructions created by the impurities of the mind and body need to be removed before the divine can permeate the inner recesses of consciousness.

Once a *Sadguru* enters one's life, slowly but surely, everything else like the caste, religion, race and temporal status of the devotees becomes unimportant. Soon the existence of the devotee rotates around the *Sadguru* to whom he submits his intelligence, ego, and ultimately all. If the right *bhava* or devotion is present, everything else just follows. The *Sadguru's* power of compassion works through the medium of His glances, touch, words, or even just His thoughts.

However, the devotees should, at the beginning, strive to make themselves capable of receiving the divine knowledge and grace of the Guru. Divine grace is not a matter of demand or usurpation. It is bestowed on a devotee when the Guru's heart is filled with compassion for him. Let's remember this on this day.

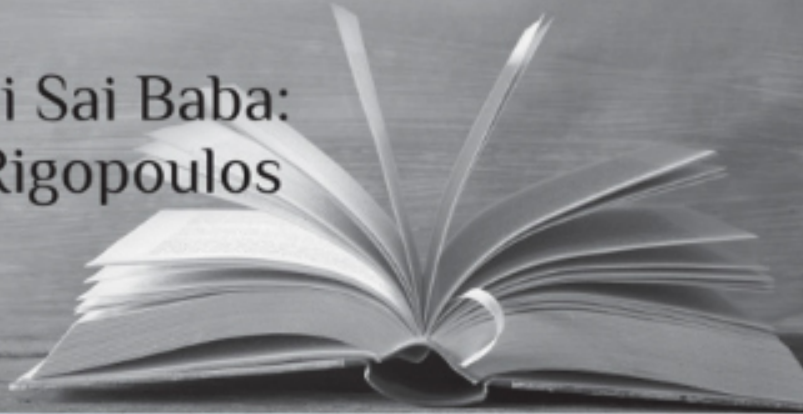
*Jai Shri Sai*

– Dr. C.B. Satpathy, Gurugram





# New Findings on Shirdi Sai Baba: A Review by Antonio Rigopoulos



Antonio Rigopoulos (MA, PhD University of California, Santa Barbara) is Full Professor of Sanskrit Language and Literature at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy. His main fields of research are: the ascetic and devotional traditions of medieval and modern Maharashtra (with special focus on Dattatreya and the *Datta-sampradāya*); the Sai Baba movement; annotated translation of Sanskrit texts on renunciation and *bhakti*; the *guru* institute; termite mound mythologies; modern Hindu hagiographies and hagiographers.

Among his publications are: *The Life and Teachings of Sai Baba of Shirdi* (SUNY Press, Albany, N.Y., 1993); *Dattatreya: The Immortal Guru, Yogin, and Avatāra. A Study of the Transformative and Inclusive Character of a Multi-Faceted Hindu Deity* (SUNY Press, Albany, N.Y., 1998); *The Mahānubhāvs* (Anthem Press, London and New York, 2011); "Sāi Bābā of Śīrḍī and Yoga Powers," in K. A. Jacobsen, ed., *Yoga Powers: Extraordinary Capacities Attained through Meditation and Concentration* (Brill, Leiden, 2012), pp. 381-426. He has authored the entries *Dattatreya, Maharashtra, Shirdi Sai Baba, Trimūrti and Vibhūti* in the *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vols. 1, 5 (Leiden, 2009, 2013).

**C. B. Satpathy, *New Findings on Shirdi Sai Baba*, Sterling, New Delhi, 2019, pp. xix, 202. ISBN 978-93-86245-52-6**

This book is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature on Shirdi Sai Baba (d. 1918), it being based on the evidence of primary sources, hitherto unknown, painstakingly discovered through years of dedicated research in the National Archives of New Delhi and Kolkata, in Kolkata's Indian Museum, and in various libraries and locales throughout the State of Maharashtra (primarily in Shirdi, Mumbai, Pune, and Aurangabad) as well as in London's British Library. The author and his team also examined the archives of the Revenue and Criminal Intelligence Departments, and benefitted from their interaction with descendants of Sai Baba's *bhaktas*, such as Uddhav Baba (son of Madhavrao Deshpande, alias Shama), Shivamma Tai, and Shivesh Swami. Preceded by a short introduction,

the book is divided into nine chapters which offer a wealth of data, while at the same time reassessing previous interpretations with rare balance and breaking new grounds for future studies.

**Chapter 1** is devoted to the saint's last moments, death, and interment in what was then known as the Buti wada, with interesting details offered by Professor Ganpatrao Govind Narke originally published in the *Shri Sai Leela* magazine in 1923, and useful information on the establishment of the Shri Sainath Sansthan Committee. Especially relevant in this regard is Annexure 1, i.e., Hari Sitaram Dixit's letter to the Collector and District Magistrate of Ahmednagar, dated 22nd October 1918, about the death of Sai Baba and requesting that his property be handed over to the Committee which had been formed to conduct the worship of his tomb (pp.170-72).



**Chapter 2** tackles the controversial issue of the saint's first arrival in Shirdi, which the author infers must have occurred around 1872 and not in 1854 as originally proposed by Govind Raghunath Dabholkar (1859-1929) in his *Shri Sai Satcharita*. He thus agrees with the position of B. V. Narasimhaswami (1874-1956) — probably the most influential figure behind the growth of the saint's devotion in the 20th century — which he further strengthens by connecting Sai Baba's arrival in the village to Tatyia Kote Patil's birth in Shirdi in 1872.

**Chapter 3** is dedicated to a cryptic saying of Sai Baba to Lakshmibai Khaparde, which her husband — the lawyer and politician Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde (1854-1938) from Amraoti, a close associate of the nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) — recorded in his diary while in Shirdi: the saint would have protected G. S. Khaparde from "the Governor's lance," i.e., from being arrested and deported, and forced his pupil to remain in the village for two more months. The author persuasively supports his argument through a document which he calls the Cleveland Report (see Annexure 2, Cleveland Report 1909, Government of India, Political-Deposit Proceedings, June 1909 no. 3; pp.173-76).

**Chapter 4** discusses the role of the detectives of the Criminal Intelligence Department (C.I.D.), set up by the Imperial British Government for monitoring G. S. Khaparde's activities and what happened in Shirdi during the latter's longest stay from December 1911 to March 1912. These detectives — whom Sai Baba apparently called Govindas — came to the village disguised as devotees or sadhus (as for instance one Mr. Natekar, who was known as Hamsa because of his ascetic attire), also keeping a watch on the saint's interactions with his followers at Dwarkamayi, the local *masjid*, taking note of what he said. The author must

be praised for his archival research on these documents since they allow us to place Sai Baba's words and deeds in historical context, situating him within the circumstances of his own times.

**Chapters 5** concerns itself with the development of Shirdi as a pilgrimage place by focusing on the construction, renovation, and present status of its wadas: the Sathe wada, the Dixit wada, and the Navalkar wada (which was created within the premises of the Sathe wada). The relevant data concerning these rest-houses for visitors are presented with thoroughness, primarily through information culled from the *Sainath Prabha* and *Shri Sai Leela* magazines. Following along these lines, **chapter 6** tells the story of the construction in 1917-18 of the Buti wada by Shrimant Gopalrao Mukund Buti, a multi-millionaire from Nagpur who first met Sai Baba in 1910, and explains how it evolved into the Old Samadhi Mandir through the formation of the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust in 1922. Both chapters are enriched by rare photographs documenting the evolution of these wadas and of the Samadhi Mandir complex.

**Chapter 7** presents a crucial phase in the saint's cult: the origin, functions, and contributions of the Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha (1915-21) which was created by Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe (born 1855; died after 1936), an Assistant Superintendent of the Revenue Survey for Kopargaon and Yeola who first came to Shirdi in 1904. This was the very first organization aimed at creating a proper management system in Shirdi, so as to guarantee order and prevent unruly and greedy individuals from causing any harm, as per Sai Baba's express wish, given the increasing number of people which came to the village seeking the holy man's darshan and blessings. The issues of the *Sainath Prabha* magazine dated 1916, detailing among other things





the statements of Tatya Kote Patil (d. 1945) — a local who from his infancy was very close to Sai Baba — prove invaluable in this reconstruction.

The author draws attention to some of the problems which arose when the Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha tried to regulate financial dealings (for instance, by proposing that whoever received money from Sai Baba should give 10% of it to the Sanstha, so as to meet the saint's needs of food, tobacco, oil, etc.), and points out that nonetheless after the saint's death (*mahā-samādhi*) there occurred a smooth transition from the Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha to the Shri Sainath Sansthan Committee proper, made up of influential figures such as Hari Sitaram Dixit (d. 1926) and Gopalrao Buti.

Highlighting the tensions determined by the coming to Shirdi of many opportunist individuals who were after money and material advantages, is in itself meritorious since it underlines the changes which were fast occurring in the village and in the saint's own routine due to the latter's growing popularity: a topic which calls for further investigation. Sai Baba himself complained about these unwarranted happenings which disrupted the spiritual atmosphere of the place and asked competent people such as Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe to do something about it. In turn, however, Sathe and the Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha had to face the opposition of locals such as Tatya Kote Patil and Shankar Narayan Joshi, alias Nanavali.

**Chapter 8** elucidates the origin and contents of the little known *Sai Prabha*, the first bilingual (English and Marathi) magazine on Sai Baba, which was created by Sathe himself via the Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha while the saint was still alive: its first issue appeared in April 1916 and though it was short-lived — being published only up until October 1919, with an interruption from June 1917 to April 1918 — it was by all standards a most important achievement, signaling the renown of the holyman.

In particular, the author offers an outline of the first issues of the magazine and a list of what he views as its

highlights, noting how the information contained herein on Sai Baba's daily routine in the last years of his life is quite detailed and therefore precious, occasionally reporting the very words which the saint uttered in his rustic Marathi. As the author states, the *Sai Prabha* magazine was "a link between the pre-Samadhi and post-Samadhi period of Sai Baba" (p. 152) and "a live history of Sai Baba and of Shirdi between 1916 and 1919" (p. 153). That Sathe and the Dakshina Bhiksha Sanstha took the decision of publishing it partly in English is in itself remarkable. An in-depth study of the whole collection of the *Sai Prabha* issues would be most desirable, along with the translation of its Marathi portions into English.

Finally, **chapter 9** offers an outline of the origins and contents of the *Shri Sai Leela* magazine, the official organ of the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, which was inaugurated in 1923 and originally published in Marathi (an English section was added starting in 1943). Throughout the decades it has been a powerful instrument in the diffusion of Sai Baba's fame, despite its ups and downs. From its inception, the magazine was keen to publish the saint's teachings and utterances, the various experiences that devotees had with him (*Maharajanche Anubhav*), and the *Shri Sai Satcharita* of Govind Raghunath Dabholkar, whose first chapter with introduction (*Upodghaat*) by Hari Sitaram Dixit was published in its first issue. As is well-known, the chapters which make up the *Shri Sai Satcharita*, the foremost scripture (*pothi*) for all *bhaktas*, were first serialized in the *Shri Sai Leela*, later to be published in book format in 1930.

