

*SAI BABA OF SHIRDI - A GOD!*

*Sri Sai Nilaya Publication No. 58*

First Edition (English)

4000 Copies September, 2002.

Original Telugu Book First Published in the year 1960. Reprinted in the years 1968, 1979, 1988, and 1996.

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### **PREFACE**

I had the pleasure of going through the manuscript of the translated version of the book captioned 'Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi -A God!' written originally in Telugu by late Sri Bapatla Hanumantha Rao garu, an ardent devotee of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. Inspired by Sri Sai Maharaj, Sri Rao wrote as many as 28 books in his life time which indicates the level of his Shraddha (faith) and Saburi (Patience), the essential qualities of a true devotee.

This is a book pre-excellence in the sense that Sri Rao has beautifully amalgamated the deeds and sayings of Baba with the spiritual precepts of the Hindus and other religions. The vast knowledge of spiritual science and practices he has indicated in the context of Sri Sai is phenomenal. As one proceeds through the book, one invariably comes to the conclusion that Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi is much more than a Sadhu, Yogi, Saint or a Guru. It is not only His wonderful power that amazed every one who came in His contact at that time and which still continues to baffle His devotees but also His majestic personality consisting of utmost compassion tolerance and sacrifice that draws millions towards Him. In fact the universalism in Shri Sai has transcended the concepts of clan, race, religion and national barriers. A clear picture of 'Sai brotherhood' is emerging in the world in the form of a new religion, which tomorrows world will know as 'Saism".

No doubt Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi was an Incarnation and like the play of all incarnations, after the departure, faith in Him is spreading throughout the world. Sri Rao, as an inspired soul has brought-out the 'Spirit of Sai' in this book, as we may call it. Although he has quoted vastly from scriptures and religious treatises but intuitively he knew that Sri Sai is Parambrahma in Saguna Sahara form. The style of writing is lucid, poignant and emotive indicating truthfulness of the thought of the writer. The translators have done an excellent job in meticulously translating the original Telugu writing to English which is an extremely difficult job. I congratulate them for this noble endeavor.

No doubt Sri Rao was one of the chosen few to bring Baba's leelas to the people who then can be drawn towards Him for their own emancipation.

**C.B. SATPATHY**

New Delhi (18.12.2001)

*PRASAMSA*

*(Appreciation)*

My salutes are to the lotus feet of *Sri Shirdi Sai Baba*.

I feel it a privilege to write a few sentences appreciating the holy and divine book written by *Sri Bapatla Hanumantha Rao Garu* father of *Sri. Bapatla Venkata Pardbasaradhy garu*. Both father and son who happened to be exemplary devotees of *Sri Shirdi Sai Baba* and the real followers of *Sri Sai's* preachings and the message preceptors and communicators to the human world. They are themselves holy people and eligible persons for receiving *Sri Sai Baba's* merciful love and protection and in - turn bestow it to the society. They have shaped number of people into staunch devotees of *Sri Sai Baba* and made lakh's of people the pure and wholly dependent and ardent devotees of *Sri Sai Baba*, so that millions of people are saved of their worldly ailments.

They have cleared the minds of so many fellow devotees regarding their devotion to Lord *Sri Sai*. Their gospel through their innumerable holy books of *Sri Sai* has spread to the core of the hearts of millions of devotees and saved them from mental, physical and spiritual agonies by becoming devotees of *Sri Sai*.

So it appears to us that *Sri Sai Baba* has selected them for this divine mission. They are the blessed devotees. Now *Sri B.V. Pardbasaradhy garu* is continuing his divine mission inspite of his advanced age with the assistance of his family members and disciples.

Supreme is the donor. The donor of life, life style, health, wealth, food and fortune. He is the donor of medicine for ailments, and a doctor of preventive medicine, giving treatment at various levels for needy devotees.

He is the judge of our behaviour and benevolent commander shaping us into beings with humanism and divinity.

He is the Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent. The Supreme Power embodies into nameless form having no parents and of unknown origin expressing his Self as the teacher and ruler having lakhs of years on age and divinity as his origin, and called by his devotee Sri Mahalsapathi as *Sai*. Now all his devotees worship him as *Sri Sai Baba*. He protected, loved all who seeked his mercy and surrendered to him, no body in the world is independent of divine power and have nobody is a bar for his requirement of Baba's divine grace. Only the fact is some people may realize it at a later stage of life.

Bearing a good character and good will power makes one to reach his lotus feet even without their actual knowledge or ambition.

Divine power bestow from him on people with sathvik mind and mind without Arishadvargas, the six evil characters of mind.

The percentage of marks obtained by the devotee depends upon the sincere effort made by the student in his life time in *Sri Sai Baba's* school. Industrious, faithful, knowledgeable and holy student will get first class, and make lakhs of people pure and wholly dependent and ardent devotees of *Sri Sai Baba*, so that millions are saved of their worldly ailments by joining into school of *Baba*. Later in the school of *Sri Sai Baba* these students will be given teacher posts working as guides to a number of other devotees and beggars seeking his divine help.

In the universal school of the *Supreme Sai*, some devotees grow to the stage of absorbing the divine power emanating from Him. Some of them turn into Sarva Sanga Parityagies and Yogies.

Sun's rays are absorbed by plants and made into high energy chemical bonds that make the lives of animals and plants along with Panchabhuthas. This process is called Photosynthesis or Photophosphorelation.

Living beings get solar energy for life energy purpose and get cosmic energy for origin of life. Supreme is the source, generator and donor of the cosmic energy. Sri Mehar baba, Sri Sivananda of Rishikesh and a number of greatest yogies recognised and worshiped *Sri Shirdi Sai Baba* as the Supreme.

Sri Sivananda described *Sai Baba* as *Parabrahma*, *Paramatma* and *Sachidananda* in his message to his devotees.

Mehar Baba told that *Sri Sai Baba* is his first Guru and He is the Adiguru of this universe. He is *Sakala Devata Swarupa* and *Sakala Guru Swarupa*.

Our pranamams to the lotus feet of *Lord Shirdi Sai baba*. Blessings are to them who even chant His holy name.

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#### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*My Dear fellow devotees,*

I am indeed fortunate to bring out this small publication '*Sai Baba of Shirdi • A God!*' the translation of the original booklet in Telugu written by my beloved father and Guru - *Late Sri Bapatla Hanumantha Rao Pantulu garu*. It is my intention that not only Telugu people but others also be benefitted by his writings.

My father was brought up under the care of my grand mother, Smt. Chinna Punnamma garu, who was proficient in Sanskrit and Telugu. She was instrumental in my father developing keen interest in our ancient Scriptures,

Puranas, etc. at a tender age. Sri B.H. Rao attained high proficiency in both Telugu and Sanskrit. He took his '*Ubbaya Bbasha Praveena*\* at an early age and started translating the great Sanskrit works into Telugu. At the age of 22, he translated one of the greatest Scriptures of Hindu religion, 'Bhagavadgita', written by sage Veda Vyasa into Telugu poems. This work won accolades, especially from one of the greatest poets of Telugu literature in the twentieth century, Satavadham, Sri Chellapilla Venkata Sastry garu, Later he translated many other great Sanskrit works. To mention a few: 1. Sri Adi Sankara -Prabhoda Sudhakaram, Bhaja Govinda Slokas etc. 2. Sri Nigamantha Desikulu - Srinivasa Daya Satakam, Paduka Sahasram, 3. Lilasuka - Sri Krishna Karnamrutam. 4. Sage Narada-Narada Bhakti Sutramulu (Premamrutam) etc.

