

Chapter XLV

Kakasaheb's Doubt and Anandrao's Vision - Wooden Plank Baba's bedstead and not Bhagat's.

Preliminary

We have described in the last three chapters Baba's Passing away. His physical or finite form has no doubt disappeared from our view; but the infinite or spiritual form (Spirit of Baba) ever lives. The Leelas which occurred during His lifetime have been dwelt upon at great length up till now. Ever since His passing away, fresh Leelas have taken place and are even now happening. This clearly shows that Baba is ever-living and helping His devotees as before. The people who got the contact of Baba when He was living, were indeed very fortunate, but if any of them did not get a dispassion for the things and enjoyments of the world and had not their minds turned to the Lord, it was sheerly their ill-luck. What was then wanted and is now wanted is the whole-hearted devotion to Baba. All our senses, organs, and mind should co-operate in worshipping and serving Baba. It is no use in engaging some organs in the worship and deflecting others. If a thing like worship or meditation is to be done, it ought to be done with all our mind and soul.

The love that a chaste woman bears to her husband is sometimes compared to that which a disciple bears to his master (Guru). Yet the former falls far short of the latter, which is incomparable. No one, whether he be father, mother, brother or any other relation, comes to our aid in attaining the goal of life (self-realization). We have to chalk out and traverse the path of self-realization ourselves. We have to discriminate between the Unreal and the Real, renounce the things and enjoyments of this world and the next, control our senses and mind, and aspire for liberation only. Instead of depending upon others, we should have full faith in ourselves. When we begin to practice discrimination, we come to know, that the world is transient and unreal and our passion for worldly things becomes less and less, and ultimately we get dispassion or non-attachment for them. Then we know that the Brahma which is no other than our Guru is the sole reality

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and as It transcends and besets the seeming universe, we begin to worship It in all creatures. This is the unitive Bhajan or worship. When we thus worship the Brahma or Guru whole-heartedly, we become one with Him and attain self-realization. In short, always chanting the name of the Guru, and meditating on Him enables us to see Him in all beings, and confers eternal bliss on us. The following story will illustrate this.

Kakasaheb's Doubt and Anandrao's Vision

It is well-known, that Sai Baba had enjoined Kakasaheb Dixit to read daily two works of Shri Ekanath: (1) Bhagawat and (2) Bhawartha Ramayan. Kakasaheb read these daily while Baba was living and he followed the practice even after Baba's passing away. Once in Kaka Mahajani's house in Choupati, Bombay, Kakasaheb was reading Ekanathi Bhagawat in the morning. Madhavarao Deshpande alias Shama and Kaka Mahajani were then present and listened attentively to the portion read, viz., the 2nd Chapter, 11th skandha of the book. Therein the nine Nathas or Siddhas of the Rishabha family, viz., Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayan, Avirhotra, Drumil, Chamas and Karabhajan expounded the principles of the Bhagawat Dharma to King Janak. The latter asked all the nine Nathas most important questions and each of them answered them satisfactorily. The first, i.e., Kavi explained what is Bhagawat Dharma; Hari, the characteristics of a Bhakta (devotee); Antariksha, what is Maya; Prabuddha, how to cross Maya; Pippalayan, what is Para-Brahma; Avirhotra, what is Karma; Drumil, the incarnations of God and their deeds; Chamas, how a non-devotee fares after death; Karabhajan, the different modes of worship of God in different ages. The substance of all the exposition was that in this Kali age, the only means of liberation was the remembrance of Hari's (Lord's) or Guru's feet. After the reading was over, Kakasaheb said in a despondent tone to Madhavarao and others - "How wonderful is the discourse of the nine Nathas on Bhakti or devotion. But at the same time how difficult it is to put it into practice! The Nathas were perfect, but is it possible for fools like us to attain the devotion as delineated by them? we won't get it even after several births, then how are we to get salvation? It seems that there is no hope for us." Madhavarao did not like this pessimistic attitude of Kakasaheb. He said - "It is a pity that one who by his good luck got such a jewel (Guru) as Baba, should cry out so disparagingly; If he has unwavering

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faith in Baba, why should he feel restless? The Bhakti of the Nathas may be strong and wonderful, but is not ours' loving and affectionate? And has not Baba told us authoritatively that remembering and chanting Hari's and Guru's name confers salvation? Then where is the cause for fear and anxiety? Kakasaheb was not satisfied with Madhavarao's explanation. He continued to be anxious and restless, the whole day, thinking and brooding over how to get the powerful Bhakti of the Nathas. Next morning, the following miracle took place.

One gentleman, named Anandrao Pakhade came there in search of Madhavarao. The reading of the Bhagawat was then going on. Mr.Pakhade sat near Madhavarao and was whispering something to him. He was mentioning in low tone his dream-vision. As there was some interruption in the reading by this whispering, Kakasaheb stopped the reading, and asked Madhavarao what the matter was. The latter said - "Yesterday you expressed your doubt, now here is the explanation of it; hear Mr.Pakhade's vision which Baba gave him, explaining the characteristic of 'saving' devotion and showing that the devotion in the form of bow to, or worship of, Guru's feet is sufficient." All were anxious to hear the vision specially Kakasaheb. At their suggestion Mr.Pakhade began to relate the vision as follows.

I was standing in a deep sea in waist-deep water. There I saw Sai Baba all of a sudden. He was sitting on a beautiful throne studded with diamonds, with His Feet in water. I was most pleased and satisfied with the Form of Baba. The vision was so realistic that I never thought that it was a dream. Curiously enough Madhavarao was also standing there. He said to me feelingly - 'Anandrao, fall at Baba's Feet.' I rejoined - "I also wish to do so, but His Feet are in water, how can I place my head on them? I am helpless." Hearing this he said to Baba - "Oh Deva, take out Your Feet which are under water." Then Baba immediately took out His feet. I caught them without delay and bowed to them. On seeing this Baba blessed me saying - Go now, you will attain your welfare, there is no cause for fear and anxiety. He also added - "Give a silk-bordered dhotar to my Shama, you will profit, thereby."

In compliance with Baba's order, Mr.Pakhade brought the dhotar and requested Kakasaheb to hand it over to Madhavarao; but the latter refused to accept it, saying that

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unless Baba gave a hint or suggestion for acceptance, he would not accept it. Then after some discussion Kakasaheb decided to cast lots. It was the invariable practice of Kakasaheb to cast lots in all dubious matters and to abide by the decision as shown by the picked up chit or lot. In this particular case two chits, on one of which was written 'To accept' and on another 'To reject', were placed at the feet of Baba's picture and an infant was asked to pick one of them. The 'To accept' chit was picked up and the dhotar was handed over to, and accepted by, Madhavarao. In this way both Anandrao and Madhavarao were satisfied and Kakasaheb's difficulty was solved.

This story exhorts us to give respect to the words of other saints, but at the same time asks us to have full faith in our Mother, i.e., the Guru, and abide by His instructions: for he knows our welfare better than any other person. Carve out on your heart, the following words of Baba - "There are innumerable saints in this world, but 'Our father' (Guru) is the Father (Real Guru). Others might say many good things, but we should never forget our Guru's words. In short, love your Guru whole-heartedly, surrender to Him completely and prostrate yourselves before Him reverentially and then you will see that there is no sea of the mundane existence before you to cross, there is no darkness before the sun."