The author concentrates his analysis on the first issues of the magazine so as to offer an account of its creation, format, and purpose. Noteworthy in this regard is Annexure 3, i.e., the Scheme for the Management of the Shirdi Sansthan of Shri Sai Baba (pp. 177-80), which appeared in issue 1 of *Shri Sai Leela* with the objective of informing all devotees of the Sansthan's presence and authority. The Management was formed by a Committee of fifteen

members, among whom figured five trustees for life (Moreshwar Vishwanath Pradhan, Lakshman Ganesh Mahajani, Ganpatrao Govind Narke, Ramchandra Atmaram Tarkhad, and Tatyā Kote Patil), Dasganu as Chairman, Govind Raghunath Dabholkar as Treasurer, Yeshwant Janardan Galwankar as Joint Treasurer, Hari Sitaram Dixit as Secretary, Ramchandra Dada Kote Patilas Joint Secretary, and five other people.

In the early years, the articles for *Shri Sai Leela* were mostly written or prepared by Hari Sitaram Dixit and Govind Raghunath Dabholkar. Financial resources for the magazine came from Ramchandra Atmaram Tarkhad, who was later helped by Moreshwar Vishwanath Pradhan and B.V. Deo.

Besides the more than forty photographs, four tables, and three Annexures, the book comprises a map of Shirdi, two useful glossaries of Hindi terms

and proper names, and a fine bibliography inclusive of e-Books, Websites/ Weblinks, *Sai Prabha* and *Shri Sai Leela* issues, and Government Reports.

All in all, Dr. Chandrabhanu Satpathy along with his team must be congratulated for writing this book which, true to its title, brings to light new findings on Shirdi Sai Baba. Researchers and devotees alike will greatly benefit from reading it and I am confident it will stimulate further studies. I wholeheartedly agree with what the author states in his Preface (p. vii): "It is desirable that Indian universities, especially those of Maharashtra, undertake research on Shri Sai Baba and related matters. Emphasis on the universities of Maharashtra is laid because many of the documents relating to Shri Sai Baba are in Marathi or Modi language."

– Antonio Rigopoulos, Venice, Italy





# Upanishadic World View and Sai

## A. Introduction

S hirdi Sai Baba liked His devotees to read spiritual literature with devotion and evolve spiritually to lead a life of virtues and bliss. He emphasized the role of a Sadguru to guide one on the path of spiritual evolution. He would sometimes give short or long discourses on 'Brahma-gyana' (Knowledge of Self-realisation) reflecting the essence of Upanishads, Gita or Bhagavata. An attempt is being made in this article to share some essence of Brahm-gnana as elucidated in the major Upanishads and Sai Baba's teachings.

## B. The Upanishadic World View

Mundaka Upanishad records the dialogue between Shaunaka and Angiras about the Brahmn and the self (Atman). The higher knowledge is assigned to that by which the indestructible 'Brahmn' is understood. The source of all that exists, the Brahmn is all pervading and eternal; but it can't be seen nor seized. "As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on this earth, as from every man hairs spring forth, so does everything arise here from the indestructible". From Him (the unmanifest Brahmn) is born Hiranyagarbha (the first manifest Brahmn).

That Brahmn is the indwelling self in every being. Concentration, self-control and sacrifice are "the legs on which that knowledge stands"

*(Kena Upanishad, 4.6, 8-9).*

"The face of the True (Brahmn) is covered with a golden disc. Open that; we may see the nature of the True'.

*(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 5.15.1).*

He who knows the Self "obtains pre-eminence among all beings; he attains sovereignty and supremacy".

*(Kaushitaki Upanishad, 4.20).*

"The world of Brahmn" belongs to those only who find it by practising the discipline and self-control required for pursuing the knowledge of Brahmn; for them "there is freedom in all the worlds".

*(Chandogya Upanishad, 8.4.3).*

The "wheel of Brahmn" is made to turn by the greatness of the "self-luminous, self-existent one", who is "the Knower", the "Time of Time", assuming all qualities and all knowledge; at His command, that work of "self-emanation" unfolds itself as Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. He fused one essence (the Self) with the other (Matter), and linked this with, one, the cover of Ignorance, 'Maya', (which is the first implicit condition of Creation); with two, the virtuous and sinful action (as two constituent orbits of the cycle of Karma); with three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, of the primordial nature, Prakriti), or with Eight distinctive planes of

Prakriti: Mind, Intellect, Ego and five cosmic elements; and also with Time and the subtle qualities.

*(Shvetashvatara Upanishad, Chapter-Six).*

Maitrayani Upanishad analyses further the body-mind-self mechanism by referring to the "Bhuta" (the five tanmatras of Sound, Touch, Form, Taste and Smell) aggregated as 'Sharira' (Body); and the immortal 'Bhutama' (the elemental self) dwelling in the body like a 'drop of water on a lotus leaf'. But the person is overcome by the qualities of nature; is bewildered and not able to see the Creator, abiding within himself.

He who acts is the 'elemental self'; he who causes the act by means of organs is "the Inner Man". The elemental self pervaded (overcome) by the inner man, and hammered by the Gunas, becomes manifold.

That self is "a causeway, a bridge, which holding the two worlds together, keeps them apart and yet joins them".

*(Chandogya Upanishad, 8.4).*

That subtle self is to be known by thought in bodies where breath has entered fivefold (Prana, Apana, Udana, Vyana and Samana); for every thought of man is interwoven with the senses, and when thought is purified, then the Self arises.

*(Mundaka Upanishad, 3.1.9).*

When physical and mental nourishment is pure, the Mind becomes pure. When Mind is pure, Memory becomes firm. And when memory of the highest Self wells up and remains firm, then all the ties which bind us to a belief in anything but the Self are loosened. That Self abiding in the heart is the fearless, true and immortal Brahmn.

*(Chandogya Upanishad 7.26 and 8.3 & 4).*

When all desires which once entered his heart are undone, then the mortal becomes immortal; then he attains 'Brahmn'. He beholds clearly this Self as the

ultimate and as the Lord of all that is and will be. Then he fears no man.

*(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4).*

Mandukya Upanishad analyses the subsistence of self in four states representing four levels of consciousness namely,

- (i) The state of Waking (**Vaishnavara**) with cognition of only external objects of the physical world, with seven parts and nineteen means of relating to this external world. The seven parts comprise the Heaven, the Sun, and the five prime elements of Space, Air, Water, Fire and Earth.

The nineteen means of relating to the external world comprise 5 organs of perception, 5 organs of Action, 5 vital breaths, Mind, Intellect, the I-consciousness and Chitta (faculty of awareness). Only gross objects are experienced.

- (ii) The second state of the self is the **State of Dream (Taijosa)**, which cognizes only internal objects existing in the Mind. This also has 7 parts and 19 means of relating to mental and subtle objects formed of impressions left in the Mind by the deeds done in the past or in the waking state.
- (iii) The third state of the self of **Deep Sleep (Prajna)** bereft of dreams and desires, experiences one undifferentiated point of restful and blissful consciousness.
- (iv) The **fourth state of the self (Prajna)** is the **Supreme Self** - the Source, Knower and Inner Controller of all, neither outward nor inward directed. This is peaceful, benign and pure Oneness (OM). He who knows this merges his elemental self (atman) into the Supreme Self (Paramatma Brahmn).

Katha Upanishad reveals the process of Self



realization with clarity, when it advocates 'Yoga' – a state of Thoughtlessness by the firm holding back of the senses. When the five instruments of knowledge (the five senses) stand still, together with the Mind at rest, and when the Intellect does not work, that is called the highest state. When all desires that dwell in the heart cease, then the mortal becomes immortal, and obtains Brahmā. When all the ties of the heart are severed here on earth, then, the mortal becomes immortal.

*(Chapter – 2-3-7-15).*

This Upanishad enunciates the body - mind - self mechanism with clarity: "Know the Self as one sitting in the Chariot, the Body as the chariot, the Intellect as the charioteer, the Mind as the reins, the senses as the horses and the sense objects their path. He who has no understanding and whose mind (the rein) is never firmly held, his senses (horses) are unmanageable, like the vicious horses of a charioteer. But he who has understanding and whose mind is always firmly held, his senses are under control, like good horses of a charioteer.

The former (no understanding/unmindful, uncontrolled senses, impure mind) never reaches that place, but enters into the round of births.

The latter (mindful, understanding and ever pure) reaches the place, from where he is not born again.

Like the sharp edge of a razor difficult to pass over, this path to realize the Self is hard".

*(Chapter-1.2).*

### **C. Some snippets of Sai's teachings reflecting Upanishadic worldview**

1. "I am the Inner Ruler of all and seated in your hearts. I envelope all the creatures, the movable and immovable world. I am the Controller – the wirepuller of the show of this universe. I am the Mother – origin of all beings – the Harmony of the three Gunas, the propeller of all senses, the Creator, Preserver

and Destroyer. Nothing will harm him, who turns his attention towards Me; but Maya will lash or whip him, who forgets Me. All the insects, ants, the visible and immovable world, is My body or form".

*(Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter-3, P-14).*

2. "He who loves Me most, always sees Me. The whole world is desolate to him without Me. He who tells no stories but Mine, he who ceaselessly meditates upon Me and always chants My name, I feel indebted to him. He who surrenders himself completely to Me, and ever remembers Me, I shall repay his debt by giving him salvation (Self-realisation)... He who thus comes to Me, becomes one with Me, just as a river gets to the sea and becomes merged (one) with it. So, leaving out pride and egoism, and with no trace of them, you should surrender yourself to Me, who is seated in your heart".

*(Chapter-43, P-230, ibid).*

3. Sai Baba expounded many a time who this Me (I) is. He said:

"You need not go far in search of Me. Barring your name and form, there exists in you, as well as in all beings, a sense of Being or Consciousness of Existence; That is Myself.

Knowing this, you see Me inside yourself, as well as in all beings. If you practise this, you will realize all pervasiveness, and thus attain oneness with Me..."

*(Chapter-43, P-230, ibid).*

4. "The dog which you saw before meals and to which you gave the piece of bread, is one with Me; so also other creatures are one with Me. I am roaming in their forms. He who sees Me in all these creatures, is My beloved. So, abandon

the sense of duality and distinction, and serve Me as you did today”.

*(Chapter-9, Page-56, ibid).*

5. “The appeasement of the dog's hunger is the same as Mine. The dog has a soul; the creatures may be different, but the hunger of all is the same, though some speak and others are dumb. Know for certain that he who feeds the hungry really serves Me with food. Regard this as Truth”.