By the grace of *Sri Sai Baba*, he came into contact with Pujyasri B.V. Narasimha Swamiji, Founder President of All India Sai Samaj, Mylapore Chennai and became his beloved disciple. With the blessings of his Guru, he became an ardent devotee of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, He researched thoroughly about Sri Sai Baba, by studying all the available literature, listening to the teachings of his Guru and contacts with many devotees who had intimate knowledge of Sri Sai Baba directly or indirectly. He made it his life's mission to spread the message of Baba, (ie) '*Prema Tatwam*\* (Love towards all). He wrote several books on Sri Sai Baba. Among them (1) 'Yemee Ninnupekshintuna!' experiences of Baba's devotees and life history of Sai Baba (2) Sri Sai Pujastavamulu (3) Sri Sainatha Bodhamrutam (4) Sri Sai Karuna (5) Sri Sai Anusaranamu etc. are well known. All these books were written in Telugu. (These books are available with the Publisher - Please refer to *Appeal* elsewhere in this book.)

He worked as a secondary grade teacher (Telugu Pandit) in a high school at Chinaganjam, (Prakasam District A.P.) for his livelihood. He spent all his spare time, in reading and writing books, having religious discourses with friends and relatives, writing letters to fellow devotees, answering their queries, and preaching the message of Sri Sai Baba to one and all who came in contact with him. He had a large following in Andhra Pradesh. His fellow devotees used to call him as '*Sai Prasanna*', '*Sai Bhakta Sikhamani*' affectionately. *Shri Sai Sansthan*

of Shirdi honoured him with the title '*Asthana Andhra Vidwan*' for the invaluable services he rendered. Humility was his greatest virtue. He lead a very simple life and has showed to the world how a Sai devotee should live and conduct himself. The present book is one of his earliest Publications and was first printed in Telugu in 1960, and subsequently got reprinted four times. This deals extensively about the nature of God, his Avatars (Incarnations), and Avatara Purushas (Holy saints). To answer a doubt raised by one of his friends, he wrote some articles first in the magazines, 'Sai Leela' and 'Sai Sudha'. Later, at the behest of his devotees, these articles were compiled and modified into a book form. This is the maiden attempt to publish one of his books in English. With the help of Sarvasri (1) R. Ramachandra Rao, M.A., Lecturer in English, Junior College, Markapur and (2) C.R.K. Murthy, M.A., M.Ed., Lecturer and Principal (Rtd.), Govt. Junior Colleges, Hyderabad, the book was translated into English. Indeed, it was a very difficult task. I am highly grateful to them for the enormous pains they have taken to render into simple English, conveying the profound ideas expressed. I am very happy that the central ideas were beautifully conveyed so that even a layman can understand them. Simultaneously they can understand the reasons for founding various religions, which are man made, and their objectives. Several doubts of ordinary persons like, 'Who is God?', 'What is an incarnation?', 'What is its purpose?', 'Whether there is one God or several Gods!', 'Who are holy saints?' etc have also been clarified. The divine attributes of God have been enumerated very vividly. The objective of *Sri Sai Baba's Incarnation* has been clearly explained and it has been established beyond doubt that *Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi is an Incarnation of God*.

I am sure that this book will help the society immensely, especially at this time, when passions are being raised by some selfish and unscrupulous persons between the various religions, sects, forgetting the fundamental principles propounded by their founders. The message of *Sri Sai Baba Love towards all (Prema Tatwam)* without consideration of religion, caste, creed, sect etc towards all human beings is the only remedy for all the evils of the present society. It is my fond hope that readers will find this book interesting and beneficial. I humbly

request my fellow devotees to convey their impressions and suggestions. Based on the response, I shall make my efforts to get the other great books of my father also translated and published in English.

Matters pertaining to printing of this book:

I express my grateful thanks to Revered Guruji, Sri C.B. Satpathy, I.P.S. New Delhi for his excellent '*Preface*'.

2. I express my affectionate thanks and graceful blessings of Sri Sai Baba to Sri K. Ramkumar, B.Sc., M.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Biochemistry, Govt. Medical College, Guntur, a staunch devotee of Sri Sai Baba, for his '*Prasamsa*', a faithful expression about my father's works and this book.
3. I thank Sri K.V. Ramani, Managing Director, 'Shirdi Sai Trust', Chennai, for magnanimously donating Rs. 15,000/-towards publication of this book.
4. I record my deep appreciation and blessings to Chi. M.V. Sairam Gopal, M.S.(USA) for his contribution of Rs. 11,116/ - on behalf of his grandparents Sri M.V. SivaramaiahM.A., M.Ed., and Smt. M. Varalakshmi (sister of Sri B. H. Rao garu, the author of this book) towards expenses for printing this book. I pray Lord Sai Baba to give his blessings to all the 'Manchikanti' family members, who are the followers of Sri B.H. Rao garu for over five decades.
5. Further, I thank all the Donors whose names have been published separately for their valuable contributions towards publication of this book. I pray Sri Sainath to bless them all with success and happiness.
6. I thank Sri R. Janardhana Rao, Proprietor, Odin Press Pvt. Ltd. Balkampet, Hyderabad and his staff for the excellent getup and printing of this book, taking enormous pains.
7. I thank the services done by many, whose names could not be listed here, for their valuable contribution in bringing out this publication. May Lord Sai Baba bless them all.
8. Lastly, but not the least, May Sri Sai Baba bless all the readers with peace, prosperity, happiness, health and show them the right path to lead their lives.

In the service of Sri Sai Baba, Your fellow Devotee and Publisher.

Bapatla Venkata Pardhasaradhy  
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*My Dear fellow devotees,*

I am indeed fortunate enough to place this booklet in the hands of all the devotees as directed by *Sri Sai Baba* in an attempt to answer the question: "*Is Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi also a God? Are the present **Gods** not enough?*", posed to me by a friend of mine.

I wrote some articles on this issue in *Sai Leela*, (a monthly magazine published from Chirala) in 1953, and in *Sai Sudha* (Published from Mylapore, Chennai,) in 1957-'58, At the behest of my fellow devotees, this small publication is brought out compiling all those articles with certain additions and modifications. I am a small and insignificant person to detail about *God, His Incarnations and the Holy Saints*. *One* should be *One* with that *Supreme Being* to speak about *Him*. It shall always remain incomplete if a small person like me ventures to talk about *Him*. Words seem to express a fraction of entirety. The *Eternal Truth* can neither be comprehended nor expressed but can only be experienced. *God* is the central cause of all our actions and its effects. It is *Sri Sai Baba's* wish that makes one to raise a question and it is His wish only that prompts some one else to answer it. I earnestly believe that this is a special mission entrusted to me by my *Guru, Sri B.V. Narasimha Swamiji* a great Saint. He earned the reputation as the modern *Nana Saheb Cbandorkar* (a close disciple of Sri Sai Baba) and also called *Sai Vyasa* by Sai devotees. He was the Founder President of All India Sai Samaj, Mylapore, Chennai.

Let the learned pardon me for my audacity in talking about a divine personality, *Sri Sai Baba*, The book is divided into four chapters.

***First Chapter:***

In answer to the second question of my friend: (*Are the present Gods not enough?*), It has been established that there is only one *Supreme God*, who is *Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent*, and does not possess any specific form. The other Godly forms (called by my friend as Gods in his question) are His *Avatars (Incarnations.)*

Hinduism is the most ancient of all religions in the world with wider scope, goals, and objectives. It propounds that this human life is the best form of all

living beings. If a person who believes in the existence of God (Theist) meditates upon Him (God) with full faith and devotion on any form the results are the same. They do not depend upon the form of God, they worship. *Bhagawan Sri Adi Sankara*, known as *Shanmatacharya*, has taught us the truth that *Saivism*, *Vaisnavism*, *Saktism* are all accepted by Vedas and God can be worshipped in any form as per his/her belief and the rewards shall be the same. Our ancient Hindu religion has no rifts with other religions. It exhibits a broad feeling of love and respect for all other religions and absorbs all of them into its fold. This is the reason for its survival till today and it will survive forever.