Wooden plank Baba's Bed-Stead, and not Bhagat's

In His earlier days, Baba slept on a wooden plank, 4 arms in length and only a span in breadth with panatis (earthen lamps) burning at the four corners. Later on He broke the plank into pieces and threw it away (Vide Chapter X). Once Baba was describing the greatness or importance of this plank to Kakasaheb. Hearing this the latter said to Baba - "If You still love the wooden plank, I will again suspend or hang up one in the Masjid again for You to sleep at ease." Baba replied - "I won't like to sleep up, leaving Mhalasapati down on the ground." Then Kakasaheb said - "I will provide another plank for Mhalasapati." Baba - "How can he sleep on the plank? It is not easy to sleep up on the plank. He who has many good qualities in him can do so. He who can sleep 'with his eyes wide open' can effect that. When I go to sleep I ask often Mhalasapati to sit by My side, place his hand on My heart and watch the 'chanting of the Lord's name' there, and if he finds Me sleepy, wake Me up. He can't do even this. He himself gets drowsy

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and begins to nod his head. When I feel his hand heavy as a stone on My heart and cry out - 'Oh Bhagat', he moves and opens his eyes. How can he, who can't sit and sleep well on the ground and whose asana (posture) is not steady and who is a slave to sleep, sleep high up on a plank? On many other occasions Baba said, out of love for His devotees - "What (whether good or bad) is ours, is with us, and what is another's is with him."

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Chapter XLVI

Baba's gaya Trip - Story of Goats.

This Chapter describes Shama's strip to Kashi, Prayag and Gaya and how Baba (in the Form of His portrait) was there ahead of him; it also describes Baba's reminiscences of the past birth of two goats.

Preliminary

Blessed, Oh Sai, are Your Feet, blessed is Your remembrance and blessed is Your darshana which frees us from the bond of Karma. Though Your Form is invisible to us now, still if the devotees believe in You, they get living experiences from You. By an invisible and subtle thread You draw Your devotees from far and near to Your Feet and embrace them like a kind and loving mother. The devotees do not know where You are, but You so skillfully pull the wires that they ultimately realize that You are at their back to help and support them. The intelligent, wise and learned folk fall into the pit of the samsar on account of their egoism, but You save, by Your power, the poor, simple and devout persons. Inwardly and invisibly you play all the game, but show that you are not concerned with it. You do things and pose yourself as a non-doer. Nobody ever knows Your life. The best course therefore for us is to surrender our body, speech and mind to Your Feet and always chant Your name for destroying our sins. You fulfill the wishes of the devotees and to those who are without any desire You give bliss supreme. Chanting Your sweet name is the easiest sadhan for devotees. By this sadhan (means), our sins,

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Rajas and Tamas qualities will vanish, the Sattwa qualities and righteousness will gain predominance and along with this, discrimination, dispassion and knowledge will follow. Then we shall abide in our Self and our Guru (who are one and the same). This is what is called complete surrender to the Guru. The only sure sign of this is that our mind gets calm and peaceful. The greatness of this surrender, devotion and knowledge is unique; for peace, non-attachment, fame and salvation etc., come in its train.

If Baba accepts a devotee, He follows him and stands by him, day and night, at his home or abroad. Let the devotee go anywhere he likes, Baba is there ahead of him in some form in an inconceivable manner. The following story illustrates this.

Sometime after Kakasaheb Dixit was introduced to Sai Baba, he decided to perform the thread (Upanayan) ceremony of his eldest son Babu at Nagpur. At about the same time Nanasaheb Chandorkar decided to perform the marriage ceremony of his eldest son at Gwalior. Both Dixit and Chandorkar came to shirdi and lovingly invited Baba for these functions. Baba asked them to take Shama as His representative. When He was pressed to come in person. Baba told them to take Shama with them and that "*after doing Banares and Prayag He would be ahead of Shama.*" Now mark these words for they show Baba's all-pervasiveness.

Taking the permission of Baba, Shama decided to go to Nagpur and Gwalior for these functions and ceremonies and thence to Kashi, Prayag and Gaya. Appa Kote made up his mind to accompany him. They both went first to Nagpur for the thread ceremony. Kakasaheb Dixit gave Shama Rs.200/- for his expenses. Then they went to Gwalior for the marriage ceremony. There Nanasaheb Chandorkar gave Shama Rs.100/- and his Vyahi (relation) Mr.Jather gave him also Rs.100/-. Then Shama went to Kashi, and then to Ayodhya where he was well received in Jather's beautiful temple of Laxmi-Narayan at Kashi (Varanasi or Banares) and in the Rama-Mandir at Ayodhya by Jathar's manager. They (Shama and Kote) stayed for 21 days in Ayodhya and two months in Kashi (Banares). Then they left for Gaya. In the train they felt a little uneasy on hearing that plague was prevailing in Gaya. At night they alighted at Gaya station and stayed in the Dharmashala. In the morning the Gayawala (the Priest who arranges and provides for the lodging and boarding of the pilgrims) came there and aid - "The pilgrims have already

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started, you better make haste." Shama casually asked him whether there was plague in Gaya. "No" said the Gayawala. "Please come without any fear or anxiety and see yourself." Then they went with him and stayed in his house which was a big and commodious Wada. Shama was pleased with the accommodation provided for him, but what pleased him most, was the beautiful big portrait of Baba fixed in the central and front portion of the building. Seeing this portrait Shama was overwhelmed with emotion. He remembered Baba's words, viz., "*After doing Kashi and Prayag He would be ahead of Shama*" and burst into tears. His hairs stood on end, his throat was choked and he began to sob. The Gayawala thought that he was afraid of plague prevailing there and therefore was crying. But Shama enquired of him whence he got Baba's portrait there. He replied that he had 200 or 300 agents working at Manmad and Punatambe for looking to the convenience of the pilgrims to Gaya and from them he heard about Baba's fame. Then about 12 years ago he went to Shirdi and took Baba's darshana. There he wanted Baba's portrait hung in Shama's house and with Baba's permission Shama gave it to him. This was the same portrait. Shama then remembered this former incident. The Gayawalas's joy knew no bounds when he learnt that the same Shama who obliged him before, was his guest then. Then they both exchanged love and service and were most delighted and happy. The Gayawala gave him a right royal welcome. He was a very rich man. He sat in a palanquin and made Shama ride an elephant and attended to all his comforts and conveniences.

The moral of the story is this:- That Baba's words came out true to the letter and unbounded was His love towards the devotees. But leave this aside. He also loved all creatures equally, for He felt that He was one with them. The following story will illustrate this.

Two Goats

Baba was once returning from Lendi, when He saw a flock of goats. Two of them attracted His attention. He went to them, caressed and fondled them and bought them for Rs.32/-. The devotees were surprised at this conduct of Baba. They thought that Baba was duped in this bargain, as the goats would fetch Rs.two each, at the most Rs.3/- or 4/- each, i.e., Rs.8/- for both. They began to take Baba to task for this, but Baba kept calm

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and cool. Shama and Taty Kote asked Baba for an explanation. He said He should not store money as He had no home, and any family to look after. He asked them to purchase at His cost 4 seers of 'dal' (lentil) and feed the goats. After this was done, Baba returned the goats to the owner of the flock and gave out of the following reminiscences and story of the goats.