*(Chapter-42, Page-223, ibid).*

6. “Though I am a fakir, have no house or wife, and though leaving all care, I stay at one place, the inevitable Maya teases Me often. Though I forgot Myself, but she cannot forget Me. She always envelops Me. This Maya (illusive power) of the Lord (Shri Hari) harasses even Lord Brahma and others; then, what to speak of a poor fakir like Me ?

Those who take refuge in God, will be freed from Her clutches with His grace”.

*(Chapter-13, P-72, ibid).*

7. “Nana, why are you getting agitated in vain? Let the senses do their allotted work or duty. We should not meddle with their work. God has created this beautiful world, and it is our duty to appreciate its beauty. The mind will get steady and calm slowly and gradually. When the heart is pure, there is no difficulty whatsoever. Why should one be afraid of anyone, if there be no evil thought in us? The eyes may do their work; why should you feel shy and tottering”?

*(Chapter-49, P-252, ibid).*

8. “To get the knowledge (realization) of the Self, Dhyan (meditation) is necessary. If you practise it continuously, the Vrittis (subtle thoughts) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should

meditate on God, who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved...”

*(Chapter 18-19, P-99, ibid).*

9. “For seeing Brahm, one has to surrender five things, namely 5 Pranas (vital forces), 5 Senses, Mind, Intellect and Ego. The path of Brahm – gnana or Self-realisation is as hard as treading on the edge of a razor”.

*(Chapter 16-17, P-87, ibid).*

Sai Baba's long discourse on Brahm-gnana contains ten qualifications to attain this knowledge, namely,

- ❖ Mumukshuta (Intense desire to get free)
- ❖ Virakti (A feeling of non-attachment with the things of the world)
- ❖ Antarmukha (Introversion)
- ❖ Catharsis (Eliminating all base ideas and emotions)
- ❖ Right Conduct (Life of Truth, Penance, Insight and Celibacy)
- ❖ Preferring Shreyas (the good) to Preyas (the pleasant)
- ❖ Control of Mind and the senses
- ❖ Mind purification and Ego elimination
- ❖ The necessity of a Sadguru and
- ❖ The Lord's grace

The imprint of the Upanishadic teachings as discussed earlier is very vivid and clear in this discourse.

**– A.R. Nanda, Delhi.**



# श्री साईसच्चरित

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### 'A Different Spiritual Perspective'

*This is the thirteenth in a series of articles based on the Shri Sai Satcharita that seek to understand and derive the true spiritual essence of the teachings of Baba. The analysis of the concluding part of chapter 9 was published in Ram Navami issue of the Heritage. In it we analyzed the essence of mendicancy exhibited by Baba and offerings in the scheme of overall spiritual ascendancy of a truth seeker and the importance of devotion while making an offering to God. Negating the dictates of intuition causes suffering at all three levels of consciousness. We now analyse the first half of chapter 10 and discuss the genesis and effect of intuition, the cosmic-conscious state of a Sadguru and try to understand the Cause of The Causeless'.*

Earlier we have discussed the after-effects of negating Intuition's command as resulting in suffering at all the three levels of consciousness. But any normal devotee who has not realized this aspect is bound to wonder regarding this nature of Intuition's command. Moreover, what is this command of intuition and in perpetuity? What is it going to command?

This basic doubt continuously lingers on in the mind of aspiring devotees throughout their spiritual voyage. This doubt is also bound to creep in all those aspirants who see *Intuition* as a form of 'The Infinite' **emanating from somewhere outside**. In most cases, a devotee firmly believes in some outside supernatural power or force as the cause of this whole manifestation and thus bewildered, gropes in the dark in search of that reality and after not finding any satisfactory answer returns dejected and frustrated. Thus, the requirement of an amplified solution for solving this mystification arises for the devotees.

If understood in the correct perspective, then it can be realized that, the Infinite initiated *Intuition* is **within ourselves and accordingly we should search for it in our own conscience**. There is no external power or force, which

affects our consciousness. As, only one Infinite has manifested itself into various forms as the sole cause of all beings as their origin and end, thus, the answer also lies within us only. Lord Krishna has said in Shri Bhagavad-Gita; chapter IV, verse 6, that '*Although I am causeless and unborn and of immutable mien, yet upon entering nature I myself – the Lord of all beings and their cosmic domain – don the cosmic garment of **My self created Maya** (delusion) but its illusory power does not change Me. The realm of my consciousness extends beyond the limits of My mortal frame to the boundaries of My eternity - whence I, the cosmic sea, watch the little Ego floating in Me.*'

This amplifies the cause and nature of this whole manifestation. As a man is made in the image of God, therefore he too possesses the free will like his creator and accordingly rewards or punishes himself by the results of his merits and demerits. But how many of us understand the essence of this philosophy?

An average mortal is too engrossed in his self-Ego to think anything beyond his own self, which he foolishly believes to be the ultimate reality. The identity of his self, when visualized separately from the *Infinite*, makes him



dependent on that perceived outer source of power. In such a bizarre situation, he turns his complete energy in pacifying the requirements of that outer soul and his inability to comprehend the true nature of this outer source makes him disheartened and disoriented in his approach. Thus, the need arises of a *Guru/Sadguru*, who is able to solve this mystery or assist in solving it for devotees who are not qualified enough to understand the nuances of this philosophy themselves.

However, the basic quality of *Guru/Sadguru* would remain all-pervading nature, omnipresence and ability to solve all material, psychological and philosophical problems of a devotee. This means that he has to be either *Infinite* Itself or It's **complete incarnation** who is equally powerful and approachable.

In order to assist aspiring devotees in their resolve of treading the spiritual path the Infinite manifests itself in various forms at different levels and consciousness in realized souls. These fully realized souls work in unison within the divine law to uplift the consciousness of various devotees and are perceived by the masses as Saints, Prophets, or Avatars. All great prophets and minor saints differ only in their degree of self- realization. Saints manifest God through small cervices of certain divine realization, whereas Prophets / *Sadguru* manifest God through wide-open windows of their consciousness. Full manifestation of divinity is an *Avatar* and the God Himself incarnates in such fully liberated Souls, who were once ordinary human beings to teach and lead the mortals by experience. ***Thus, in the present time the 'Infinite' has incarnated as Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi.*** Verse 10 of chapter IV in Shri Bhagwat Gita amplifies this aspect when the Lord says, *'Sanctified by the asceticism of wisdom, disengaged from attachment, fear and ire, engrossed and sheltered in Me, many beings have attained My nature.'*

The present chapter thus deals with the qualities of the *Sadguru*, wherein certain divine qualities are enumerated for the benefit of aspiring devotees to understand and realize the ultimate goal to be achieved in their resolve of self-realization. Until such time that a devotee realizes Infinite being the only cause of his own self, the Infinite will be perceived as different from his individual soul and accordingly he would be groping in the

dark in search of God, which will always be evasive. Nevertheless, as Infinite fully understands this aspect therefore He has accordingly made necessary arrangements in the form of Saints and *Sadgurus* to fill this void and draw the consciousness of devotees out of this maze.

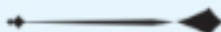
The author while commencing this chapter says, 'Remember Him (Sai Baba) always with love, for He was ever engrossed in doing good to all and always abided in His Self. To remember only Him is to solve the riddle of life and death. This is the best and easiest of *Sadhanas*, as it involves no expenditure. A little exertion here brings great rewards. So, as long as our senses are sound, we should minute by minute practice this *Sadhana*.'

Thus, the author has specified the easiest of *Sadhana*, as remembering the name of *Sadguru* 'Shri Sai Nath'. He further writes, 'All other Gods are illusory, and Guru is the only God. If we believe in *Sadguru*'s holy feet, He can change our fortune for the better. If we serve Him sincerely, we will get rid of our worldly afflictions.'

As discussed above, *Sadguru* is one such realized soul, where the Infinite manifests itself in its entirety and thus He is a reality and not an illusion as perceived in relation to our own reality, whereas all other Gods and deities are illusory in nature as they belong in the realm of God's illusion (*Mahamaya*). Further, since the *Sadguru* has Himself undergone the various facets of life thus, only He is capable of guiding other aspiring souls on this grand journey.

The author while concluding this portion of the text says, 'we need not study any philosophy like *Nyaya* and the *Mimansa*. As we trust the helmsmen in crossing rivers and seas, so, we have to trust our *Sadguru* in getting over the ocean of worldly existence.' This clearly amplifies the worth of the *Sadguru*, as the embodiment of all the studies, which finally lead to attainment of ultimate desired knowledge and thus, there is no further requirement for any other knowledge.

A truth seeker must understand that, all the available knowledge in this manifestation is nothing but the means and pathway to realize God. However, if we have once realized God then what is the necessity of acquiring all this





available knowledge? Thus, the only requirement is to somehow or the other first realize God and the rest will fall in its place. How to realize God if we do not have any knowledge about Him? Which is the way where initially we can progress individually without any support or guidance of any realized soul? The answer is that you earnestly yearn for him and feel that if God does not reveal Himself to you then you will definitely die. If you are still doubtful in your approach and want certain tangible thing, then a simpler method is to **surrender yourself completely** at the Lotus Feet of *Sadguru* because He will definitely solve your problem.

*Sadguru* is the required lighthouse of knowledge towards which the intuition of the devotee should look up for any guidance and assistance during the journey of self-realization. Having accepted this eternal truth of life as the only way out of this maze, your consciousness is bound to know more about the nature of this *Sadguru* and search for Him. And now, in this context we may analyze the purport of this chapter wherein author has mentioned certain facts about Shri Sai Baba, which we will proceed to discuss.

### **Baba's Wonderful Bedstead – 'The Cosmic - Conscious State of Sadguru'**

An average devotee is only conscious of his body and mind and of their outer connections. He remains hypnotized by worldly delusions, which reinforce his tacit assumption that he is finite and a limited creature. However, by unswerving right thoughts and actions in harmony with divine law, the soul ascends slowly in course of natural evolution of his consciousness.

The consciousness of a devotee undergoes evolution through various stages. At the **first stage**, a devotee strengthens his resolve to find God through self-realization. During this stage, he is able to free his consciousness from egoistic attachment of his earthly possessions and his little circle of friends; however, his motive is not a limited and negative one of denial, but a natural expansion towards all-inclusiveness. In the **second stage**, though a devotee finds his consciousness free of all external attachments, it still clings tenaciously within to body consciousness when he tries to meditate on God. At the **third stage** through deep meditation, he tries to

silence the internal and external body – consciousness so that his thoughts may focus entirely on the form of God. In the **fourth stage**, he learns to quiet his breath and heart and withdraws his attention and life energy into spinal centers. At the **fifth stage**, when he has learned to quiet his heart at will, he enters the state of Super-consciousness, where his perceptions are internalized rather than externalized. **Finally**, when he is able to simultaneously perceive the true nature of God and His manifestation during all the three stages of his material, sub and super consciousness, then he is deemed to be in a state of Cosmic – Consciousness and this state is also known as *Nirvikalp Samadhi* (the highest level of *Samadhi*).