Several foreign philosophers like Max Muller, George Bernard Shaw, etc. extolled the great virtues of our ancient religion and culture. In the words of George Bernard Shaw:

"The apparent multiplication of Gods is bewildering at first glance, but you soon discover that they are all the same God in different aspects and functions. There is always one utter most God who defies personification. This makes Hinduism the most tolerant religion in the world, because its own transcendent God includes all possible Gods."

The first chapter further deals in detail with the term God as propounded in the *Smritis*, *Sruties* and *Puranas* which are the-roots of our ancient Hindu religion and establishes that there is only one *Universal God* and different Gods do not exist.

### ***Second Chapter:***

This deals with God's physical forms, and His *Avatars (Incarnations.)* An *Incarnation*, a learned Saint, a person who knows *Brahmam* are all considered to be Gods in our presence by virtue of their powers of attaining Godliness. There is no discrimination between them in their *State, Stature or Status*. Whoever possesses such extraordinary qualities and powers as witnessed in the *Almighty*, will be God. God who is *Nirakara* becomes *Sahara* in order to quench the thirst of love of His devotees. The *Sahara* form of God is not confined to a particular country or time. It appears at all times as and when the need arises and protects His children.

The chapter thus underlines the need of God's *Incarnation* assuming the form of *Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi*.

The ten incarnations of *God* such as *Matsya* (fish form), *Kurma* (form of tortoise), *Narasimha* (form of man and lion) etc., *Kapila*, *Dattatreya*, *Gautam Buddha*, and *Sri Rama Krishna Parama Hamsa* are no way different from the incarnation of *Sri Sai Baba*. Let my fellow devotees not be under illusion that there were several Gods and Sri Sai Baba has been the added to the list. It is always good for them to believe that God, the *Supreme Power* had assumed different forms and shall assume any form with His unlimited, myriad and miraculous powers at any time, as and when the occasion arises.

It is all God's will and play to create the universe, sustain it and annihilate it. He is incomprehensible. The *Paramatma*, the Creator dwells in all the living beings and enchants them with His divine spell of magic. The main objective and goal of all living beings is to know the *Eternal Truth* hidden in them. Man is luckier than other living beings in this regard. He is endowed with should utilise our faculties to know the all pervasive nature of God and make efforts to realize Him and this should be our life's mission. But we continue to pursue an untruthful path and indulge in ephemeral physical pleasures, under the magic spell of *Maya* (an illusion) and keep ourselves aloof to the *Ultimate Reality* and the *Truth* (Realisation of God). The kind hearted *Lord*, in the incarnation as *Sri Krishna*, taught us the path of reaching *Him (God)* in Bhagavadgita thus:

"You are given to the transitory and unreal pleasures in this world. Pray to Me for an everlasting bliss" (Gita 9-33)

"Who ever turns to Me and surrenders shall be free from Maya!" (Gita 7-14)

"You will realize Me only when you keep Me in your mind, pray to Me with devotion, think of Me, salute Me, concentrate and meditate upon Me in full faith." (Gita 9-34)

"If You surrender to Me leaving everything, I shall give you relief from all your sinful actions: this is the truth",  
(Gita 18-66)

Adi Sankara says:

"Of all living beings, man's life is an unique and arduous one. It is difficult to be free from the cycle of births and deaths and attain salvation. It is also very difficult to seek great seers and obtain their grace and guidance. Only our good deeds in the previous lives will lead us to have association with holy saints and noble people. Once this is achieved, man's attention is diverted and he is led into the rightful path. *Mukti* (Salvation) is not possible in one life but can only be attained by the accumulation of several good and noble deeds in many previous lives."

It is said in the Bhagavadgita:

"Man becomes wise after taking several births and he realizes that God is only one and such a person knows Me totally".

(Gita 7-19)

Single-minded devotion is not possible in one life even if we seek refuge under a great *Sadguru* (God's incarnation) in view of the sins committed by us in our many past lives. But, a great **Guru** will never leave us in the lurch and will be with us always, protecting us at every moment and showing us the right path.

- Sai Baba summoned Nana Saheb Chandorkar to His presence and when Nana inquired about the reason; Baba replied; "Nana! Do I call every one? I have had associations with you for the past four lives"
- Justice M.B. Rege surrendered to Sri Sai Baba as His child. While conversing with him one day, Baba said, "My child, I shall grant whatever you desire. You may ask me your wish". Rege refused to seek any favour. But when Baba persisted Rege finally expressed his wish as follows: "Baba! Grant me the boon to live with you in all my future lives and further you will not leave me even for a moment." Sainath then replied; " My child! I never left you for the past ten thousand years. How can I leave you here after?"
- Once Shyama (Madhava Rao Deshpande) seemed to be angry with Baba when the latter twisted his cheek. Baba then jokularly said, "I didn't touch

you for the past seventy two lives of yours. Why are you so angry now if I just twist your cheek once?"

- When Shyama introduced prof. G.G. Narke to Baba, He promptly said: "What! Why do you introduce him to me? I know him for the past thirty two lives."

We come across several such anecdotes and incidents in the life history of Sri Sai Baba. Many may have doubts about rebirths. Some do not believe in rebirth after leaving the mortal body. If one does not have faith and respect for the age-old scriptures, it is of no use explaining to them.

Let us recapitulate an interesting dialogue between Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna in the battlefield while preaching Bhagavadgita.

Krishna says: " I taught this yoga to Surya (Sun God) in the beginning who in turn taught to his son Vaivaswata Manuvu, and that Manuvu taught it to Ikshwaku".

Then Arjuna inquired: "You are born now; how can I believe your statement that you taught this Yoga to Sun God, who was born earlier to you".

Then Sri Krishna replied:

"You and I were together in many lives but you are not aware of them but I know every thing". (Gita 4-5)

From this one can understand that *Barman*, the *Divine* is not limited to a particular time, place or country. Sai, who is *Omniscient* and *Omnipresent*, knows the past, the present and future. It is for this reason that all those who had close association with Baba in their past lives, came closer to him. Baba granted them all their desires. He corrected them, moulded them, and elevated them spiritually.

Baba provides opportunities to the children who are devoted to Him to remember Him, keep Him in their minds, meditate upon Him and serve Him. He will never leave them for a moment. He assumes responsibility to guide them at all times. Let all the devotees remember this. Baba is the *Antaryami* of all living beings. A devotee should meditate upon Him like that. Then he himself will become the inner *Self* of living beings. This basic principle as explained in Bhagavatam is often repeated by Sri Sainath. -"If you keep others at a far off

distance you experience evil thoughts and obstacles; but if you invite every one into the domain of love, you enjoy peace of mind and ever lasting bliss. There will be no limit to the boundaries of love in your soul when it is extended to all other living beings, for, love conquers all and achieves everything". We cannot afford to ignore this truth and inner secret. Sai Baba's incarnation spreads this message of '*Prema Tatvam*<sup>3</sup>. ('Love towards all') Its potentialities are enormous.

### **Third Chapter**

In this chapter, the birth of Baba,- His initial training under a Sufi saint from His second to the fifth year, - His association from his sixth year with Gopala Rao Deshmukh (Venkusa), - His ideal real Guru - His arrival for the first time to Shirdi in His seventeenth year - His stay there for a few months, - His subsequent wanderings to unknown places - His return to Shirdi in the twentieth year, - and His life at the mosque of Dwaraka Mai - the incidents that followed, - are explained briefly.

Baba served Gopala Rao Deshmukh (Venkusa) for about 12 years during His childhood. He could attain the state of *Sakshatkara* by the divine grace of His *Guru* only. It is said that Saint Kabir and Kasika Ramananda Yogi were reborn as Sai Baba and Gopala Rao Deshmukh respectively. We need not have any doubt about this statement, as the Bhagavadgeeta also endorses the same view in a general way.