"Oh, Shama and Taty, you think that I have been deceived in this bargain. No. Listen to their story. In their former birth they were human beings and had the good fortune to be My companions and sit by My side. They were uterine brothers, loving each other at first, but later on, they became enemies. The elder brother was an idle fellow while the younger one was an active chap and earned a lot of money. The former became greedy and jealous and wanted to kill his brother and take away his money. They forgot thier fraternal relations and began to quarrel with each other. The elder brother resorted to many devices to kill his younger brother, but all of his attempts failed. Thus they became deadly enemies and finally on one occasion the elder gave a deadly blow with a big stick on the latter's head while the latter struck the former with an axe, with the result that both fell dead on the spot. As the result of their actions, they were both born as goats. As they passed by me, I at once recognized them. I remembered their past history. Taking pity on them I wanted to feed them and give them rest and comfort and for this reason I spent all the money for which you reprove me. As you did not like My bargain I sent them back to their shepherd." Such was Sai's love for the goats!

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Chapter XLVII

Baba's Reminiscences

Story of Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa (Snake and frog)

The last chapter described Baba's reminiscences about two goats. This describes more such reminiscences and relates the story of Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa.

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Preliminary

Blessed is the face of Sai. If we cast a glance at Him for a moment, He destroys the sorrow of many past births and confers great bliss on us; and if He looks at us with grace, our bondage of Karma is immediately snapped away and we are led to happiness. The river Ganges washes away the dirt and sins of all people who go to her for a bath; but she intently longs for the saints to come to her and bless her with their feet and remove all the dirt (sins) accumulated in her. She knows for certain that this accumulation can only be removed by the holy feet of the saints. Sai is the crest-jewel of the saints, and now hear from Him the following purifying story.

The Snake and the Frog

Sai Baba said - "One morning after taking My breakfast I strolled along till I came to a small river bank. As I was tired, I rested there, washed My hands and feet and had a bath and felt refreshed. There was a foot-path and a cart-track sheltered by shady trees. The breeze was also blowing gently. As I was preparing to smoke chillim (pipe), I heard the croaking of a frog. I was striking the flint and lighting the fire, when a traveller turned up, sat by My side, bowed to Me and politely invited Me to his house for meals and rest. He lit up the pipe and handed it over to Me. The croaking was heard again and he wanted to know what it was. I told him that a frog was in trouble and was tasting the bitter fruit of its own karma. We have to reap now the fruit of what we sow (do) in our past life, and there is no use in crying about it. Then he smoked and handed over the pipe to Me and said that he would go there in person and see for himself. I told him that a frog was caught by a big snake and was crying. Both were very wicked in their past life and were now reaping the fruit of their actions in these bodies. He went out and found that a huge black serpent was holding a big frog in its mouth.

He turned to Me and said that in about 10 or 12 minutes the frog would be eaten up by the snake. I said, "No, this can't be. I am its father (protector) and I am here now. How shall I allow the snake to eat it up, am I here for nothing? Just see how I release it."

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After smoking again, we walked on to the place. He was afraid and asked Me not to proceed further as the snake might attack us. Not minding him, I went ahead and addressed the creatures thus:- "Oh Veerbhadrappa, has not your enemy Bassappa yet repented though he has been born as a frog, and you too, though born as a serpent, still maintain bitter enmity against him? Fie upon you, be ashamed, give up your hatred now and rest in peace."

Hearing these words, the snake left the frog quickly and dived into the river and disappeared. The frog also jumped away and hid itself in the bushes.

The traveller was much surprised; he said that he could not understand how the snake dropped the frog and disappeared at the words uttered, who was Veerbhadrappa and who was Bassappa, and what was the cause of their enmity. I returned with him to the foot of the tree and after sharing a few puffs of smoke with him I explained the whole mystery to him as follows:-

There was ancient holy place sanctified by a temple of Mahadev about 4 or 5 miles from My place. The temple was old and dilapidated. The residents of the place collected funds for its repairs. After a large amount was collected, arrangement for worship was made and plans with estimates for repairs were prepared. A rich local man was appointed the Treasurer and the whole work was entrusted to him. He was to keep regular accounts and be honest in all his dealings. He was a first class miser and spent very little for the repairs, which consequently made very little progress. He spent all the funds, swallowed some amount himself and spent nothing from his pocket. He had a sweet tongue and was very clever in offering plausible explanations regarding the poor and tardy progress of the work. The people again went to him and said that unless he lent his helping hand and tried his best, the work would not be complete. They requested him to work out the scheme and again collected subscriptions and sent the amount to him. He received it, but sat as quiet as before without making any progress. After some days, God (Mahadev) appeared in his wife's dream and said to her - "You get up, build the dome of the temple, I will give you a hundred-fold of what you spend." She told this vision to her husband. He was afraid that it would involve him in some expenses and therefore laughed it out saying that it was a mere dream, a thing not to be relied and acted upon, or else why

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did not God appear to him and tell him? Was he far off from her? This looks like a bad dream, having for its object the creation of ill feeling between husband and wife. She had to remain quiet.

God does not like big subscriptions and donations collected against the wishes of the donors, but He likes ever trifling amounts given with love, devotion and appreciation. Some days after, God again appeared in her dream and said - "Do not bother yourself about your husband and the collections with him. Don't press him to spend any amount for the temple. What I want is, feeling and devotion. So give, if you like, anything of your own." She consulted her husband about this vision and decided to give God her ornaments given by her father. The miser felt disconcerted and decided to cheat even God in this item. He undervalued the ornaments at Rs.1,000/- and bought them himself and in lieu of the amount gave a field to God as endowment or security. The wife agreed to this. The field or land was not his own, it belonged to one poor woman named Dubaki who mortgaged it to him for Rs.200/-. She was not able to redeem it for long. So the cunning miser cheated all, his wife, Dubaki and even God. The land was sterile, uncultivated and worth nothing and yielded nothing, even in best seasons.

Thus ended this transaction and the land was given in the possession of the poor priest who was pleased with the endowment. Sometime later on, strange things happened. There was a terrific storm and heavy down-pour of rain; lightning struck the house of the miser, when he and his wife both died. Dubaki also breathed her last.

In the next life, the rich miser was born at Mathura in a Brahmin family and was named Veerbhadrappa. His devout wife was born as the daughter of the priest of the temple and was named Gouri. The woman Dubaki (the mortgagor) was born as a male in the family of the Gurav (attendant) of the the temple and was named Chenbassappa. The priest was a friend of Mine, He often came to Me, chatted and smoked with Me. His daughter Gouri was also devoted to Me. She was growing fast and her father was seeking a good husband for her. I told him not to worry about this as the bridegroom himself would come seeking her. Then there came a poor boy named Veerbhadrappa of their caste, wandering and begging his bread to the priest's house. With My consent Gouri was given in marriage to him. He was also at first devoted to Me as I recommended his

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marriage with Gouri. Even in this new life he was hankering after money and asked Me to help him to get it as he was leading a married man's life.