In this state, the inner conscience constantly remains in suspended animation, always wakeful and alert towards both the God and His creation simultaneously. This was the state of Shri Sai Baba, during his brief sojourn at Shirdi. Analysis of the story of Baba's wonderful bedstead as described by the author in this section clearly amplifies this state of cosmic – consciousness (*Nirvikalp Samadhi*) of Baba.

The author says, '*Instead of keeping the plank on floor and then sleeping on it, Baba tied it like a swing to the rafters of Masjid with old shreds or rags and commenced to sleep upon it.*' Allegorically, this clearly illustrates the suspended animated state of the devotee's conscience in stage of his cosmic – consciousness. Generally, a normal devotee sleeps on the floor depicting his state of Sub-consciousness where he is only able to forget temporarily the illusory world of *Maya* and painfully returns to material consciousness on waking up from sleep. Whereas the act of tying the sleeping plank to rafters depicts the state of Cosmic - consciousness when a devotee is always watchful of the *Maya* and is conscious of the ultimate reality. However, to remain constantly in this state a devotee has to cultivate incessantly the **four** basic qualities as '*Shraddha*' (heart's natural love), '*Virya*' (moral courage), '*Smriti*' (memory of one's divinity) and '*Samadhi*' (true concentration). We would discuss and analyze the relevant aspects of these four qualities subsequently as they appear in the text. As of now, it is sufficient to understand that, lighting of four *Panthis* (earthen lamps) by Baba, one at each corner *allegorically* depicted this. For aspiring devotees, it may also depict vigil of all four directions at all



times to shun any negative thoughts entering consciousness.

### Manifestation of Brahma – 'Attributes of Soul in Cosmic-Consciousness'

The author in this section of text has described various qualities of Baba, who was manifestation of Brahma – the ultimate reality – the only one Infinite. The author says, 'Inwardly, He was unattached and indifferent but outwardly, He longed for masses welfare. However inwardly, an abode of peace, He looked outwardly restless. Inwardly, He had the state of Brahma; outwardly, He seemed engrossed in the world. He was calm and thought free. He never cared for wealth and fame and lived on begging. He always uttered '*Allah Malik*' (God is the real owner). He was a mine or store house of self- knowledge and full of Divine Bliss.'

Thus, this is the state and true nature of the Soul, which is firmly established in Cosmic-Consciousness. He is the abode of *Sat-Chit-Anand*; Wherein **Anand** (Bliss) is contentment of heart attained by ways and means suggested by the Savior – *Sadguru*. **Chit** (True consciousness) brings about destruction of all troubles and rise of all virtues. **Sat** (Existence) is attained by realization of permanency of Soul. These three qualities constitute the real nature of man and the ultimate goal desirable on path of *Self- realization*. Once established in this state of consciousness, the above-mentioned qualities as possessed by Baba become inherent in the nature of the realized soul. A soul can thus, perceive God and Its manifestation simultaneously. Cementing this hypothesis is the statement made by author when he says, '**One principle, which envelops the whole universe (from a stone to Brahma), incarnated in Shri Sai Baba.**' However, this understanding is only for those devotees who have the required knowledge to comprehend this aspect. Unfortunately, for the rest, Shri Sai Baba remained a mere human being.

### His Stay in Shirdi and Probable Birth- date – 'The Origin of the Infinite'

Lord Shri Krishna has said in Shri Bhagawad Gita, chapter II, verse 20 that, '**This Self is never born, nor does it ever perish; nor having come into existence will it again**

**cease to be. It is birthless, eternal, changeless and ever-same (unaffected by the usual process associated with time).'**'

Thus, it can be safely assumed that the origin of Infinite is impossible to determine because it is neither ever born nor will it ever perish. However, it also says that, having come into existence it will neither again cease to be, thus specifying the nature of manifestation as the reality, which infuses doubt in the minds of the devotee as to the real purport of this verse. The Lord clarifies this doubt when He further says in verse 28, chapter II that, '**the beginning of all creatures is veiled, the middle is manifested, and the end again is imperceptible. Why then lament this truth.**'

This also amply clarifies the brief sojourn of Shri Sai Baba at Shirdi. However, normal devotees within span of their limited consciousness cannot fathom the reality of origin of Infinite and hence no one knows the parentage or date of birth of Baba, as He is as eternal as the Infinite itself. However, manifestation is visible as the middle portion through His stay at Shirdi, which the author has tried to explain by sequence of various events at Shirdi, which are self-explanatory. Secondly, until such time we consider Baba as a saint embodied in human body we will tend to debate and discuss about His probable birth and parentage, but is He limited in a human body? We will definitely falter in understanding Baba and His true essence if we consider Him as a mere Saint. The human form of Baba was like an interlude in this grand scheme of events wherein we are able to correlate ourselves and connect ourselves with the Infinite. We might definitely try to fix the visible manifested state in compartmentalized period of history, but eventually is it going solve any logical purpose? The true essence of divinity and infinity underlying visible human form of Baba is beyond comprehension of a normal human intellect and therefore it is even futile to discuss about the probable birth and parentage of Baba in realm of Spiritualism.

### Baba's Mission and Advice – 'The Cause of the Causeless'

In this section the author has mentioned the bridging of the gap between Hindu and Muslim communities as the Mission of Baba, which had widened within two centuries



of departure of Saint Ramdas (1608 – 1681). Although this seems reliable, however, the scope is not limited to only these two communities as commonly perceived by devotees. *The only mission of the Infinite when it incarnates is to uplift the consciousness of humanity towards the goal of achieving self-realization.* Thus, for Baba all were equal. He never made any distinction based on caste, creed, color, race, or social standing. How could He who never thought of even harming any creature, even think of differentiation between the two communities? Baba always taught that there is only one supreme reality and that is the only 'infinite', which is cause of this whole universe.

While quoting Baba the author writes that, 'It is not good to dispute and argue. So, do not argue, do not emulate others. Always consider your interest and welfare. The Lord will protect you. Yoga, sacrifice, penance and knowledge are means to attain God. If you do not succeed in this by any means, then your birth is in vain. If any one does any evil unto you, do not retaliate. If you can do anything then do some good unto others.'

What a beautiful piece of advice for all to comprehend and follow in letter and spirit. Whosoever has understood the true essence behind this advice has understood everything. *This apart from advising devotees to mind their own business also guides them to accept all beings and all happenings in life as they unfold.*

If any devotee understands the true essence of only this beautiful piece of advice, then he will definitely not require any further knowledge for attaining salvation. The root cause of all problems lies in emulating and trying to compare with others, because we foolishly imagine that a person with more material wealth would be happier and more contented. This illusion about happiness sets a benchmark for other persons to strive for and unfortunately, the more they think about it the more they are entangled in web of *Maya* and thus, they accordingly suffer endlessly.

It must be realized by devotees that all individualized souls subsist in this manifested world in accordance with the divine wish and scheme of events. However, because of their own free choice (*failure to discriminate between the*

*truth and illusion*) they take rebirths to fulfill and execute their self-created unfinished desires. The problem is in their not remembering events of past lives, which eventually makes them believe that their present life is the only reality and accordingly they suffer more by comparing their achievements with those of others around them. They fail to understand that whatever is happening in their lives is because of their own choice. Their own consciousness and their desires in this non-real manifested world are the real cause of all their sufferings. *Thus, Baba has said that, 'one should not emulate others.'*

Further, a devotee must understand that every individualized soul is reaping the fruits of his own '*Karmas*' and resultant '*Sanskars*' and thus, emulating others will not solve any meaningful purpose and in retrospect it will only lead to enhancement of material desires which will further cause bondage to this illusory world and rounds of rebirth. Whereas, the aim should be to rise above law of causation and mortal desires which chain a man to a series of inherently painful incarnations and to become established instead in eternal freedom of his immortal soul.

Secondly, as true happiness of the soul lies in pursuing God, therefore a devotee must attempt to realize the same and if this is not achieved then obviously his life is vain. This in short was Sai Baba's advice to all and this will definitely stand us in good stead in both the material and spiritual matters.

To be continued...

– R.S. Besen, Gurugram



# Shri Shirdi Sai Mangalam Temple

Temple Name	: Shri Shirdi Sai Mangalam Temple
Address	: 2/ 357, Gokul Nagar, Rango Panditha, Agraharam, Hosur, Tamil Nadu-635109
Trust name	: Shri Shirdi Sai Mangalam Trust
Names of Trustees	: Mrs. Suguna Miapuram, Mrs. Rashmi Bellur Miapuram, Mr. Prasanna Miapuram
Bhoomi Pooja	: Conducted by Dr C.B. Satpathy on 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2006
Pran Pratishtha	: Conducted by Dr C.B. Satpathy on 24th April 2010

After the Pran Pratishtha Satpathyji said:

- "Trustees are the first servants and they do not have any other special status in the Temple".
- "Devotees who come to the Temple should always remember simplicity and work with Trustees to manage the Temple".

During the time of Construction Satpathyji said:

- "Keep the process very simple and be patient and do not try to emotionally overdo anything."

- When financial difficulties surfaced, he said "Keep trust in Baba. He knows how much to give and when to give" (true to his words many issues got solved within a few months)
- "Managing the Temple needs much more commitment than building a Temple."
- "This Temple will become a landmark." He said this when there was nothing in the area. Today the Temple is a landmark.









# Questions & Answers<sup>1</sup>



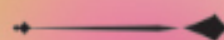
**Question: Many people speak of 'Manasa Puja'. What is 'Manasa Puja' and how to perform it?**

**Answer:** Manasa Puja or mental Puja is a process in which the worshipper goes through a mental process of the entire ceremony of a certain puja that he usually performs when sitting in front of a statue or a picture of a Deity or Guru. For example, when we perform any puja, normally we try to concentrate on the statue or picture of the Deity, offer naivedya, and perform aarti. We complete the entire process of puja, stage by stage. We use many items for the puja. In Manasa Puja, the detailed acts of the puja are performed mentally, visualizing the same process and stages. Keeping his eyes closed, the devotee focuses his inner mind on the image of Deity or Guru. He goes on to perform each stage of puja like bathing, clothing, decorating the statue, offering naivedya and performing aarti in front of the mental image of the deity or Guru, in his mind, as if it were real. While doing so, the worshipper does not cut short on the time of the actual puja. Material Puja items are not needed for conducting such a puja.