"He will attain the noble self by his good deeds and past actions". (*Gita 6-43,44*)

Further, we find in this chapter - How the young divine lad is named as Sri Sai Baba - How Sri Mahalsapathi knew this '*Parabrahmam*<sup>3</sup>, - The significance of the '*Name*<sup>3</sup> and the person - The greater power of a '*Name*' than the '*Named*' – Whether Saibaba is a Hindu or a Muslim. The incident of Baba getting into a state of Samadhi for 72 hours in the year 1886 is also narrated.

Religion is man made. God does not have any specific; religion. He is universal. All are His children irrespective of caste, creed, religion, nation etc. The one who realises '*Brahmam* also does not have any specific religion or

nation like the *Universal God*. It is not a surprise if ordinary people fall into some illusions about these things.

Akal Kot Maharaj, Nanded Mowla, Tejuddin Baba of Nagpur and Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati swami, who were all great saintly persons considered Sri Sai Baba as their eldest brother and respected him. A learned lady scholar, Smt. 'Kasibai Kanitkar' once visited Shirdi from Pune to find out whether Sai Baba is a Hindu or Muslim. As she had climbed up the steps of Dwarakamayi. Baba came out and spoke to her, pointing his finger at himself thus.:

"This person is a Brahmin, a pure Brahmin, a holy Brahmin and this Brahmin mosque is the place to show the true path of to millions of people and leads them to their ultimate destination". The lady was astonished at the Baba's divine words; She at once recognised Him as the God in her inner heart and prostrated before Him. Her doubts were fully clarified. Several people, who came with an intention to examine Him, realised the truth that Baba is '*Real God*'

It is essential for the readers to make a note of the observations made by Mrs. '*Manager*' (of the Holi city on 21/5/1936) in the divine presence of Sri B. V. Narasimha Swamiji Founder President of All India Sai Samaj, Mylapore, Chennai.

"We must be aware of the subtle distinction between other *Saints* and *Sri Sai Baba*. I observed many great *Saints*. They read our minds and answer our unspoken questions after raising themselves from their Samadhi State. But Sri Sai Baba is very special. He need not go to Samadhi State to read our minds and clarify our doubts not expressed. He is capable of existing in dual states at all times. One - as Sai Baba in His physical form - He blesses His devotees, clarifies their doubts, both of physical and spiritual natures.

Two - as *Lord Sai Baba* - formless *Omniscient*, - *Omnipresent* - *Sat-Cbit-Ananda State* - Some *Saints*, have to strain themselves to read our minds and know the past. Their Samadhi State is also of short duration and temporary But Baba reads our minds and answer our unspoken questions instantaneously to the bewilderment of all. He is capable of living inwardly and out wardly at all

times. It is very difficult for us to know what His real Natural State is? He is incomprehensible."

#### **Fourth Chapter**

Baba's assumption of the state of Samadhi for 72 hours (in 1886), and the aftermath of His condition have been detailed about in this part. He informed Mahalsapathi while leaving His body-" I am going to see *God*" and after entering His body again he proclaimed- "I saw *God* (Allah)": Seeing, *God* and attaining *Godliness* mean only one thing. His becoming Divine. From his present physical form, *Baba* attained the state of *Omnipresence* with the blessings of His Guru, Venkusa. After the state of Samadhi, He could see *Parabrahma* in His *Self* as well as in others and became *Parabrahma* Himself. He is now *Omnipotent*. Even now Sai Baba exists at the same place where He used to live earlier in His physical form.

Lord Sri Krishna observed the wicked Dussasana trying to remove the robes of Draupadi in the court of Kauravas and prayers I Jraupadi of to protect her, even though he appeared to be playing the game of dice with his consort Rukmini. She could not understand the significance of the words of Krishna, *Aksbayamastu*, as he threw the dice. (A blessing granting infinite number of robes). Lord Sri Krishna rescued her at the critical moment.

As Lord Krishna was Omnipresent and Omnipotent he could perform this miracle. Sai Baba could observe Chandorkar who was suffering from intense thirst on the hill of Harischandra, while conversing with His devotees at Shirdi. The people around Him could not grasp the significance of the words of Baba! "Arre! Nana is suffering from thirst. How shall I let him die!". Baba in the form of a hunter appeared at the Harischandra hill and advised Nana to drink the water under the stone he was sitting and soon disappeared. His devotees like Chandorkar, Upasani Baba, Dad Ganu, Dhumal, Norke, Nachne, Sathe Kaka Dikshit etc., had] observed and experienced many such incidents in their lives. When Kaka Dikshit stood in the presence of Baba in, utter desolation, Baba assured him saying; "(Kaka! Why do you feel s sad? Are your burdens and sorrows not mine?".

Once Dikshit said: "Baba! I am in a sordid, and helpless state to extend any assistance to my brother". At that time Baba said: "I am in a position to help him". Baba as a saint appeared at Bandra and said to Dikshit's brother: "I am in a position to help you". Baba's all pervasiveness is manifest in several such instances

We should not be influenced by the magic spell of trickster and magicians. Some perform certain tricks by their worship of evil forces and attain satanical powers. We cannot call them God or God's Incarnations. The readers may well note that the amazing miracles that Sri Sainath exhibited, are all for the sake of helping His children and devotees who are in distress. They are not done for the sake of living, fame, wealth or achieving any other material benefits. They are done without an iota of selfishness. Baba never looked at the wonderful supernatural powers, endowed to Him by the grace of His Guru, for nearly 40 years. He chided people<sup>1</sup> like Kusha Bhav, who cheated the people by producing sweet fruits etc. He got their bracelets removed and thereby deprived them of their supernatural powers.

There is no distinction between religions before Baba. He never taught any one to change their religion. Baba sent one of his devotees, Appakulkarni, to go to the place Nivas and worship *Lord Siva*. Shyama, a devotee, was asked to serve *Vani*:- Megha was ordained to worship *Khandoba* (the incarnation of *Siva*). Sai chided Nana Saheb Chandorkar for not offering his worship to *Lord Dattatreya* during his journey to Shirdi. Baba's aim was to exhibit equality to all irrespective of their way of devotion. A devotee of Sai is the one seeking and drinking the divine nectar at the lotus feet of the *Supreme Guru*.

Lord Sri Krishna says in Bhagavadgita thus: (9-11-13)

'Fools indulge in insulting Me without knowing My all pervasive nature in this creation when I assume the form of a human being. Oh, Arjuna! All Noble souls seek Me in the entire universe, worship Me in their minds, and keep themselves aloof from all the worldly cares and anxieties'. (Gita 9-11,13)

The sixteenth chapter of Bhagavadgita deals with all those who are blessed by God and are in possession of divine wealth and those possessed by evil powers.

All people in the universe are divided into two categories: Fools and noble men. An illiterate person cannot be considered as a fool. Similarly, an educated person cannot be construed as a wise person. The noble and wise have steadfast devotion towards the *Almighty* with a philosophical and spiritual outlook. The people, devoid of such qualities, are diametrically opposed to all good things in life and have only ill will towards others. One can obtain the genuine wealth of education and spirituality with the grace of God only. Knowing the truth about God and Godly Saints is the real education, which enables them to attain God. There is no other alternative way to realize Him.

It is said in the Bhagavadgita:

"Who ever knows My Might and seeks Me with real devotion only such a person shall understand My real nature and reach Me ultimately". (Gita 18-55)  
Lord Krishna informed Arjuna that his unswerving faith and devotion to Him alone made him see His universal form in all its splendor.