Strange things happened. There was a sudden rise in prices. By Gouri's good luck, there was a great demand for land and the endowment land was sold for one lakh of rupees (100 times the worth of her ornaments). Half the amount was paid in cash and the remaining was to be paid in 25 instalments of Rs. 2,000/- each. All agreed to this transaction, but began to quarrel over the money. They came to Me for consultation. I told them that the property belonged to God and was vested in the priest and Gouri was his sole heiress and proprietress and no amount should be spent without her consent and that her husband had no right whatsoever to the amount. Hearing my opinion Veerbhadrappa was wroth with Me and said that I wanted to establish Gouri's claim and embezzle her property. Hearing his words, I remembered God and kept quiet. Veerbhadrappa scolded his wife (Gouri) and she came to Me at noon and requested Me not to mind the words of others and not to discard her as she was My daughter. As she thus sought My protection I gave her a pledge that I would cross seven seas to help her. Then that night Gouri had a vision. Mahadev appeared in her dream and said - "The whole money is yours, do not give anything to anybody, spend some amount for temple purposes in consultation with Chenbassappa and if you want to use it for some other purpose, consult Baba in the Masjid (Myself)." Gouri told Me the vision and I gave her the proper advice in the matter. I told her to take the principal or capital amount to herself, give half the amount of interest to Chenbassappa and that Veerbhadrappa had nothing to do in the matter. While I was thus talking, both Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa came there quarreling. I tried My best to appease them and told them God's vision to Gouri. Veerbhadrappa got wild and angry and threatened to kill Chenbassappa cutting him to pieces. The latter was timid, he caught my feet and sought my refuge. I pledged Myself to save him from the wrath of his foe. Then after some time Veerbhadrappa died and was born as a snake and Chenbassappa died and was born as a frog. Hearing the croaking of Chenbassappa and remembering my pledge, I came here, saved him and kept My word. God runs to His devotees for help in times of danger. He saved Chenbassappa (the frog) by sending Me here. All this is God's Leela or sport."

The Moral

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The moral of the story is that one has to reap what one sows, and there is no escape unless one suffers and squares up one's old debts and dealings with others, and that greed for money drags the greedy man to the lowest level and ultimately brings destruction on him and others.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Chapter XLVIII

Warding off Devotee's Calamities

Stories of (1) Shevade and (2) Sapatneker

At the commencement of this chapter, some one asked Hemadpant whether Sai Baba was a Guru or Sad-guru. In order to answer the question Hemadpant describes the signs or marks of a Sad-guru as follows:-

Signs of Sad-guru

He who teaches us Veda and Vedanta or the six Shastras (systems), he who controls the breath, or brands his body with Mudras (metallic marks of Vishnu's weapons) or gives pleasing discourses regarding Brahma, he who gives mantras (sacred syllables) to the disciples and orders them to chant the same a certain number of times, but does not assure them any result in a definite time, he who by his spacious wordy knowledge explains beautifully the Ultimate Principle, but has himself got no experience or self-realization is not a Sad-guru. But he, who by his discourse creates in us, a distaste for the enjoyments of this world and the next, and gives us a taste of self-realization, who is well-versed in both the theoretical and practical knowledge (self-realization) deserves to be called a Sad-guru. How can he, who is himself devoid of self-realization, give it to the disciples? A Sad-guru does not, even in his dream, expect any service or profit from his disciples. On the contrary he wishes to serve them. He does not think that he is great and the disciple small. Not only he loves him as his son but regards him as equal to himself or as Brahma. The main characteristic of a Sad-guru is that he is the abode of

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peace. He is never restless nor ruffled. He has no pride of his learning. The poor and the rich, the small and the great, are the same to him.

Hemadpant thinks that on account of the store or accumulation of merits in his past births, he had the good fortune of meeting and being blessed by such a Sad-guru as Sai Baba. Even in full youth He hoarded nothing (except perhaps chillim). He had no family, no friend, no home, nor any support. Since He was eighteen, His control of mind was perfect and extra-ordinary. He lived then fearless in a secluded place and always abided in His Self. Seeing the pure attachment of His devotees He always acted in their interests and hence He was in a way dependent on them. What experiences He gave to His devotees while he was living in flesh, are even to-day, after His Mahasamadhi, obtained now by those who attach themselves to Him. What the devotees have to do is this - They have to trim their heart-lamp of faith and devotion, and burn in it wicks of love, and when this is done, the flame of knowledge (self-realization) will be lit up and shine brighter. Mere knowledge without love is dry; nobody wants such knowledge. Without love there is no contentment; so we should have unbroken and unbounded love. How can we praise love? Everything is insignificant before it. Without love our reading, hearing and the study are of no avail. In the wake of love follow devotion, dispassion, peace and liberation with all their treasures. We do not get love for anything unless we feel earnestly about it. So where there is real yearning and feeling, God manifests Himself. It includes love and is the means of liberation.

Now let us revert to the main story of this chapter. Let a man go to a true saint with a pure mind, otherwise (fraudulently) and hold his feet; ultimately he is sure to be saved. This is illustrated by the following stories.

Mr.Shevade

Mr. Sapatneker of Akkalkot (Sholapur District) was studying for law. A co-student Mr.Shevade met him. Other fellow students also gathered together and compared notes of their study. It was found by the questions and answers amongst themselves, that Mr.Shevade was the least prepared of all for the examination, and therefore all the students derided him. But he said that though he was not prepared, he was sure to pass

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the examination, as his Sai Baba was there to get him through it successfully. Mr.Sapatnekar was surprised at this remark. He took Mr.Shevade aside and asked him who this Sai Baba was whom he extolled so high. He replied - "There lives in a Masjid in Shirdi (Ahmednagar District) a fakir. He is a great Sat-purusha. There may be other saints, but this is unique. Unless there is a great store of merits on one's account, one can't see Him. I fully believe in Him, and what He says will be never untrue. He has assured me that I will pass definitely next year and I am confident that I will get through the final examination also with His grace." Mr.Sapatnekar laughed at his friend's confidence and jeered at him and Baba.

Sapatnekars

Mr.Sapatnekar passed his examination, settled at Akkalkot and practised as a pleader there. Ten years after this, i.e., in 1913 he lost his only son on account of a throat disease. This broke his heart. He sought relief by making a pilgrimage to Pandharpur, Ganagapur and other holy places. He got no peace of mind. Then he read Vedanta, which also did not help him. In the meanwhile he remembered Mr.Shevade's remarks and his faith in Baba, and he thought that he too should go to Shirdi and see Baba. He went to Shirdi with his younger brother Panditrao and was much pleased to see Baba from a distance. When he went near and prostrated himself and placed a coconut before Baba with pure feeling (devotion), the latter at once cried out "Get away." Sapatnekar hung down his head, moved back and sat aside. He wanted to consult somebody who would advise him how to proceed. Somebody mentioned Bala Shimpi's name. Sapatnekar saw him and sought his help. They bought Baba's photos and came with them to the Masjid. Baba Shimpi took a photo in his hand, gave it to Baba and asked him whose photo it was. Baba said that this photo was the 'Yara' (Lover) of him, pointing to Sapatnekar. Saying this Baba laughed and all others joined. Bala asked Baba the significance of the laugh and beckoned Sapatnekar to come forward and take darshan. When Sapatnekar began to prostrate himself, Baba again cried "Get out." Sapatnekar did not know what to do. Then they both joined their hands and sat before Baba, praying. Baba finally ordered sapatnekar to clear out immediately. Both were sad and dejected. As Baba's order had to

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be obeyed, Sapatnekar left Shirdi with a heavy heart praying that he should be allowed to take darshan next time.