Initially, it is difficult to perform Manasa Puja, but after a lot of practice, the performance of the Manasa Puja becomes easy. The benefit of such a system of puja is that it can be performed at any place and at any time, even in the absence of material items required for a puja. However, it is advisable to perform the mental puja at a fixed time and for a fixed period of time when you are at home or away from home. It is more difficult to perform Manasa Puja than the normal Puja that people generally follow. It is advisable to perform actual Puja in the first stage and Manasa Puja in the second stage.

**Question: What is the meaning and importance of symbol worship or "Prateek Puja"?**

**Answer:** Parabrahma or God has been visualized as an all-pervading and eternal reality by the saints and realized souls. They have also experienced the subtle and divine power of God. Devotees, who have, with the grace of the Sadguru, experienced the Chaitanaya Roop (God as pure consciousness) of God may not perform worship of a symbol of God. They can worship God as an All-Pervading Consciousness. However, symbolic worship of statues, photos, pictures, etc., is required to be performed by the devotees who are at an early stage of their spiritual journey. Those who have not acquired the ability to link their consciousness with the all-pervading universal consciousness of God (by undergoing hard spiritual penance or yoga sadhana), find it easy to worship God in the form of a symbol. Through worship of the symbolic form of God, it is possible to graduate to the worship of the *nirakar* or formless aspect of God.





We worship Him in the form of a statue because it is not so easy to mentally conceive the idea or image of the formless all-pervading God in our mind, which suffers from many limitations. Therefore, most of the spiritual practitioners worship the embodied form of God at the beginning. After succeeding in that, they start worshipping God without a form. Many saints worship the formless God. It can be said that Nirvikalp Samadhi is nothing but the experience of the formless God, who transcends all qualities, characteristics, attributes and forms that exist in the universe.

### **Form and formless worship of Baba**

Therefore, Baba said “Meditate always on My formless nature, which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate on My Form from top to toe as you see here, night and day. As you go on doing this, your *vrittis* will concentrate on one point and the distinction between the Dhyata (meditator), Dhyana (act of meditation), Dhyeya (that meditated upon) will be lost and the meditator will be one with the Consciousness and be merged in the Brahman.”

(Chapters 18 & 19- Shri Sai Satcharita)

**Question: Sadguru is Sagun Sakara and the statues worshipped in the temple are also Sagun Sakara. What is the difference between the two and what are the different methods to worship them?**

**Answer:** The difference between a statue and Sadguru is that statues are made of inert objects like stones, metal or some other materials whereas the Sadguru is a living form with the highest spiritual attribute, that is, Divine Consciousness. That is why during *pran pratishtha* or installation of the statue, the priest recites the prana mantra to infuse the statue with prana, divine powers and attributes. Further, when thousands of devotees go and focus their spiritual thoughts on the statue, it is believed to be surcharged with divine thought waves emanating from such thoughts and prayers. It is believed that the deities need to be propitiated through puja in order to get a boon. However, the devotees of a Sadguru can get blessings from a Sadguru even without performing such a Puja.

The Sadguru who has realized God can be communicated with directly by the devotee, which we cannot do with a statue. Shirdi Sai Baba encouraged His devotees to continue with the worship of their personal deities as well. However, these devotees used to worship Baba even while worshipping other deities of the Hindu pantheon. Baba used to encourage the devotees to continue to worship their personal or family deities.

### **Megha**

Then Megha began to look upon Sai Baba as an incarnation of Shiva. In order to worship Shiva, *bael* leaves are required and Megha used to go miles and miles every day to bring them and worship his Shiva (Baba). His practice was to worship all the Gods in the village and then come to the Masjid and after saluting Baba's gadi (aasan), he worshipped Baba and after doing some service (shampooing His Legs), drank the washings (Tirth) of Baba's Feet. Once it so happened that he came to the Masjid without worshipping God Khandoba, as the door of the temple was closed. Baba did not accept his worship and sent him again, saying that the door was open then. Megha went, found the door open, worshipped the Deity, and then returned to Baba as usual.

(Chapter 28- Shri Sai Satcharitra)

– Dr. C.B. Satpathy

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<sup>1</sup>These Questions and Answers are re-printed (with necessary permission) from Dr. C.B. Satpathy (2014). *Baba The Devotees' Questions*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.





## Uddhavagita: Lord Srikrishna Speaks To His Childhood Friend Uddhava: A Sequel To Bhagavadgita

### Introduction

While Bhagavadgita is a well-known text and a pillar of Prasthanaya triya, the triad which is authoritative exposition of Vedanta, it is one of the four texts attributed to Bhagavan. The other three are, Anugita, a refresher retold to Arjuna as he claimed to have forgotten what he had been told earlier in the battle field; Uttaragita, a technical clarification on the Yoga practice again at his request when he was older and needed further instruction. Uddhavagita is advice to another devotee, a childhood friend who is troubled about the immanent Nirvana of the Lord and seeks guidance on what he should do when the Lord is no longer available to him physically for guidance. While the first three are from Mahabharata, Uddhavagita is from Bhagavata Purana. In all the three there is reference to Bhagavadgita which makes them an integrated quartet.

Modern academic research however holds an opinion that the three are texts incorporated into Mahabharata at different periods of time as it grew from a smaller account of history of the Pandava-Kaurava battle to a massive fifth Veda with more than a hundred thousand verses. Uddhavagita is from a different tradition which is not a part of the debate. The date of Bhagavata Purana is also a matter of controversy; it is considered a much later text. For believers, the four

texts are considered pronouncements of Bhagavan and need to be studied together. This has not happened however; Bhagavadgita and Uddhavagita are better known than the others.

Sai Satcharitra has references to devotees being instructed by Baba to study and share Nath Bhagavata, a Marathi commentary by Sant Eknath on the eleventh canto of Bhagavata. It follows the Varkari tradition of Pandharpur.

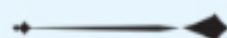
### Background to Uddhavagita

Bhagavata Purana gives its origin thus. When the destruction of Yadava clan and His Nirvana was immanent, Uddhava putting his head on the feet of Bhagvan said,

'You could have averted the calamities to the Yadus if you had so wished; but you decided to leave this world. I do not want to be left without you even for a second, please take me with you'.

What follows is a conversation between the two and advice to Uddhava on what he should do. It is in one sense advice to one person and in another it is guidance for all of us.

It is a text of 1080 verses in 24 chapters and the comparison with the other three texts is as under





Name	Chapters	Verses
Bhagavadgita	18	700
Anugita	35	914
Uttaragita	31	22
Uddhavagita	24	1030
		<b>2566</b>

Note: The numbers vary with recensions where sometimes verses are omitted or combined. The table gives relative sizes.

It is said that there are 28 commentators on Bhagavatam; a large number have commented on Uddhavagita. While the text and translations are available, there has been no effort to collate them and present a consolidated point of view. Modern commentators are Swami Madhavananda of Ramakrishna Mission, Prabhupada in his massive translation of Bhagavatam, and the two heads of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. Here again reconciliation has not been attempted. By themselves they are instructive texts, the former is brief and the latter two have elaborate explanations.

If Bhagavadgita is a text preaching action in the battle field with the full support of the Lord as the charioteer, Uddhavagita is a reference at a time the Avatara of the Lord was about to come to an end and devotees used to his physical presence had to make serious adjustments. It shows in the structure and the detail in the two texts. Whatever the route taken to come to a conclusion in these texts, the final instruction in both is the same: surrender to the Godhead.

Vedanta discussions sometimes treat the three options, Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti as distinct, the considered opinion seems to be that they are interconnected. Jnana leads to Bhakti and in turn reinforces Jnana. Karma is variously interpreted as karma-kanda (Yajna) and individual action.

All the texts support the Sankhya theory, one of the six darshanas of Indian philosophy and disagree with the

Purva Mimamsa with its preference to ritual. The tone varies. Uddhavagita is more explicit in its rejection. Ritual at best is considered a short term benefit which is impermanent, while surrender to Lord, Bhakti, is a stable gain.

### Bhakti is the preferred method

The text starts with a story of an Avadhuta (a wandering monk) who says he learnt from his 24 gurus; eight of whom are elements like earth, and sun; eleven are animals; five are humans including his own body. It ends by his assertion that, 'wise people (Rishis) have described Brahman in many forms; learning from one Guru under the circumstances is not adequate' (9.31). It is an unusual display of humility and openness to learning from whomever.

Like Bhagavadgita it also covers topics like, Sankhya Philosophy, the three yogas, and dharma injunctions. But the emphasis is clear; it prefers Bhakti as the most effective method of worship.

It has 190 verses covering this topic. The width of coverage is given below.

No.	Topic	Reference	No. of Verses
01	Description of Bhakti	11.22-25,29.48	7
02	Satsanga	12.1-15	15
03	Merits of Bhakti Yoga	14.1-30	30
04	Bhakti Practice	14.31-46	16
05	Undesirability of Siddhis	15.31-36	6
06	Visuddha Bhakti Yoga	19.1-7	7
07	Repeat of Bhakti Yoga	19.19-27	9
08	Who benefits by Bhakti	20.8,28-37	10
09	Pururava's Realisation	26-25-35	11
10	Archana Vidhi	27.1-45	45
11	Repeat Bhakti Yoga	29.1-34	34
<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>190</b>

Note: The references in the paper follow the Bhagavatam text.



Bhagavadgita has, in comparison, 34 verses; while the former is brief the latter is very detailed.

Satsanga is a section which describes how groups like Gopis, and other entities, animate and inanimate, could reach Him without recourse to Vedic knowledge. Uddhava is advised to ignore ritual restrictions and surrender to Him and move about without fear.

The long lineage of Bhakti tradition is traced from Brahma and like gold which shines when exposed to fire; the Bhakta will attain salvation leaving behind traces of desire. It will purify his mind.

The section on Archanavidhi (the method of worship) is a detailed 45 verse manual for a Bhakta.

The story of Pururava who realises his folly of following his desires illustrates the need not to be slaves to one's sense-desires. It is a well-known Vedic story of the desertion of the king by the divine damsel, Urvashi, as he was unable to keep his word to her.

As in all good text-books there are judicious repetitions which reaffirm the main message. It ends by exhortation to surrender to Him. It is similar to the well-known charamasloka of Bhagavadgita; 'Sarva Dharman Parityajya'.

### Some sample verses

We present 3 verses each from chapters 14 and 29 as a sampler.

14.9: 'O best among men, the intelligence of human beings is bewildered by my illusory energy (maya) and thus, according to their inclination, they propagate various means for attaining what they feel is the ultimate good.