The Bhagavadgita once again affirms: (11-53,54)

"Oh! Arjuna! Even those who have performed many sacrifices to propitiate Gods, continue their penance for year: together, and explore 'Sruties' unceasingly are not fortunate enough to witness, the divine universal form of mine, which you have seen. It is impossible for any one to see Me except by true devotion without any worldly thoughts and desires."

Baba imbibed the infinite feeling of love towards all by the grace of his Guru. When the *Absolute Love is Supreme*, Concentration, Meditation - Samadhi States will follow automatically. That *Supreme Love* unites with the person and becomes *one* with him. Readers may note here that Baba is the real *Love Machine*.

Baba once said; "Those who climb the foot steps of this Masjid will inherit the empire of Love, and it is in this Dwarakamai Sai dwells. This is the Holy truth".

There is only one answer to the question. "Is *Sai Baba also a God*"? He is truly a God. He is God in human form. He knows everything. It is He who dwells in our hearts, knows our minds, and directs us. He commands the five elements. He leads the entire universe according to His will. We find in Sai selflessness,

spirit of service and infinite love. Sai's love is unparalleled, including the mean and the low.

*God* who is *Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent* listens to all our prayers and protects us like mother. Saibaba is known as God only and He is the *Antaryami* in all of us. He is clearly recognized, by millions of devotees and they always worship Him.

Saibaba is the modern prophet. One should know Him perfectly He knows us thoroughly. Those who surrender to Him with full faith, look to Him for solutions to their problems and worship Him, will surely be rewarded and their genuine wishes will always be granted. They will also be spiritually elevated in their search for the ultimate.

Sai's grace is not confined to persons of any particular sect caste, religion or nation. Baba wants *Nishta* (Profound Faith) in Him and *Saburi* (Patience coupled with Courage) on the part of His devotees. These two qualities only make them eligible to earn His Grace and that Grace is the life force, the ever lasting force and the effulgent fire that brightens their lives. This is the only interpretation to God. Sai answers every devotee and gives solace to everyone who looks to Him. He is *God, Bhagawaan* and *Allah* and has proved it beyond doubt. It is beyond our intelligence and knowledge to test Sai's mighty powers and supremacy.

For the people who worship and serve Him, Sainath's, blessings are always there. I humbly dedicate this book to all the Sai devotees.

I pray to *Sri Sai Baba* to bless one and all in this universe.

*Sri Sai Prasanna! Sri Sai Samartha!!*

*Bapatla Hanumantba Rao* (Servant of Devotees of Sai Baba)

**Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi**

**SAI BABA OF SHIRDI - A GOD !**

***Are the present Gods not enough? (Clarification of doubts)***

**CHAPTER ONE**

In the year 1953, I had a pleasant encounter one day with a friend of mine. I requested him to subscribe for a spiritual magazine, *Saileela* being published every month from *Chirala* (a place in *Prakasam* District of Andhra Pradesh). He disparagingly remarked: " *Is Shirdi Sai Baba also a God? Are the present Gods not enough?* I responded furiously by saying "Yes - Sai is God - Present Gods are not enough".

The words of my friend hurted my ego. I felt that my friend belittled My *Sai Baba*. My friend's strange behavior compelled me to introspect. After a while I said to myself: "Why should I be angry with him? I suddenly remembered the episode of the *Bandra boy* (Master T)."

Once Sai Baba asked the *Bandra boy* (Master T) to go to *Bapu Saheb Jog* to fetch *Dhakshina*. (A small amount of donation as offering to God, Guru or Brahmine etc). When the boy arrived at *Sathewada*, *Jog* and some other devotees were having discourse on, *Dhruva Charitram*-(A book on *Dhruva's* devotion to Lord *Vishnu*) and they indulged in certain critical comments about Saints thus: "Sadhus (Saints) may sometimes imbibe some powers by the grace of God; yet they cannot be considered as Gods or God's incarnations."

Listening to these words, the boy returned to *Baba* in a fit of anguish and questioned him: "Baba! Why have you sent me there? They say that you are not God at all". *Baba* replied, "That is the truth; I am a poor fakir (mendicant). God is great! None can equal Him".

In the meanwhile some devotees arrived and informed the gathering how *Baba* had saved their child falling down from the top of a building. *Baba* countered: "What else can I do? Can I be indifferent to my child falling down except to protect him with my four arms". The *Bandra boy*, listening to this, suddenly jumped up and questioned: "Baba, you have just told that you are not

God! Then how could you have four arms?" Baba did not answer but smiled at him in affirmation.

This incident flashed to my mind. I felt that it was Baba who ordained me to approach my friend and it was he who made my friend to raise certain queries, and thus subjected me to a test.

I felt that one should not get annoyed or angry with those who question us about some thing? Had there been no such eager seekers, there may not be any *Smruties, Sruties* or *Puranas*. Doubts give scope to pertinent questions. Why should we be angry with the person for questioning? Instead let us endeavour to provide a satisfactory reply by giving factual information about which they are ignorant. It is better to keep mum and leave the place if we do not prefer to respond. Let us not lose our temper and peace of mind. We should not be too concerned with the acceptance or rejection of our views. It is foolish to imagine that we can attract everybody by convincing them to our way of thinking. Every one has a right to have his or her own thought and decision. Truth will unfold at an appropriate time.

I know that it is an impossible task for a small and insignificant person like me to detail about Almighty's real nature. Let the learned pardon me for my audacity. The inspiration to speak comes from Lord Sai himself. I have full faith that He will get the mistakes, if any, suitably corrected.

*My friend's two questions are:*

- I. *Is Shirdi Sai Baba also a God?***
- II *Are the present Gods not enough<sup>1</sup>?***

It is obvious from the questions that my friend is a '*Theist*' (One who believes in the existence God). I am glad about it.

To the second question: "*Are the present Gods not enough?*"-My friend seems to be under the impression that as it is there are many Gods in Hinduism. Probably he refers to the various deities that are being worshipped by different sects. He may also be vexed with their antagonisms and quarrels. But one thing is very clear. He is of the firm opinion that God is there. Let us discuss this second question first and then delve into the realm of the first question later.

**Who is God?**

Who can answer this question truthfully? God only knows the answer. The wise men explain about God from their own personal experiences. Philosophers describe God, and His manifestations. In fact God is very different from what they know and describe. Despite their constant and continuous search no one has been able to know the Infinite and the Absolute. The terms God and Godliness cannot be subjected to arguments and are beyond our comprehension.

The truth that God exists is crystal clear. The opinions and views propounded by various people about God are one only, though the words appear to be different. The ultimate goal is the same. It is to realize God, who is *Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient*. To realize Him, different paths have been propounded by the *Smruties, Puranas and Itihasas*. They are offshoots of the *Vedas*. Based on these, the founders of different religious sects professed their own theories. Superficially, they may appear as different. But a careful detailed analysis reveals that the essence of all religions is to realize God, and attain a state of Permanent Bliss - Sat - Chit - Ananda state.

No other work in world literature is as ancient as the *Vedas*. The Rigveda says: (8-7-17-3)

"The entire universe was enveloped in utter gloom and darkness before the creation and Swayambhoo (Creator), the embodiment of wisdom, was present both inside and outside that with the naked eye. darkness. He neither had a beginning nor an end. Emerging out of the darkness, He created this universe by his unique power and inimitable wisdom."

"He is the *Atman*, the Universal Soul, *Purana Purusha*, and the everlasting. Being perfect, incomparable, and imperceptible, He transcends all *Maya* (illusion) and enjoys beatitude. He is *Amruta Purusha* (one who gives the sweetness of delight)". *Siva Purana* also explains the same graphic description of the Godly form.