Mrs.Sapatnekar

One year elapsed. Still his mind was not at peace. He went to Gangapur, where he felt more restless. Then he went to Madhegaon for rest and finally decided to go to Kashi. Two days before starting, his wife got a vision. In her dream she was going with a pitcher to Lakadsha's well. There a fakir with a piece of cloth round his head, who was sitting at the foot of the Neem tree, came close to her and said - "My dear lassie, why get exhausted for nothing? I get your pitcher filled with pure water." She was afraid of the fakir and hastened back with the empty pitcher. The fakir followed her. At this she was awakened and opened her eyes. She told this vision to her husband. They thought that this was an auspicious sign and they both left for Shirdi. When they reached the Masjid, Baba was absent. He had gone to Lendi. They waited till His return. When He returned, she was surprised to see that the fakir she saw in her vision, resembled exactly Baba. She reverentially prostrated herself before Baba and sat looking at him. Seeing her humility Baba was much pleased and began to tell a story in his peculiar characteristic fashion to a third party. He said - "My arms, abdomen and waist are paining for a long time. I took many medicines, the pains did not abate. I got sick of the medicines as they gave me no relief, but I am surprised to see now that all the pains have disappeared at once." Though no name was mentioned it was the story of Mrs.Sapatnekar herself. Her pains, as described by Baba, left her soon and she was happy.

Then Mr.Sapatnekar went ahead to take darshan. He was again welcomed with the former "Get out." This time he was more penitent and persevering. He said that Baba's displeasure was due to his past deeds and resolved to make amends for the same. He determined to see Baba alone and ask his pardon for his past actions. This he did. He placed his head on Baba's feet and Baba placed His hand on it and Sapatnekar sat stroking Baba's leg. Then a shepherdess came and sat massaging Baba's waist. Baba in his characteristic way began to tell the story of a bania. He related the various vicissitudes of all his life, including the death of his only son. Sapatnekar was surprised to see that the story which Baba related was his own, and he wondered how Baba knew every detail of

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it. He came to know that He was omniscient and knew the hearts of all. When this thought crossed his mind, Baba still addressing the shepherdess and pointing to Sapatnekar said - "This fellow blames Me and charges Me with killing his son. Do I kill people's children? Why does this fellow come to the Masjid and cry? Now I will do this I will again bring that very child back in his wife's womb." With these words He placed His blessing and on his head and comforted him saying - "These feet are old and holy, you are care-free now; place entire faith in Me and you will soon get your object." Sapatnekar was much moved with emotion, he bathed Baba's feet with his tears and then returned to his residence.

Then he made preparations of worship and naivedya and came with his wife to the Masjid. He offered all this to Baba daily and accepted prasad from Him. There was a crowd in the Masjid and Sapatnekar went there and saluted Baba again and again. Seeing heads clashing against heads Baba said to Sapatnekar - "Oh, why do you prostrate yourself now and then? The one Namaskar offered with love and humility is enough." Then Sapatnekar witnessed that night the chavadi procession described before. In that procession Baba looked like a veritable Pandurang (Vithal).

At parting next day, Sapatnekar thought that he should first pay one rupee as dakshina and if Baba asked again, instead of saying no, he should pay one more, reserving with him sufficient amount as expenses for the journey. When he went to the Masjid and offered one rupee, Baba asked for another as per his intention and when it was paid, Baba blessed him him saying - "Take the coconut, put it in your wife's oti (upper fold of her sari), and go away at ease without the least anxiety." He did so, and within a year a son was born to him and with an infant of 8 months the pair came to Shirdi, placed it at Baba's feet and prayed thus - "Oh, Sainath, we do not know how to redeem Your obligations, therefore we prostrate ourselves before You, bless us poor helpless fellows, henceforth let Your holy feet be our sole refuge. Many thoughts and ideas trouble us in waking and dream states, so turn away our minds from them to Your bhajan and bless us."

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The son was named Murlidhar. Two others (Bhaskar and Dinkar) were born afterwards. The Sapatnekar pair thus realized that Baba's words were never untrue and unfulfilled, but turned out literally true.

Bow to Shri sai - Peace be to all

Chapter XLIX

Stories of (1) Hari Kanoba - (2) Somadeva Swami - (3) Nanasaheb Chandorkar.

Preliminary

The Vedas and the Puranas cannot sufficiently praise (describe) Brahma or Sad-guru; then how can we, who are ignorant, describe our Sad-guru Shri Sai Baba? We think that it is better for us to keep quiet in this matter. In reality the observance of the vow of silence is the best way of praising the Sad-guru; but the good qualities of Sai Baba make us forget our vow of silence and inspire us to open our mouth. Good dishes taste flat if there be no company of friends and relations to partake of the dishes with us, but when they join us, the dishes acquire additional flavour. The same is the case with the Sai Leelamrit - the nectar in the form of Sai's leelas. This nectar we cannot partake alone. Friends and brothers have to join us - the more the better.

It is Sai Baba Himself that inspires these stories and gets them written as He desires. Our duty is to surrender completely to Him and meditate on Him. Practising penance is better than pilgrimage, vow, sacrifice, and charity. Worshipping Hari (Lord) is better than penance, and meditation on the Sad-guru is the best of all. We have, therefore, to chant Sai's name by mouth, think over His sayings in our mind, meditate on His form, feel real love for Him in our heart and do all our actions for His sake. There is no better means than this for snapping the bondage of samsar. If we can do our duty on our part as stated above, Sai is bound to help and liberate us. Now we revert to the stories of this chapter.

Hari Kanoba

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A gentleman of Bombay named Hari Kanoba heard from his friends and relations many Leelas of Baba. He did not believe in them as he was a doubting Thomas. He wanted to test Baba himself. So he came to Shirdi with some Bombay friends. He wore a lace-bordered turban on his head and a new pair of sandals on his feet. Seeing Baba from a distance he thought of going to Him and prostrating himself before Him. He did not know what to do with his new sandals. Still going to some corner outside in the open courtyard, he placed them there and went in the Masjid and took Baba's darshan. He made a reverential bow to Baba, took udi and prasad from Baba and returned. When he reached the corner he found that his sandals had disappeared. He searched for them in vain and returned to his lodging very much dejected.