14.20: 'My dear Uddhava, neither through ashtanga-yoga, nor through impersonal monism or an analytical study of the Absolute truth, nor through study of the Vedas, nor through austerities, charity or acceptance of Sannyasa can one satisfy Me as much as by developing unalloyed devotional services to me'

14.23: 'Without the manifestation of ecstatic symptoms of devotional service, such as the hair

standing on end, how can the heart melt? If the heart does not melt, how can tears of love flow from the eyes? Without the melting of the heart, and without tears flowing from the eyes, how can one render loving devotional service? Without devotional service, how can the consciousness be purified?'

29.13/14: 'O most-intelligent Uddhava, one who cultivates the understanding that I am present in the heart of all living beings, and who offers respect to everyone, is to be considered actually wise. Such a person sees equally the brahmana and the outcaste, the thief and the person who gives charity to the Brahmana, the sun and the tiny sparks, the gentle and the cruel.'

29.19: 'I consider this process of utilizing one's mind, words, and bodily functions for realizing My presence within all living entities to be the best method of spiritual enlightenment'

29.34: 'One who gives up all fruitive activities and surrenders unto Me, sincerely desiring to render service unto Me, achieves liberation from birth and death and while residing in My supreme abode, shares My opulence'

### Uddhava's reaction

At the end of the conversation, Uddhava says 'O greatest of mystic yogis, I offer my obeisance to You. Please instruct me, who am surrendered unto You, so that I may have unflinching attachment to your lotus feet'


Suka Deva who present during the interaction wrote an epilogue 'Thereafter, the exalted devotee, Uddhava, placed Sri Krishna upon the lotus of his heart and went to Badarikashrama. By engaging in austerities, he attained the Lord's eternal abode, which had been described to him by the only friend of conditioned souls, Lord Sri Krishna'. The lesson was well learnt.

### End piece

'Krishnam Vande Jagat Gurum' - Salutations to Lord Krishna, the Guru of the Universe.

— N.C.B. Nath, Bengaluru





## A Surreal Experience

When I was in Bangalore, I used to pen down a few thoughts about Sai Baba but somehow, I was unable to complete my writings and left them unfinished. However, in the first week of June, when Shipra asked me to contribute something for Heritage of Shirdi Sai, I was preparing for visiting Shirdi and thought that, maybe Baba would give me some experience, which I can write and share with other devotees. I had wonderful darshan at Shirdi on 5 and 6 June 2019 and also met some devotees from Sai ka Aangan, including Richa and Kavita and her family. This is always a source of immense joy as it gives us the feeling of being connected with Baba. However, the day after we got back from Shirdi, that is on 8 June 2019, my friend Richa called me from Shirdi and said that Baba had appeared in her dream and told her that He was very hungry and therefore I should give food to Him immediately. Richa narrated this dream to me and told me that Baba had taken my name and told her that 'tell Uma to give me food as I am very hungry'. Richa further said that she looked for me in her dream but could not find me and at this point of time, she woke up from her dream.

I was overjoyed at the thought that Baba had asked me for food. However, I did not know where and how to feed Him. In fact, at the time when Richa had called, I was preparing dinner as we had invited our friend, Brigadier Pandey and his wife Vijju for a farewell dinner as they were shifting to Allahabad. We had also invited

another dear friend of ours, Colonel Goyal and his family for dinner. However, while preparing the dinner, Richa's words kept on ringing in my ears that Baba was very hungry, and He wanted food immediately. I thought that it was unlikely that Baba would visit my house. Therefore, I immediately prepared some paneer vegetable, dal makhani and laccha paratha. I had already prepared fresh mango panna for the guests to drink, which I poured in a glass for Baba and along with it cut some fresh fruit and offered it to Him. I halted all my preparations for the evening dinner and proceeded to first offer food to Baba as I thought He must be very hungry, if He had sent me a message through Richa, all the way from Shirdi. I also sent my husband to the market to get paan for Baba as I knew that Baba liked paan, and no meal of his was complete without it. My husband brought five sweet paans, and I was perplexed as to why he brought five, when I asked him for only one. However, he told me that the rest can be offered to the guests in the evening. I offered all these to Baba's picture in my temple and thanked Him for remembering me so kindly. However, I was still not sure whether it was sufficient to offer naivedhyam or whether Baba would appear in person or in some form inquiring for His food.

I continued to prepare for the evening dinner and it was almost ready when the guests arrived. Brigadier Pandey and Vijju arrived late as they were busy with the packers till evening as they had to send their luggage to Allahabad. As soon as Vijju entered my house, she told



me that she was very hungry, and I must give her food immediately. I had made elaborate dinner arrangements, with five or six varieties of snacks and as I offered her aam panna, she again insisted that I give her food immediately. I was a little confused as, generally, in army circles, snacks and drinks are offered before proceeding for dinner. However, Vijju insisted that she had not eaten a morsel since morning, so she was very hungry and I should halt all the snacks and give her food instead. I must admit that I was also a little irritated at this point as all my preparations for the evening were getting foiled and I had to rush to lay the table for dinner. I quickly warmed the food and laid the table, as every time I went into the hall, Vijju would demand food and she also had an annoyed expression at my delay in serving her food. The food was laid, and I requested the ladies to proceed to the table. Vijju seemed very impatient to grab her plate and there was a little odd situation when I was the offering plate to the other guest first. Anyway, Vijju was very happy with the food and went on praising it, though I thought that the food was not so great that day, as I had made very simple food without onion and garlic. She praised the dal makhani and the paneer and I noticed that she did not praise the bhindi, which was prepared by my cook. The dinner was completed satisfactorily and Vijju apologized for hurrying me through it. She said that as soon as she entered our building, she was suddenly extremely hungry, and she had conveyed the same to the guard also and announced it to her husband as well. She told them that she would demand for food from me as soon as she entered.

It was at this point of time that I remembered Richa's words that Baba had told her that He was very hungry, and I should give food to Him immediately. I shared the contents of the dream as well as the message from Shirdi with my friend. I also remembered the story in Sai Satcharita, Chapter 40 where Baba appears in the form of a sanyasi asking for food at B.V. Dev's Udyapan Ceremony at his house in Dahanu (Thana District) and he thinks He had come for donations. Baba said that 'I always think of him who remembers Me. I require no



conveyance, carriage, tonga, train, or aeroplane. I manifest Myself to him who lovingly calls Me'.

As I sat to do the Shej Aarti in my temple after the guests had left, I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten to offer paan to Vijju. The five paans were lying intact in my fridge. It was as if Baba was telling me that my meal was not complete. Also, during the aarti I realised how I got fooled into thinking that it was a farewell dinner for Brigadier Pandey, whereas Vijju was asking me for simple food again and again. Though the entire episode seemed too unreal but the words that Baba needs no form to enter any house kept on ringing in my ears. I also regretted not offering paan to the guests. I was, however, still not sure whether it was Baba who came to my house demanding food, so I mentally took a vow that whenever I meet Satpathyji at the temple I shall offer paan to him to make the meal complete. I was grateful that he received my offering of paan without questioning and also acknowledged it, when I had the opportunity to meet him on the recent Ekadashi on Thursday 13 June 2019 at Sai Ka Aangan. This removed all my doubts about the guest who appeared at my house demanding food.

Jai Shri Sai

– Uma Besen, Gurugram





# OM-AUM-OM SAI

## What is OM? Why do we prefix OM with SAI

The word "OM" is of profound significance. Though its meaning is simple but its value is great. I have been reading Ramayan, Bhagwat, Baba's Leela and few other books but the word "OM" as such is not defined anywhere. I read Hari Gita in English and a small book published by Arya Samaj and realized the importance of this word.

OM stands for omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. It is also spelled as AUM which is constituent of three letters. A stands for Brahma, U stands for Vishnu and M stands for Mahesh. Brahma is the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Mahesh the Destroyer.

In the Hari Gita Lord Krishna in his discourse to Arjuna said (I am AUM). It is the first syllable in Vedas as Gayatri mantra is first among the verses. It means God. OM is God and God is OM. So whenever we say OM we are referring to Almighty who pervades everything and is everywhere, including within each one of us. It is such an auspicious word, the use of which, could carry us across the mundane existence.

In the booklet issued by Arya Samaj the letters are described as follows. When we say A, meaning Brahma, let us watch the cheeks and the lips. The lips remain

open as long as we don't close them. It means the process of creation continues. Lord Krishna in Bhagwat Gita says that it is the body which dies and not the soul meaning thereby that the process of creation continues. When we speak U, let us watch the cheeks and lips. The cheeks get curved and the lips remain open. It means that the process of preservation continues. Now, let us watch the lips when we speak M. The moment we speak M, the lips get closed. It means that the universe is destroyed. AUM has two special meanings. It means Omnipresent and Protector.

There is no atom, object or place where he is not present. He is present all the time everywhere and in everyone. There is thus no situation or place where his existence is not felt. For example, we are sitting here, he is present and watching us as he is all around us in this very place. The Lord says in Gita, chapter IX that he exists in each of us. Speaking to Arjuna, he said that while he is in the hearts of everyone but is not visible to anyone physically and at the same time he is handling physically the chariot carrying Arjuna with him.

He protects this universe with his power, knowledge and laws. He therefore protects the whole universe and each and every creature including human beings all over the universe.

Simple recitation of this word 'OM' purifies our mind, speech and action and ensures us safe journey to



reach the Lord, the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. One should develop a habit of reciting OM so much that at the last moment of life, 'OM' comes to our lips of its own.

### **OM SAI**

While writing on 'OM' I have been watching a serial on 'SAI' on TV over the last few days. It is noted that while addressing SAI it is said "OM SAI". Why is OM prefixed before SAI? The answer is simple. SAI is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and he is no other but God. He came to this world in manifest form

and after having spent 80 years, he left us a century ago. A perusal of his Leelas clearly establishes that he is none other than the embodiment of God. He is Ram, Vasudeva and any other God one believes in and so there is no difference between OM and SAI. It is one. Recite it and enjoy. The only requirement on the part of devotee is devotion and perseverance, i.e., Sharda and Saburi. This is the only solution to our problems. Try it. His remedial measures are inconceivable. This is why OM is prefixed while reciting OM SAI.

**– S. C. Dhingra, Gurugram**







## Symbolism of Sai

Sai is our Mother, full of unconditional Love.  
Sai is our Father, all Capable and Giving.  
Sai is our Beloved Friend,  
always present when needed.  
Sai is our Doctor, setting us free  
from unimaginable afflictions.  
Sai is the Bestower of Wealth,  
filling our lives with immense prosperity.  
Sai is our Samarth Sadguru,  
fulfilling our quest for self knowledge.  
Sai is All Pervasive, Omnipresent,  
Internal Wirepuller, solving all our confusions.  
Sai is Formless, appearing before  
His devotees in the very Form they think of Him.  
Sai is our Life-force, giving life and  
sustaining the entire Universe.  
But who is this SAI???