**How to believe that God exists?**

Vedas propound the existence of God and He cannot be seen

"No one can behold God with his eyes, but by removing the impurities in our hearts and minds we can perceive Him with our intellect"

Manu also expresses the same opinion. (*Manusmriti*, 5-7)

"There was nothing but darkness before this creation. The whole universe seemed to be in a state of sleep. From this *Tamas*, (Darkness) *Bbagawan*, the *Swayambhoo* emerged in divine splendor and effulgence. Gradually, the veil of darkness vanished, God with his own will power manifested himself in an abstract, inexplicable, ancient, indescribable, omnipresent, omniscient form".

**The 'Vedas' further say:**

"Before the onset of creation, when nothing was there, only I remained. I was beyond description. In the great dissolution and deluge also, only I remained. This visible universe is not different from Me. Ultimately, only I will remain."

In the Bhagavatha Purana, in the Dasarna (Tenth) Skanda, is said (10-14,23):

In our life from birth to death, we come across several phenomenal changes. Many riddles do appear, grow and vanish in our very presence. The planets like the Sun the Moon and the Stars appear in the sky doing their appropriate functions. Are these an admixture of the five elements moving about because of mutual attractive power? Or is there an Omnipotent Creator or Controller of the universe who conditions and directs them? Our continued search lead us to the inevitable conclusion that there is some unknown, invisible force that guides every thing and to conceive of it may be beyond our comprehension. The Vedas concur with the above.

"God created the Sun, the Moon the Sky and the Earth. We are amazed at the super powers of God when we examine the birth, growth and the death of different species in the universe. It beyond our knowledge and comprehension to know the mystery creation, it's beginning and the end. We do feel that some mysterious divine force guides this universe since its inception."

Hence, we feel that there is some primal, ancient, complete, indestructible, all pervasive cause for this creation and that supreme cause is *God* only, who is

*Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent* and an embodiment of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (ever lasting bliss). This indescribable power is known by myriad names. *He is Parameswara - Parabrahma • Brahma - Narayana-Bhagavan - Vasudeva - Siva • Vishnu - Rama - Krishna -Jahovah-Deva - Khuda - Arha - Buddha - Allah - etc., God is one but He is called the Trinity - Brahma - Vishnu -Maheswara, (Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer.)*

The Vishnu Purana says:

" Though *God* is one, *He* is called *Bramha* when *He* creates the universe, *Vishnu* when *He* preserves it and *Siva*, when *He* destroys it ".

Bhagavatha Purana says:

"Oh! Brahmin! I assume different names when I begin the task of creating this universe, protecting it and annihilating the same". This proves that *Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara* are not different and the sum total of the *Almighty*.

*What is that God's 'Swarupam\*'? (form, attributes)*

The Vedas say: "God is truth, Gnana (wisdom) and infinite" Bhagavatha Purana says thus:

"God is Parabrahma - embodiment of perfect truth -Omnipotent - Omnipresent - Omniscient - embodiment of knowledge and Wisdom. He is always in eternal bliss. He stage manages this creation through different bodies without himself having any physical form. He is pure - total - and has neither a beginning nor an end. He is second to none - He is one only but appears in different forms."

In some other context, in the same Purana, it is said: "He shines as Aatman in different bodies. He is Pure - Purana Purusha (unique single minded individual) - Self effulgent - Complete -Parameswara - Narayana - Bhagawan - Vasudeva. He makes every form created by Him to shine with His Yoga Maya (divine illusion).

Again in the same Bhagavatha Purana, in the second skanda, a vivid description of God, the Parabrahma, is given.

Janaka Rajarshi (a saintly person among the kings) pleaded with the seers. "Oh! Great seers! You are all eminent philosophers and seekers. Kindly enlighten me about Narayana, the Parabrahma and His attributes."

To this, the sage Pippalayana replied:

"Oh King! Know that it is Narayana, the Parabrahma, is beyond the scope of any cause; and yet, He is the cause for the creation, preservation and destruction of this vast universe. Being present both inside and outside, He energizes these living bodies. They (these bodies) perform various functions through their sense and other organs when the vital power (Prana) dwells with them. God, the primordial force is always present in all these bodies and in all the three stages viz: Swapna (Dream), Jagrit (awaken state) and Sushupta (state of deep sleep). Just as the sparks of fire cannot reach the fire, the five sense elements (Eyes -sight, Ears-hearing, Nose - smell, Mouth - taste, Skin - touch) the organs that perform actions. (Hands, Feet etc), the Mind and Intellect cannot perceive the primordial force. Then how can we describe it? He is without birth and death. He is a witness to all the changing situations. He can exist always and everywhere. He is endless.

He is the sole wisdom. Just as Prana is one, but performs different functions through different organs and appears as a different force the Atman is one, but manifests differently in different bodies, is present in mosquitoes, birds, animals, human beings - in short in all living beings. He is there every where in this universe. He is a silent witness, - to the sushupta state, (a state in which all elements stop functioning temporarily, and body loses its identity of 'Self') - and to the awakened state (when we say 'I had a good sleep' or 'I dreamt likes this'). He is always present with us. That primordial force 'Brahmam' - is God"

Thus Pippalayana described the attributes of God, the Parabrahma, to the King Janaka.

### ***Where God resides?***

Svethasvetharopanishad says:

"God is one and unique; He is present in all beings. He in the soul divine in all. He distributes the fruits of all our actions by being an invisible witness. He is devoid of any specific attributes."

*Sruties, Smruties* and *Puranas* emphatically pronounce one single voice that "God permeates in water, fire, air and in the entire universe including bushes creepers and even a blade of grass.

The *Sruties* further say; "Only those who can see Him in the inner hearts of all beings with a pure, immaculate mind can realize Him and attain eternal bliss." (Svetasvetharopanishad 4-1').

There are many such statements, which bear testimony this truth:

"There is no power superior to Him in the universe. No one protects Him. He yearns nothing. He is the primal cause of all 'our actions. He is the Lord of all. He is not borne to any one. There is no authority over Him". (Svetasvetharopanishad 6-9)

*Lord Sri Krishna* in His divine message says:

"Oh Arjuna! The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings (revolving them all by His mysterious power *Maya*, as if they were objects mounted on a machine" (Bhagavadgita, 18-61)

As Pronounced in Vedas, *Yagnavalkya Mahamuni* said like this:

"In every man's heart, there are 1,44,000 Hita-Ahita Nadies [with several branches spread all over the body. In the heart lies ever shining *Param Jyoti* (Divine light) and our relentless pursuit is to seek that. The one who realizes it knows no birth, no death and attains *Mukti* (Salvation)"

*Veda Vyasa* says:

'The divine effulgence shines in us as well as in all other living beings. One can experience this radiance with his inward eye only after controlling his mind and disciplining himself rigorously." *Lord Krishna* says:

"The light of all lights is beyond the perplexity of *Maya* who is the knowledge infinite and can only be seen after *Sadhana* (process of continued practice.), and search with single-minded devotion. He is uniquely seated in the hearts of all."

**(Gita 13-18)**

Verily he is the seer, who sees the supreme Lord as the only 'Perishable substance abiding equally in all perishable beings',

**(Gita 13-28)**

Hence let us understand that God is seated in the hearts of all beings.

*Sanatana Dharma (Ancient Religion)*

The basic theory of Sanatana Dharma (Ancient religion) is to know God, who dwells in the hearts of all living beings. Religion shows a way of leading life. They all profess the same thing but their paths look varied. They firmly believe in the existence of God, and preach different ways to attain Him.