He bathed, offered worship and naivedya and sat for meals, but all the while he was thinking about nothing but his sandals. After finishing his meals, he came out to wash his hands when he saw a Maratha boy coming towards him. He had in his hand a stick, on the top of which was suspended a pair of new sandals. He said to the men who had come out to wash their hands that Baba sent him with this stick in hand and asked him to go on the streets crying - "Hari Ka Beta. Jari Ka Pheta" and told him that "If anybody claims these sandals, first assure yourself that his name is Hari and that he is the son of Ka, i.e., Kanoba, and that he wears a lace-bordered turban and then give them to him." Hearing this, Hari Kanoba was pleasantly surprised. He went ahead to the boy and claimed the sandals as his own. He said to the boy that his name was Hari and that he was the son of Ka (Kanoba) and showed him his lace-bordered turban. The boy was satisfied and returned the sandals to him. Hari Kanoba wondered in his mind saying that his lace-bordered turban was visible to all and Baba might have seen it, but how could he know his name Hari and that he was the son of Kanoba, as this was his first trip to Shirdi. He came there with the sole object of testing Baba and with no other motive. He came to know by this incident that Baba was a great Satpurush. He got what he wanted and returned home well-pleased.

Somadeva Swami

Now hear the story of another man who came to try Baba. Bhaji, brother of Kakasaheb Dixit was staying at Nagpur. When he had gone to the Himalayas in 1906

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A.D., he made an acquaintance with one Somadeva Swami of Haradwar at Uttarkashi down the Gangotri valley. Both took down each other's names in their diaries. Five years afterwards Somadeva Swami came to Nagpur and was Bhaiji's guest. There he was pleased to hear the Leelas of Baba and a strong desire arose in his mind to go to Shirdi and see Him. He got a letter of introduction from Bhaiji and left for Shirdi. After passing Manmad and Kopergaon, he took a tanga and drove to Shirdi. As he came near Shirdi he saw two high flags floating over the Masjid in Shirdi. Generally we find different ways of behaviour, different modes of living and different outward paraphernalia with different saints. But these outward signs should never be our standards to judge the worth of the saints. But with Somadeva Swami it was different. As soon as he saw the flags flying, he thought - "Why should a saint take a liking for the flags, does this denote sainthood? It implies the saint's hankering after fame." Thinking thus he wished to cancel his Shirdi trip and said to his fellow travellers that he would go back. They said to him - "Then why did you come so long? If your mind gets restless by the sight of the flags, how much more agitated would you be on seeing in Shirdi the Ratha (car), the palanquin, the horse and all other paraphernalia?" The Swami got more confounded and said - "Not a few such Sadhus, with horses, palanquins and tom-toms have I seen and it is better for me to return than see such Sadhus." Saying this he started to return. The fellow-travellers pressed him not to do so, but to proceed. They asked him to stop his *crooked* way of thinking and told him that the Sadhu, i.e., Baba did not care a bit for the flags and other paraphernalia, nor for fame. It was the people, His devotees that kept up all this paraphernalia out of love and devotion to Him. Finally he was persuaded to continue his journey, go to Shirdi and see Baba. When he went and saw Baba from the courtyard, he was melted inside, his eyes were full of tears, his throat was choked and all his evil and crooked thoughts vanished. He remembered his Guru's saying that - 'that is our abode and place of rest where the mind is most pleased and charmed.' He wished to roll himself in the dust of Baba's Feet and when he approached Baba, the latter got wild and cried aloud - "Let all our humbug (paraphernalia) be with us, you go back to your home, beware if you come back to this Masjid. Why take the darshan of one who flies a flag over his Masjid? Is this a sign of sainthood? Remain here not a moment." The Swami was taken aback by surprise. He realized that Baba read his heart and spoke it out. How omniscient He was! He knew that he was least intelligent and that Baba was noble and pure. He saw Baba embracing

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somebody, touching someone with his hand, comforting others, staring kindly at some, laughing at others, giving udi prasad to some and thus pleasing and satisfying all. Why should he alone be dealt with so harshly? Thinking seriously he came to realize that Baba's conduct responded exactly to his inner thought and that he should take a lesson from this and improve; and that Baba's wrath was a blessing in disguise. It is needless to say that later on, his faith in Baba was confirmed and he became a staunch devotee of Baba.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar

Hemadpant concludes this chapter with a story of Nanasaheb Chandorkar. When Nanasaheb was once sitting in the Masjid with Mhalasapati and others, a Mahomedan gentlemen from Bijapur came with his family to see Baba. Seeing gosha (veiled) ladies with him, Nanasaheb wanted to go away, but Baba prevented him from doing so. The ladies came and took the darshan of Baba. When one of the ladies removed her veil in saluting Baba's feet and then resumed it again, Nanasaheb, who saw her face, was so much smitten with her rare beauty that he wished to see her face again. Knowing Nana's restlessness of mind, Baba spoke to him after the lady had left the place as follows - "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 front door was open, why go by the back one? When the heart is pure, there is no difficulty, whatsoever. Why should one be afraid of any one if there be no evil thought in us? The eyes may do their work, why should you feel shy and tottering?"

Shama was there and he could not follow the meaning of what Baba said. So he asked Nana about this on their way home. Nana told him about his restlessness at the sight of the beautiful lady, how Baba knew it and advised him about it. Nana explained Baba's meaning as follows - "That our mind is fickle by nature, it should not be allowed to get wild. The senses may get restless, the body, however, should be held in check and not allowed to be impatient. Senses run after objects, but we should not follow them and crave for their objects. By slow and gradual practice retlessness can be conquered. We

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should not be swayed by the senses, but they cannot be completely controlled. We should curb them rightly and properly according to the need of the occasion. Beauty is the subject of sight; we should fearlessly look at the beauty of objects. There is no room for shyness or fear. Only we should never entertain evil thoughts. Making the mind desireless, observe God's works of beauty. In this way the senses will be easily and naturally controlled and even in enjoying objects you will be reminded of God. If the outer senses are not held in check and if the mind be allowed to run after objects and be attached to them, our cycle of births and deaths will not come to an end. Objects of sense are things harmful. With Viveka (discrimination) as our charioteer, we will control the mind and will not allow the senses to go astray. With such a charioteer we reach the Vishnu-pada, the final abode, our real Home from which there is no return."

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Chapter L

Stories of (1) Kakasaheb Dixit (2) Shri Tembye Swami (3) Balaram Dhurandhar.

Chapter 50 of the original Satcharita has been incorporated in Chapter 39, as it dealt with the same subject matter. Now, Chapter 51 of the Satcharita has been treated here as Chapter 50. This Chapter gives the stories of (1) Kakasaheb Dixit (2) Shri Tembye Swami (3) Balaram Dhurandhar.

Preliminary

Victory be unto Sai Who is the main-stay of the Bhaktas, Who is our Sadguru, Who expounds the meaning of the Gita and Who gives us all powers. Oh Sai, look favourably on us and bless us all.

The sandal-wood trees, grow on the Malaya mountains and ward off heat. The clouds, pour their rain-water and thereby, cool and refresh all the people. The flowers, blossom in the spring and, enable us to worship God, therewith. So the stories of Sai Baba come forth, in order to give solace and comfort to the readers. Both, those, who tell;

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and those who hear the stories of Baba, are blessed and holy, as also the mouths of the former and the ears of the latter.

It is well-established fact, that though we try hundreds of means or sadhanas, we do not attain the spiritual goal of life, unless a Sadguru blesses us with his grace. Hear the following story in illustration of this statement

Kakasaheb Dixit (1864-1926)

Mr. Hari Sitaram alias Kakasaheb Dixit was born in 1864 A.D., in a Vadnagara Nagar - Brahmin-family, at Khandwa(C.P). His primary education was done at Khandwa, Hinganghat, and secondary education at Nagpur. He came to Bombay for higher education and studied first in the Wilson College and then in the Elphinstone College. After graduation in 1883 A.D., he passed his LL.B. and solicitor's examination; and then served in the firm of the Govt. Solicitors, Messrs Little and Co., and then, after sometime started a solicitors' firm of his own.