Shirdi Sai Baba would often tell His devotees that what you see here in Shirdi is a body of 3 ½ cubic feet comprising of five elements that will ultimately merge with the same. He advised His devotees to look within and recognize the real SAI, the one seated in the heart of each living organism; the vibrating, life giving force within each one of us.

Close your eyes, barring your body and name, what is left is that feeling of being alive. This is SAI.

People have given different names to this life force energy. However, it is this awareness, this consciousness of our own existence that is called by various names Krishna, Christ, Guru Nanak, Durga and so on. All are different names representing the One and Only One Truth. Like Sai said *Sabka Malik Ek*.

This consciousness, the awareness of existence, the feeling of being alive, is common to all living beings. Hence Sai Baba advised us not to differentiate – 'Destroy this wall of *Teli* between you and Me'. All living forms are one with Sai. Sai is in All and All are in Sai.

Devotees who had difficulty understanding this were advised to meditate on the physical form of Sai Baba as they saw Him until one would close one's eyes and start experiencing the formless Sai. Sai pervades through and binds the entire Universe, visible as well as invisible.

Knowing all as One form of the Supreme Divine, Shirdi Sai Baba advised us all to drop hatred and treat each other equally as extensions of the Self. Be kind, loving and compassionate with each other. Thus we should not revile our own brethren, not harm any living being. Respect and love all life forms as extensions of Sai. There is no difference between Sai and Me.

Our ego, feeling of I-ness and taking up of Do-ership binds Karma and creates *rinanubandhs* thus obstructing our path towards self realization and ultimately keeps us far away from Truth – God. Sai Baba advised us to get rid of shackles of this Maya. Go beyond the visible phenomenon and look at the noumenon.

Sai Baba asked us to work out our duties as per our station of life and observe, understand and experience our own true state.

Sai Baba promised that He is always with His true devotees and follows them everywhere.

– Vandana Ritik Mulchandani, Noida



## Your Views

### The importance of celebrating Ram Navami

**T**he ninth day at the end of Chaitra Mas is celebrated as Lord Rama's birthday, Ram Navami.

This day is significant for the followers of Shirdi Sai Devotees and was celebrated with great pomp by Baba. Baba's teachings and actions always hold deeper meaning and it is only with the grace of Guru that can one comprehend the significance. A complete chapter in Sai Satcharita is dedicated to the origin and celebration of Ram Navami festival in Shirdi, perhaps there is a reason for this. Baba means for us to learn something from Rama. When we reflect on the origin of Ram Navami, one wonders how the celebration of an "Urs" which was thought of as a thanks giving to Baba by Gopal Rao Gund for blessing him with a child has mysteriously evolved into "Ram Navami" festival. It is mysterious because the application of celebrating the Urs was rejected initially but was later approved and Baba asked for it to be on Ram Navami.

The seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu is Shri Rama. Rama is called Maryada Purushothama – a perfect man, a picture of purity, truthfulness upholding duties and responsibilities as a son, brother, husband and a King. The role Lord Rama played on this earth to guide men who, are entangled or estranged with family and friends to lead a contented life and yet progress in spirituality. Life of Rama, does not show anywhere that Rama was an ascetic or went to Himalayas to practice penance to rise as a God. Rama's divinity was established by His qualities, His deeds and His outlook towards life, duties and love towards all beings. Baba always thought about His children. He knew that a

man would be able to associate and learn from ideals that are adopted in life. Who better than Lord Rama could be a man's role model?

Let us reflect on Lord Rama's qualities - Rama was virtuous, steady in His focus and decisions; He was brave and valiant, as well as gentle and modest. As a warrior, Rama mastered all weapons, devoted to the good and prosperity of His kingdom and His people. He was a defender of the weak and the protector of the righteous. Rama empathised with His people. He led the ideal life of a householder to teach the tenets of righteousness to humanity. Under Rama's rule, His people lived in harmony. As a result, Rama is said to have established Ram-Rajya, which meant the rule of righteousness, the rule which bestows happiness and prosperity on all. Righteousness is the spiritual energy that helps man to progress in achieving spiritual divinity. The glorious incarnation of the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Rama has exemplified the path of righteousness. Let humankind follow His footsteps and practise the ideals cherished by Him, for it is only thus that there can be everlasting peace, prosperity, and welfare in this world.

For followers of Baba, there is a lesson to be learnt from celebration of Rama Navami festival. It is not about just celebrating the birth of Rama, but celebrating the life of a virtuous man and how one should see Rama in every living being. Baba meant to highlight the difficulties that Rama faced in His divine incarnation. These have strikingly similar qualities to challenges faced by ordinary men daily their lives. If one were to look at Lord Rama's life, He had a



hard life from childhood. As a Prince, He had to stay away from parents in an ashram to learn martial arts and education. He was subjected to examination by His Guru Parashurama. When Rama came of age, He married Sita, and even before they started their marital life, He was asked to leave the kingdom by His step mother, Kaikeyi. He faced untold sufferings in the forest. Sita was abducted. He fought a battle with Ravana to get Sita back, and alas when He returned to Ayodhya after 14 years, He had to leave Sita in the forest to uphold the duties as a king to please His people. Lord Rama is considered a hero, who faced harsh circumstances with a smile and with compassion towards His people. Compared to Lord Rama's life, our lives are smooth sailing! We wail when we get hiccups!

**Sri Rama is not simply a good or a great person, but is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient God. The destruction of the ten-headed Ravana signifies the annihilation of the mind or the ten senses.** Rama exhibited quality of equanimity, 'the one who is neither happy nor sad is said to have a steady intellect'. Rama had full control over the five sense organs, five motor organs, mind, subconscious mind, intellect and ego. Atmaram – The soul Principle dwelling in the heart is the real Ramrajya. **Worship of Lord Rama is worship of the all-pervading Godhead Himself. Baba always asked people to constantly chant Ram Naam, which would remove all their miseries. Baba said devotion to Lord Rama is a great purifier of the heart and helps in the spiritual progression, and Baba sang songs about Lord Rama. Baba led by example. Repetition of Rama Nama removes all sins and helps man to lead a righteous and virtuous life.**

Baba asked people to think of Lord Rama and to reflect on Ramayana by reading the sacred scripture. Rama's life teaches us to love our parents, respect their wishes, and discharge our duties with diligence, stand by our friends times of hardship and respect women. Baba wanted to din this message to those who are so materialistically focussed and self-centred that they forget their responsibilities towards their parents and family. In short, being happy does not mean one does not suffer, but it means that the mind of the sufferer knows that the state is temporary. Just as night dawns into daylight, the spiritual man carries on knowing that there is an end to the suffering and is not

caught in the emotions of happiness and misery. Happiness is knowing that we are loved unconditionally by God. Let us change our thinking and love all alike and have more tolerance. We are all children of God. Let us be more tolerant of each other and love and respect one another.

Why is Rama's kingdom called Ramrajya? It is because all people lived in harmony and love for one another. There was no fighting based on caste or religion. Baba, said we should not fight among ourselves and create walls based on religion. We must live in harmony knowing that Ram and Rahim are the names of the same God. In order to establish the Ramrajya, Baba subtly pulled the wires, so that Urs was converted to Ram Navami, and the Sandal procession by Muslims was also held on the same day of Ram Navami. A tradition which was started in Shirdi during time of Baba, is carried on to this day in Shirdi. This shows that man is innately a divine person and can live in harmony. Where there is love, God lives among us. It is for this reason, perhaps, that Baba wanted to show to the world that it was possible to destroy the man-made barriers of caste and religion and bring Ramrajya.

Sairam

*– Anitha Kandukuri, Canberra, Australia*

Shirdi Sai Baba imparted His teachings in various ways. Each of His actions had a hidden meaning and a deep message for the masses. On the surface, His intention behind allowing of Urs on Ram Navami day and later permitting celebrations of Ram's Birth on the day was obviously intended to bring about unity of Hindus and Muslims, promoting the feeling of brotherhood, mutual cooperation, harmony besides celebrations, festivity, enjoyment and fervor in the small village of Shirdi during British ruled Indian era.

Celebrating Ram Navami each year reminds us of Ram and what Ram stands for. For Hindus Ram stands for ideal human conduct, as son, brother, Prince, disciple, husband, King etc. Ram signifies victory of good over evil in worldly terms. Ram stands for love, duty, courage, compassion, nobility, valor, humility, respect, peace, stability, sacrifice, devotion and so on.



Significance of Ram naam: Celebrating this festival each year makes us think of the efficacy of Ram Naam Jaap. Sai Baba had advised many devotees to do Smaran. Chanting of God's name is said to be very important and there are so many stories about how chanting God's name saves a devotee during tough times. All Sai devotees can recall how Sai Baba presented Vishnu Sahasranama to Shama to make us understand the significance of God's name. And Ram is special for all Hindus.

When we celebrate Ram Navami, we remember Lord Ram, his life and times. We read and sing his leelas, chant his name with devotion. This brings peace of mind and gives us mental strength to overcome difficult life situations.

What is bigger – Lord Ram or his name “Ram”? Sai Baba perhaps wanted us to understand this. Saint Tulsidas in his epic The Ramayana has explained that while both (Ram and his Name) appear as One but both have mutual relationship of obedient servant and master. Only through high level of spiritual maturity can we comprehend which is bigger. Though both name and person named as Ram have attributes of the Supreme Power yet Lord Ram follows his name. Take his Name and he appears. With closed eyes we cannot recognise what is kept on our palm without knowing its name. However, without seeing its form, if we remember the name of something, the same can be visualized with love in our heart. Between Nirgun (unseen) and Sagun (seen), the Name is a beautiful Sakshi (witness). Seekers who want to understand the secret and sacred truth of Universe, do so by chanting the Lord's name and attain Self Realisation.

When devotees are undergoing turbulent times, name chanting removes their miseries and brings about inner peace. Many Seekers chant name without any desire, material or otherwise, and want to continue chanting. Saint Tulsidas says that Brahman has two forms – Sagun and Nirgun. Both cannot be defined or measured. Both were, are and will be. Both are magnificent. But Name is bigger than both, and controls both. Nirgun is like a tiny speck of fire hidden deep in wood while sagun is manifest fire itself which we can see with naked eyes. In principle, both are same, yet difficult to understand. However, with Name, both are easy to understand.

Lord Rama took a human body, suffered himself, to free earth from 'Rakshas', the demons. However his true devotees can easily cross the worldly ocean by taking his name only. Saint Tulsidas says Lord Rama freed Ahilya but his name has reformed negative thoughts of millions around the world. Lord Rama himself killed one 'Tadkha' for protecting Saint Vishwamitra but his name alone has destroyed sins of millions just as the Sun destroys the darkness of night. Rama himself destroyed Shiva's Bow at Sita Swayamvar but his name itself removes all fears of the world. His name has purified the hearts and souls of innumerable human beings and paved the way for their ultimate merger with the Supreme while Ram himself gave deliverance to only a few like Kevat, Shabri and Jatayu etc.