Sage Veda Vyasa in his *Brahma Sutras* explicitly underlines the essence of all religious tenets and beliefs which are of great interest. Bhagavadgita has provided us a vivid explanation of the *Brahma Sutras*. What is manifest in different religious practices are varied forms of Religion given in the *Brahma Sutras*. There cannot be any basic difference between one religion and another. All the religions that prevail now have been expounded, to suit the times and conditions that existed in those countries in order to arrest certain violent trends of behavior in the people and to reform the society. They make the people follow certain codes of conduct and ideals so that contradictory behaviors and conflicting tendencies give way to nobler ways of living. But, in course of time, people forgot the basic principles postulated by the founders and indulged in mutual bickering and developed hatred with vehemence. They, with a closed mind, thought that their religion is the only right one and it only gives salvation. This irrational behaviour of the people is like the old saying 'One blind man leading the other blind man.' Religions are man made. Any religion which preaches that 'God exists' is acceptable to all pious people.

Individual belonging to any nationality has got the liberty to choose his own religion, his God. Others should not have any say in this matter. All the religions in the world can be broadly classified into two categories. Viz.

- (1) Following '*Gnana Marga*'\* (realization of God through knowledge)
- (2) Following '*Bhakti Marga*' (realization of God through prayers, devotion etc)

Similarly the philosophers who seek God also can be classified into two categories.

(1) *Dwaita philosophy* (Dualistic) -to seek the *Parabrahma* by the seeker.

(2) *Adwaita philosophy* (Non dualistic)-Realization of *Parabrahma* and there by uniting himself with Him (God).

Vedas say essentially these are the two approaches. All other religions preach in between these two schools of thought.

Sage Veda Vyasa says:

"Listen to the principles of *Dharma* from all the religions and put them into practice. Know that what is harmful and painful to you is equally harmful and painful to others. Therefore do to others what you would like others to do to you. In short this is the essence of '*Dharma*'. Any other practice has a shadow of selfishness. How can any one think of killing or harming others, when he himself wants to live happily. You should try to provide others, what you would like to have for yourself."

### ***How to realize God?***

In order to realize '*God*' one should do '*Sadhana*' (particular way of devotion, prayer, meditation tapasya etc.) The sages and philosophers say like this: " A *Sadhaka* (seeker) may do *Sadhana* in his own way which is most suitable to him with intense faith and determination. There can not be any mistake in his way *Sadhana*. When viewed from a different angle with a different notion, one may come across several defects in it. It is, therefore necessary that we should have a clear objective before practice *Sadhana* and our own goals. It should be remembered that the '*Almighty*' may be altogether different from what he perceived about Him. *Sadhana* is the sole technical path to realize the existence of '*Paramatma*'. But let us not think that we should first overcome all our blemishes, doubts before performing an '*Sadhana*'. We can rectify our shortcomings later. Truth dawns on us as we relentlessly pursue our path and approach our '*Goals*'

Let me cite an example to clarify the point. Imagine the way in which one person who witnessed the beauty of the crescent moon, a day after the new

moon day, directs his accomplice. He says: "Look at that tree directly and look a little above. You will find the beautiful crescent moon". His accomplice had concentrated as per his directions and felt happy at the sight the crescent moon. Now let us analyse the facts. The moon was not really above the tree. The planet moon was not so small as it appeared to him. Nothing equals to the real form of moon. The moon's actual nature is quite different from what the on looker, behold. No one really understood its true nature and significance The moon, its real glow, real form and nature were not at al present in the crescent moon. Similarly, if realization of God is our Goal, and we concentrate upon Him, we may be able to reach our objective. Like the moon, God is also entirely different from what we perceive him to be. God is not something that can be explained or expressed in words. God or His real form will be known only when we pursue our path with utmost devotion. He is beyond our imagination.

Sruties say: "God is beyond description and imagination and those who make Him their objective and meditate upon Him will attain Him. The seeker need not change his path, once the goal is established in his mind. He has to further strengthen it by his faith and determination".

### ***How to meditate upon God?***

If one meditates upon God, in *Sahara* form (God in a particular form) or *Nirakara state* (God without any form) the results obtained are the same. The scriptures say that it is difficult to meditate upon God without a form. The two ways of meditation differ only in the way of the *Sadhana*. He who seeks God in *Nirakara* state should continue to do so. He who seeks God in *Sahara* form should continue his *Sadhana* concentrating upon the form he has chosen. But it is good for him to remember and understand the significance of the Omnipresent state of God. For those who consider the body to be themselves, it will be very difficult to do *Sadhana* upon God who is *Nirguna* (without any specific attributes) and *Nirakara* (form less).

Lord Sri Krishna says in Gita:

"The path of those who seek God in *Nirakara* state is difficult as such a way of reaching the goal is very hard for those Who have attachment to the body." (Bhagavadgita 12-5)

Some meditate upon God in its pure formless state, while others choose a specific form. Actually, the same God takes the form of '*Sri Maha Vishnu*', '*Sri Rama*' '*Sri Krishna*'. Similarly '*Devi*', '*Ganesha*' '*Siva*', '*Surya*' are also not different from *Maha Vishnu*'. Sage Veda Vyasa had written the eighteen *Parana*' describing acts performed by various Godly forms for those who are interested in them. He has proved that all these Godly forms represent one '*Supreme God*' only, the '*Creator*', the '*Preserver*' and the '*Destroyer*'. They differ in name and form only. The seeker imagines the name and form of the God to his liking. If one meditates upon a pillar as God, it will become a God only to him, and his meditation will bear the same results as to any other form of God. Only one has to keep full faith and worship upon it.

Lord Krishna says:

"I consider him a great Yogi (sage) who reposes supreme faith on Me, ever united with Me through prayer and worship and keeps Me always in his mind". (Gita 12-2)

The best and the easiest path to attain God is to meditate upon Him in *Sahara* state with unflinching devotion and dedication and also with a total awareness of his *Nirakara* state. The fruits are same in any type of meditation. Adisankara brought out the secret nature of God and his relationship with His devotees in a nutshell as:

"Oh! God! I am your servant as long as I have the feeling that the *Body* is mine. Once I get off this feeling of *Body Consciousness* and realize the *Consciousness of the Jiva* in me, You are the *whole* and I am a *part* of it. If I get rid off the *Consciousness of the Jiva* also and reach the *Soul Consciousness*. I am one with You; You and I are the same. This is my firm belief. " The readers should realize that this is the essence of *Advaita* philosophy as preached by Sri Sankaracharya.

*Why does God become Sakara?*

(Having a physical form for the sake of his devotees)

God is the embodiment of *Eternal Bliss* and pervades in the entire universe. *Fire*, in the form of *Nirakara*, spreads in all things. It manifests only when certain essential materials are assembled at one place and ignited. The fire so manifested assumes gigantic proportions, depending on the quantity and quality of the fuel. But the *Paramatma (God Divine)* spreads even beyond air and ether manifests Himself to the seeker as *Sahara* in the form he desires. God's all pervasiveness is greater than that of *Agni (Fire)* or *Vaayu (Air)*, as there is no place without His presence. The entire universe is enveloped with His *Maya* (illusion). As said in the Gita -"The creation of *Maya* around us, is only God's will." Hence it is not at all difficult for Him to manifest Himself before the seeker, when he comes out of *Maya*. The happiness to the seeker is at His will. God's pervasiveness all over as *Nirakara* is possible always, but He reveals Himself to the seeker, who is an ardent devotee. That God is *Omnipotent* can be seen as *One in Many* and *Many in One*. That is His wish, which is pure and noble. The wish of a devotee will also depend on the wish of God.

Lord Sri Krishna says to Narada:

Oh! Narada! When ever my devotee sings of me, I shall be present there". He further says "The hearts of the Sadhus are mine and I am in them". This is absolutely true. Just as the fire is present everywhere in an abstract state, so also God is present in the hearts of all in a blissful and unique form. He manifests himself in the inner recesses of the hearts of all devotees.