Before 1909 A.D., Sai Baba's name was not familiar to Kakasaheb, but after that he soon becomes His great devotees. While he was staying at Lonavla, he happened to see his old friend. Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Both spent some time, in talking about many things. Kakasaheb described to him, how when he was boarding a train in London, he met with an accident, in which his foot slipped and was injured. Hundreds of remedies gave him no relief. Nanasaheb then told him that if he wished to get rid of the pain and lameness of his leg, he should go to his Sadguru-Sai Baba. He also gave him all the particulars of Sai Baba and mentioned to him Sai Baba's dictum "I draw to Me My man fram far off, or even across the seven seas, like a sparrow with a string fastened to its feet." He also made it clear to him that if he be not Baba's man, he would not be attracted to Him and given a darshan. Kakasaheb was pleased to hear all this, and said to Nanasaheb that he would go to Baba, see Him and pray to Him to cure not so much his lame leg, but bring round his lame, fickle mind and give him eternal Bliss.

Some time after, Kakasaheb went to Ahmednagar; and stayed with sirdar Kakasaheb Mirikar in connection with securing votes for a seat, in the Bombay Legislative Council. Mr. Balasaheb Mirikar, son of Kakasaheb Mirikar, who was a

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Mamalatdar of Kopergaon, also came at that time to Ahmendnagar in connection with a Horse-Exhibition there. After the election business was over, Kakasaheb Dixit wanted to go to Shirdi and both the Mirikars, father and son were also thinking in their house about a fit and proper person, as a guide, with whom he should be sent there. There Sai Baba was arranging things for his reception. Shama got a telegram from his father-in-law at Ahemdagar, stating that his wife was seriously ill, and that he should come to see her with his wife. Shama with Baba's permission went there, and saw his mother-in-law and found her improving and better. Nanasaheb Panshe and Appasaheb Gadre happened to see Shama, on their way to the Exhibition Dixit there and take him to Shirdi along with him. Kakasaheb Dixit and the Mirikars were also informed of Shama's arrival. In the evening Shama came to Mirikars, who introduced him to Kakasaheb. They arranged that Shama should leave for Kopergaon with Kakasaheb by the 10 O'Clock night train. After this was settled, a curious thing happened. Balasaheb Mirikar threw aside the veil or covering on Baba's big portrait and showed the same to Kakasaheb. He was surprised to see that He, Whom he was going to meet at Shirdi, was already there in the form of His portrait to greet him, at this juncture. He was much moved and made his prostration before the portarit. This portrait belonged to Megha. The glass over it was broken and it was sent to Mirikars for repairs. The necessary repairs had been already made; and it was decided to return the portarit with Kakasaheb and Shama.

Before ten O'Clock, they went to the station and booked their passage; but when the train arrived, they found that the second class was overcrowded; and then there was no room for them. Fortunately, the guard of the train turned out to be an acquaintance of Kakasaheb; and he put them up in the first class. Thus they travelled comfortably and alighted at Kopergaon. Their joy knew no bounds when they saw there Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was also bound for Shirdi. Kakasaheb and Nanasaheb embraced each other, and then after bathing in the sacred Godavari river they started for Shirdi. After coming there and getting Baba's darshan, Kakasaheb's mind was melted, his eyes were full of tears and he was overflowing with joy. Baba said to him, that he also was waiting for him; and had sent Shama ahead to receive him.

Kakasaheb then passed many happy years in Baba's company. He buit a Wada in Shirdi which he made as his, more or less, permanent home. The experiences he got from

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Baba are so manifold, that it is not possible to relate them all here. The readers are advised to read a special (Kakasaheb Dixit) No. of 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine, Vol 12, No. 6-9. we close this account with the mention of one fact only. Baba had comforted hi by saying that in the end "He will take him in air coach (Viman)", (i.e., secure him a happy death). This came out true. On the 5th of July 1926 A.D., he was travelling in the train with Hemadpant and talking about Sai Baba. He seemed deeply engrossed in Sai Baba. All of a sudden he threw his neck on Hemadpant's shoulder, and breathed his last with no trace of pain and uneasiness.

Shri Tembye Swami

We come to the next story, which shows how Saints love aech other with fraternal affection. Once Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati, known as Shri Tembye Swami encamped, at Rajamahendri (Andhra Country), on the banks of Godavari. He was a devout, orthodox, Jnani and Yogi Bhakta of the God Dattatreya. One, Mr. Pundalikrao, pleader of Nanded (Nizam State) went to see him, with some friends. While they were talking with him, the names of Shirdi and Sai Baba were casually mentioned. Hearing Baba's name, the Swami bowed with his hands; and taking a coconut gave it to Pundalikrao, and said to him, "Offer this to my brother Sai, with my pranam and request Him not to forget me, but ever love me." He also added that the Swamis do not generally bow to others, but in this case an exception had to be made. Mr. Pundalikrao consented to take the fruit and his message to Baba. The Swami was right in calling Baba a brother, for as he maintained an Agnihotra (Sacred fire) day and night, in his orthodox fashion; Baba too kept His Agnihotra, i.e., Dhuni ever burning in the Masjid.

After one month Pundalikrao and others left for Shirdi with the coconut, and reached Manmad, and as they felt thirsty they went to a rivulet for drinking water. As water should not be drunk on an empty stomach, they took out some refreshments, i.e., Chivda (flattened rice mixed with spice). The Chivda tasted pungent and in order to soften it, some one suggested and broke the coconut and mixed its scrapings with it. Thusthey made the Chivda mare tasty and palatable. Unfortunately the fruit broken, turned out to be the same, that was entrusted to Pundalikrao. As they neared Shirdi, Pundalikrao remembered the trust, i.e., the coconut and was very sorry to learn that it was

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broken and utilized. Fearing and trembling, he came to Shirdi and saw Baba. Baba had already received a wireless message, regarding the coconut, from the Tembye Swami, and Himself asked Pundalikrao first to give the things sent by His brother. He held fast Baba's Feet, confessed his guilt and negligence, repented and asked for Baba's pardon. He offered to give another fruit as a substitute, but Baba refused to accept it saying that the worth of that coconut was by far, many times more, than an ordinary one and that it could not be replaced by another one. Baba also added- "Now you need not worry yourself any more about the matter. It was on account of my wish that the coconut was entrusted to you, and ultimately broken on the way; why should you take the responsibility of the actions on you? Do not entertain the sense of doership in doing good, as well as for bad deeds; be entirely prideless and egoless in all things and thus your spiritual progress will be rapid." What a beautiful spiritual instruction Baba gave!