On a special occasion like Ram Navami, when a devotee earnestly sings Ram Naam, with or without understanding the true power of the Lord's name, still the Lord accepts him in his court. Sai Baba wanted us to understand that taking God's name can free us from all kinds of worldly pain, worries and fear. If we make it a habit to Remember and Meditate on the Lord's name, it will free us from attachment and bring us eternal happiness. What better day to do it than on Ram Navami day. He chose this day to remind us of importance of remembering God's name with Love.

Devotee Dhruv attained an eternal position in cosmos by merely chanting Lord's name. Hanuman ji lovingly and earnestly chants his pure name.

Ram may not be present in his physical form today but his name is so powerful. It saves and is an instrument for attaining Salvation. Just like our Sai Baba. 'Anubhav karo satya pehchano'.

– *Vandana Ritik Mulchandani, Noida*

We are extremely grateful to the readers of our magazine who have sent articles for 'Your Views'. We value your articles and will try and include these in the magazine. Do mention the name of the city and country when you write to us.





## Devotee Forum

### Dharma

There is a lot of misunderstanding about Dharma. I would like to share my understanding of dharma based on my experience of trying to make sense of my own life.

I have often wondered about the purpose of my life. Doing the usual things; having a job, marrying and having a family, indulging in pleasurable activities, accumulating possessions etc lost their sheen after a while. The old question, "what is the purpose of my life?" would start haunting me again. I tried many courses of action; reading books, attending discourses, attending programmes, following my heart/passion, being in the present without a care about the outcome, dhyān (being still and silent) and so on. Finally it occurred to me that I need to stop setting my goals based on comparisons with others. I needed to drop all comparisons. This helped me to realise when I was chasing the goals of others and trying to fulfill their dreams. Once I stopped doing this, my attention was more on the self.

I realised that I needed to take up all acts in the spirit of seva (service) and sadhana (learning). This further helped to remove the cobwebs. The horizon was clearing up. Dawn was imminent.

I realised that each one of us has taken birth (is born) for a specific purpose. The creator manages the universe

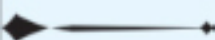
through our collective effort. We are part of the grand design. We may not know the whole picture. In fact we need not bother to know that. Having faith in the fact that there is a grand design is enough. Then we can put all our energy in doing our bit with full enthusiasm.

There are two aspects to our role. The first is our primary objective. Once we stop comparing ourselves with others, it becomes obvious that we have all the resources that are needed to do our job properly. We have enough and more. There is no need to ask for more.

The second aspect involves helping those who come into contact with us. This aspect completes the fabric and helps us to work towards the grand design. Others are doing the same to assist me. We are all sharing. There is really no transaction, no give and take, no debts to be paid back, no need to feel obliged, no accounts to be kept.

I have been gifted some qualities, physical and intellectual. I simply have to use them to do whatever needs to be done at any point of time. I have no bad qualities. I have no shortcomings. These appear only when comparisons are made with some arbitrary external standard. Once we drop comparisons it is all crystal clear.

Dharma is doing that for which one is born. It is subjective and personal. The trouble starts when we





make it into a collective practice. People can meet and need to meet to practice dharma. When it is formalised and a society or trust is formed with a constitution, a set of rules (dos and don'ts) and it has to be registered with the government that is when it no longer remains dharma. It becomes a business and would develop all its characteristics.

*– Ganoba Date, Mumbai*

### **Learning to Contribute**

Learning to contribute energises us to live in a state higher than self-centeredness and gives us enthusiasm for unselfish work. Instead of living trapped in a self-centred, often meaningless and purposeless existence, we now have an opportunity to make a difference, live more meaningfully, and lead a purposeful existence with our contribution.

The first step in learning to contribute is to focus on an activity with purpose so that we learn to become effective and result oriented in whatever we do. Thus, when we take the second step towards becoming a contributor, we begin to focus on our evolutionary purpose. This is different from just being a consumer of things and situations. It means being a contributor to whatever we do and find ourselves in. The search for evolutionary purpose sets the stage for the third step of creating proactive zones of purpose. To fulfil our higher evolutionary purpose of life we shift our purpose of life to creating or working towards a new state of affairs around us which not only enables us to live better but also helps all others in the same environment to live better. By environment we mean our own immediate family environment, and the social, cultural, physical and workplace environment around us. To contribute we have to take responsibility for the betterment of this environment. We define for ourselves the space or an environment where we can make a difference in the overall state of affairs and then act proactively within that space. As we begin to contribute to the environment, we begin seeking sustainability of contribution and its impact.

Any contributor has sustainable impact only when solving more than material need. He must also serve a more fundamental human need like empowering individuals or enabling them to find deeper fulfilment in life. Sustainable contribution takes place only when we are able to integrate function-level excellence with being-level excellence. Hence, contributors seek not only excellence in terms of profession or activity, but in terms of character and inter-human excellence, and making an impact at both levels.

Writing makes our thought process creative and brings with it the feeling of doing something good without any expectation of getting something in return; sharing one's feelings and thoughts with others helps in promoting a feeling of togetherness. Actions thereof are beneficial to the society and community.

*– Mahesh Chandra Panda, Bengaluru*





# NEWS

## 16TH ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATION, SAI KARUNA DHAM, NOIDA



Sai Karuna Dham, Noida celebrated its 16th Foundation Day on 13th April, 2019 in the ground of the City Public School, Noida. Dr. C.B. Satpathyji graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. An evening performance was presented by the children of the Shirdi Sai Public School, Moradabad and



Sai Karuna Dham, Noida. It was followed by singing of Sai Bhajans by Anuradha Paudwal, the famous singer. The annual report of the temple was presented by Shri Arun Kumar and the annual magazine 'Sai Prabah' was released. Satpathyji advised the Sai devotees and audience to serve the poor, needy and particularly those who can't afford their medical treatment.

## RAM NAVAMI CELEBRATION AT SAI KA AANGAN



Ram Navami was celebrated at Sai Ka Aangan on the 14th April 2019. The event began with Sarva Deva Pujan and Ved Paath. Shri Sainath's Mahabhishek was performed after the customary hawan. A fanfare accompanied the special *Paalki* procession in the evening after the Dhoop Arati. Later, devotional songs were sung by the devotees at the Dwarkamai. The day ended with the *Gopal Kala* and *Langar Prasad*. Dr. Satpathy visited the temple on this occasion.





**FANI RELIEF ACTIVITIES BY SHIRDI SAI GLOBAL FOUNDATION, BHUBANESWAR**



Cyclone Fani, one of the severest storms, hit the coastal region of Odisha state on 3rd May 2019. Shri Jagannath Dham of Puri suffered the worst effects of its land fall. The winds damaged half a million houses, uprooted hundreds of thousands of trees and knocked out power, telecommunications and water for millions of people in districts like Puri, Khurda, Cuttack and Jagatsingpur. Shirdi Sai Global Foundation, Bhubaneswar distributed relief materials in different



parts of Bhubaneswar and Puri. Items like Lantern, Mosquito net, flattened rice, hand fans, clothes, etc. were distributed among hundreds of families in 'Duggal' village of Puri and many other villages around. The Shirdi Sai Global Foundation team also helped in rendering medical and other logistical help in the much needed areas. They also helped in repairing some damaged houses.

**SHRI SHIRDI SAIBABA SANSTHAN,  
NEW ZEALAND**

Shri Shirdi Saibaba Sansthan of NZ Inc. was declared as the Best Religious Organisation doing Community Service in Auckland - 2019. The Pran Pratishtha of this temple was done by Dr. Satpathy ji on 9th Feb 2014. It supports several projects locally and globally through the Red Cross. Last year it took up the renovation of a flood affected school situated in a remote part of Kerala, directly, through one of its members.





## SHRI SAI SATCHARITA

1. In a small village called Dhoop, in the district of Aurangabad, there was a fortunate Muslim, whose name was Chand Patil.
2. While he was travelling to Aurangabad, he lost one of his mares and there was no trace of her for two months. He lost all hope.
3. Patil became completely despondent and was greatly distressed by the loss of the mare. Carrying the saddle on his back, he began his return journey.
4. Leaving Aurangabad four and half kos behind, he came across, on the way a mango tree, underneath which he saw this gem.
5. Wearing a cap on his head and a kafni on his body, a wooden stick under his arm, crushing tobacco and preparing it for filling his chillum for a smoke – when a strange thing happened.
6. As Chand Patil was passing by, he heard the fakir calling out to him: “Come along here, have a smoke and then proceed further. Sit for a while in the shade”.
7. The fakir asked him what was the saddle for and Patil answered that he had lost his mare. Then he told him “Go and search for it near the stream”. The horse was found immediately.
8. Chand Patil was wonderstruck and thought to himself that he had met an aulia ‘There is no limit to his powers. He cannot be called an ordinary being’.
9. Afterwards Patil returned with the mare to the original place. The fakir made him sit next to him. He then picked up in his hands a pair of tongs.
10. Then he thrust it into the soil there, took out a burning coal and put it on his chillum which was in his hands. Then he picked up his satka.
11. Next, there was no water around to wet the chappi for his chillum, so he beat the satka on the ground and water began to spring.
12. The chappi was soaked in the water and then squeezed dry. He wound it around the chillum. He smoked it himself and made Patil smoke too. Patil was dazed.
13. He made a request to the fakir to sanctify his house by his presence; and the fakir, who had manifested himself only for such divine leelas, obliged him.
14. He went to the village the next day, stayed with Patil for some time; and, then, returned to Shirdi.
15. This Chand Patil, Karbhari, was the headman of the village. A marriage was arranged with a girl from Shirdi, for his wife's nephew.
16. It was fortunate that an alliance with the bride from Shirdi was fixed for the nephew of Chandbhai's wife, who had become of a marriageable age.
17. Along with carts and horses the marriage procession started for Shirdi. Out of love for Chandbhai, Baba also joined in the procession.
18. The marriage was over and the marriage party returned. Only Baba stayed behind and stayed on for good. Thus Shirdi became blessed.
19. Sai - the Eternal, the Ancient One, was neither Hindu nor Muslim. He had no caste, nor family, nor gotra. Know him to be the Self-Realised Soul.
20. People called him 'Sai, Sai'. How was this name given to him? “Welcome Sai”, is the reverence, with which he was welcomed and that is how this name remained.
21. Near Khandoba's temple, in Mhalsapati's threshing ground, when Baba alighted with the marriage party, on that day, he was given this name.

To be continued ...

Source: Shri Sai Satcharita Translated in English by Zarine





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