Balaram Dhurandhar (1878-1925)

Mr. Balaram Dhurandhar belonged to the Pathare Prabhu community, of Santacruz, Bombay. He was an advocate of the Bombay High Court and sometime Principal of the Government Law School, Bombay. The whole Dhurandhar family was pious and religious. Mr. Balaram served his community, and wrote and published an account of it. He then turned his attention to spiritual and religious matters. He studied carefully Gita, and its commentary Jnaneshwari; and other philosophical and other metaphysical works. He was a devotee of Vithoba of Pandharpur. he came in contact with Sai Baba in 1912 A.D.. Six months previous, his brothers Babulji and Vamanrao came to Shirdi and took Baba's darshan. They returned home, and mentioned their sweet experiences to Balaram and other members. Then they all decided to see Sai Baba. Before they came to Shirdi, Baba declared openly that - "To-day many of my Darbar people are coming." The Dhurandhar brothers were astonished to hear this remark of Baba, from others; as they had not given any previous intimation of their trip. All the other people prostrated themselves before Baba, and sat talking to Him. Baba said to them- "These are my Darbar people to whom I referred before" and said to the Dhurandhar brothers- "We are acquainted with each other for the last sixty generations." All the brothers were meek and modest, they stood with joined hands, staring at Baba's Feet. All the Sattwic emotions such as tears, horripilation, choking, etc., moved them and

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they were all happy. Then they went to their lodging, took their meals and after taking a little rest again came to the Masjid. Balaram sat near Baba, messaging His Legs. Baba Who was smoking a chillam advanced it towards him and beckoned him to smoke it. Balaram was not accustomed to smoking, still he accepted the pipe, smoked it with great difficulty; and returned it reverentially with a bow. This was the most auspicious moment for Balaram. He was suffering from Asthma for six years. This smoke completely cured him of the disease, which never troubled him again. Some six years later, on a particular day, he again got an attack of Asthma. This was precisely the time when Baba took his Mahasamadhi.

The day of this visit was a Thursday; and the Dhurandhar brothers had the good fortune of witnessing the Chavadi, Balaram saw the lusture of pandurang on Baba's face and next morning at the Kakad-Arti time, the same phenomenon - the same lusture of his Beloved Deity- Pandurang was visible again on Baba's face.

Mr. Balaram Dhurandhar wrote, in Marathi, the life of the Maharashtra Saint Tukaram, but did not survive to see its publication. It was published, later on, by his brothers in 1928. In a short note on Balaram's life given in the beginning of the book, the above account of Balaram's visit has been fully corroborated therein (Vide page 6 of the book).

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

Epilogue

We have done with Chapter 51 and now we come to the last Chapter (No. 52 in the original). In this Hemadpant gave his concluding remarks and promised to give an index, giving the contents of all the Chapters in verse as is given in Marathi sacred books, but unfortunately that index was not found in Hemabdant's papers. It was therefore, composed and supplied by an able and worthy devotee of Sai Baba, Mr. B.V. Deo (Retired Mamlatdar) of Thana. As we give in English books an index in the beginning and contents of each Chapter at its top, we need not consider the last index Chapter here;

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and so we consider this Chapter as the Epilouge. Unfortunately Hemadpant did not survive to revise the manuscript of this Chapter and made it ready for the press. When it was sent to the press Mr. Deo found it to be incomplete and unintelligible in certain places; but it had to be published as it was found. The chief topics dealt therein are briefly given below.

Greatness of Sad-guru Sai

We prostrate ourselves before and take refuge in that Sai Samarth Who besets all animate and inanimate things in the universe—from a post to God Brahma, pots, houses, mansions and even sky, Who pervades all creatures equally without any differentiation, to Whom all devotees are alike; and Who knows not honour and dishonour, like or dislike. If we remember Him and surrender to Him, He fulfills all our desires and makes us attain the goal of life.

This ocean of mundane existence is very hard to cross. Waves of infatuation beat high there against the bank of bad thoughts and break down trees of fortitude. The breeze of egoism blows forcibly and makes the ocean rough and agitated. Crocodiles in the form of anger and hatred move there fearlessly. Eddies in the form of the idea "I and Mine" and other doubts whirl there incessantly and innumerable fishes in the form of censure, hate and jealousy play there, Though this ocean is so fierce and terrible, Sad-guru Sai is its Agasti (Destroyer) and the devotees of Sai have not the least to fear of it. Our Sadguru is the boat, which will safely take us across this ocean.

Prayer

Now all fall flat before Sai Baba and holding His Feet make the following prayer for the public:- Let not our mind wander and desire anything except Thee. Let this work (Satcharita) be in every house and let it be studied daily. Ward off the calamities of those who study it regularly.

Fala-Shruti (Reward of Study)

Day 7 - Chapters XLV – L, Epilogue

Now a few words about the reward you get, from a study of this work. After bathing in the sacred Godavari and after taking the darshan of the Samadhi in the Samadhi-mandir in Shirdi, you should read or hear the Satcharita. If you do this all your threefold afflictions will vanish. Casually thinking about the stories of Sai, you will get unconsciously interested in spiritual life and if you then go on through the work with love, all your sins will be destroyed. If you wish to get rid of the cycle of births and deaths, read Sai's stories and remember Him always; and get yourself attached (devoted) to His Feet. If you dive into the sea of Sai's stories, and then give them out to others, you will get an ever-new flavour of them and save the hearers from perdition. If you go on meditating on Sai's Form, it will in course of time disappear and lead you into self-realization. It is very hard to know or realize the nature of Self or Brahma, but if you approach through the Sugun Brahma (Sai's Form) your progress will be easy. If the devotee completely surrenders himself to Him, he will lose his individuality and be merged in Him and be one with Him, as the river in the sea. If you thus become merged with Him in any of the three states, viz., waking, dream and sleep, you get rid of the bond of samsara. If anybody after bathing reads this with love and faith, and completes it within a week, his calamities will disappear; or if he hears or reads it daily and regularly all his dangers will be warded off. By its study, a man wishing for wealth will get it and a pure trader, success in his life. He will get the reward according to his faith and devotion. Without these, there will be no experience of any kind. If you read this respectfully, Sai will be pleased, and removing your ignorance and poverty, He will give you knowledge, wealth and prosperity. With concentrated mind, if you read a Chapter daily, it will give you unbounded happiness. One who has his welfare at heart, should study it carefully and then he will ever remember Sai gratefully and joyfully in birth after birth. This work should be read at home specially on Guru-Pournima (Ashadha full-moon day), Gokul-Ashtami, Rama-Navami and Dasara (Baba's anniversary day). If you study this one book carefully, all your desires will be satisfied and if you always remember Sai's Feet in your heart, you will easily cross the Bhava (Samsar) sagar. By its study, the diseased and sick will get health, the poor wealth, the mean and afflicted prosperity, and the mind will get rid of all ideas and get steadiness.

Day 7 - Chapters XLV – L, Epilouge

Dear good and devoted readers and listeners, we also make our bow to you all, and make you a special request. Never forget Him whose stories you have read day by day or month by month. The more fervently you read or listen to these stories, the more encouragement Sai gives us to serve you and be of use to you. Both the author and the readers must co-operate in this work, help each other and be happy.

Prasad-Yachana

We close the with prayer to the Almighty for the following Prasad of favour:-
May the readers and devotees get complete and whole-hearted devotion to Sai's Feet.
May His Form be ever fixed in their eyes and may they see Sai (the Lord) in all beings.
amen!

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all