Sri Sankaracharya says in Prabhoda Sudhakaram:

"God is equally present in all. The devotees experience blessings and benign looks. They exist with nobler feelings and communication with the Almighty and enjoy the eternal bliss'

The Sun's rays fall equally on wood, stone and mirror, but the mirror only gives the accurate reflection. The Sun's image, not seen on wood or stone. Like wise, though God is present in every one, He is not seen in the stony, impure hearts of an atheist or a non-believer but is seen only in the pure heart of

devotee God dwells in the hearts of devotees in the form in which the Worship Him.

While meditating, we should think of God to be universal , Many founders of religions have taught us about *the Sagunopasana* (meditating upon God possessing all attributes) The seeker should realize that rewards are the same, whatever path he follows.

The *Supreme God* is worshipped as *Siva* by the *Saivites* *Vishnu* by the *Vaishnavites*, the *Brahmam* by all the *Philosophers*, *Buddha* by the *Buddhists*, *Karta* (the sole doer] by *Vaiyayikas* the *Karma* by the followers of *Mimamsa*, *Allah* by the *Muslims* and *Arhat* by *Jains*.

*I will worship the Lord Sai Prabhu* who protects the pious poor and weak, easy to attain representing all forms of *God*.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

It is now established after a review of the issues dealt with in detail in the earlier chapter that the *Supreme God* is only one; He is the *Creator*, the *Preserver* and the *Destroyer* of the entire universe and that He is *Omnipotent*, *Omniscient*, and *Omnipresent* and the '*Inner Self*' of all living beings.

My friend might have felt that *Hindu Gods* like *Sri Vishnu*, *Sri Krishna*, *Sri Sankara*, *Parvati*, *Sri Rama*, *Satyanarayana*, *Ganapati* etc., are worshiped as separate Gods when he enquired "*Are the present Gods not enough*"? We now realize that all these forms represent *One* and *Only God* but are known by different names and different forms. The devotees worship them according to their liking. The term God is beyond our comprehension and is inexplicable. God is nameless, formless, and He is *Infinite*. The God perceived by our senses is the form we imagine Him to be. Let us realise that *Vishnu*, *Sri Rama*, *Sri Krishna*, *Parvati*, *Sankara*, *Ganapati*, *Buddha*, etc., are all the incarnations of the *Almighty*, in varied forms.

### *Avatars (Incarnations)*

God who is endless, imperceptible and beyond the comprehension of the mind and word, becomes the one who settles down at a place with a definite objective in an *Incarnation*. The form, so assumed can be within the powers of

mind. An *Avatara* or *Incarnation* is the expressive form of an inexpressive state. He is all pervasive, yet He steps down from the formless state (*Nirakara*) to a definite form (*Sahara*) in order to uplift the demoralised, the oppressed and the suffering people. This does not confine to a particular place or time alone.

Lord Sri Krishna says:

Whenever there is decay of *Dharma* (righteousness) and rise of *Adharma* (wickedness and cruelty) and people are tormented! *God* embodies himself and takes birth age after age for the protection of the good and for the annihilation of the evil",

**(Gita 4.7.8)**

These *Incarnations of God* are known differently by different people, in view of the prevailing times, locations, and conditions: We cannot think of one incarnation to be either superior or inferior to the other. Each *Avatara* has a specific role to play and once its objective is achieved, it disappears from the scene paving way for the other.

Bhagavatha Purana says:

"Every *Avatara* or *Incarnation* has had a value, impeccable prowess, fame, richness, wisdom and detachments in all actions")

In every Incarnation, God has exhibited Himself in all his actions to prove the validity and supreme nature of the *Avatara* for which he was born like a mortal. We have to take it for granted that God's divine powers in a small or large measure are always manifested in the particular person or individual.

Our ancestors worshipped the five elements *Earth, Air, Sky, Fire, Water* the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Animals* and even the *Birds*-on par with *God*. Even today, certain people indulge in such worship.

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna about His divine manifestation in Gita thus: (10-41)

"Know that all that is glorious, brilliant or powerful is only a manifestation of My effulgence, and splendour".

A doubt may arise as to why a person is considered to be an ordinary one, if the *Supreme God* is present in the hearts of all.

The Vedas say; "*Narayana* is present everywhere and in all the objects".  
Fire is inherent in wood but cannot be seen as it is intrinsic and spread all over.  
When it is burnt the fire is seen, till then it is wood only but not fire.

Similarly a human being also will be considered as ordinary until *Self Realization* comes to him

It is said in 'Prabhoda Sudhakaram': (Advaita chapter 192, 193).

"A piece of wood whether straight or crooked becomes fire when it is ignited. The burning wood may retain its shape, straight or crooked, but we cannot hold it in our hands. Likewise, a realised, *Self*, may appear outwardly as a normal human being, but he is truly '*God*', in the form of '*Aatman*'\* dwelling in the body."

Lord Krishna says: (Gita, 7-8) It is my opinion that a *Gnani* (wiseman) is *Aatman* only"

Sruties say: "*Gnanies* who know about *Brahmam* 'are *Brahmam* themselves."

Narada Bhakti sutras say : (14) There is no difference between *God* and his *Real Devotee*"

Saint Tukaram says; "The *Saint* is *God* and *God* is *Saint*, Both are the same".

There is no difference between a *Gnani* (the wise), the Seeker and the knower of *Brahmam*, a *Real Devotee*, a holy *Saint*, and *Supreme God*. Among the holy *Saints*, there are some who always immersed in the '*Self*' (*Aatman*) and are in a state *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* (*constant bliss*). We find some *Saints* very benevolent. They constantly endeavour to uplift the poor and downtrodden. Some possess all types of wealth and are capable of achieving anything they wish. Verily, one who knows *God* shall be the perfect embodiment of the *Brahmam*. Wherever he is and whatever he speaks in any language, becomes *Vedas* only

### **Shri Shirdi Sai Baba's Incarnation - Reasons:**

There are two important religions in our subcontinent Hinduism and Islam. Due to mutual animosity, several quarrel involving God took place between the

people of the two religious sects. Lord took the form of *Sri Sai Baba* to preach his message of '*Prema Tatoam*' (Love towards all human beings) and even extended this to all other living beings.

In the noon 'Aarati' (Prayer) at Shirdi, "JayaDevaJayaDeva"-\* it is said: "Both religions (Hinduism and Islam) are the same There is no difference between them - I am the *God* for both This is the truth - Don't quarrel among yourselves by, misunderstandings." Thus he corrected the behaviour of the people around him.

Great saints belonging to different religious sects always have the welfare of the people uppermost in their minds. It is believed by the devotees that Kasi Ramananda Yogi and Kabir were reborn as Gopalrao Deshmukh (Venkusa) and Sai Baba respectively. One need not doubt the veracity of it. A Godly person, if his mission on this earth is not completed during his lifetime, will be born to complete it. A review of our Vedas and Puranas bring out this truth. The unbroken relationship of God and His devotees is seen in all incarnations. We call those individuals (Holy saints) as God who brings peace and tranquility to the agitated soul and inspire the people up the path of Dharma. The sole objective of Sai's incarnation is to rectify the evil minded hearts rather than to kill the wicked and destroy them. The message of Sai is to "Attain the Heavenly Bliss using Love and Faith as Tools" using Love and Faith as tools. There is nothing wrong in worshipping God in any form and calling Him by any name, or in following any religion. We need not change our religion. All religions lead us to the same God. It is necessary for us to have, adaptability and coordination in our efforts, failing which the fall is imminent. The people of different sects/religions can go forward according to their beliefs, leaving their hatred, and shunning ill-will and jealousy towards others. "*Ram, Rahim, Krishna, Christ* are all one and the same; they should not be considered as different". Thus *Sai* made it very clear to us that One can see the different forms of God in Him only. Blessed are those people like Rege Maharaj who witnessed *Sri Sai Baba's* divine acts and had first hand experience.

**Second reason:**

There is another reason for *Sai's* incarnation during our times. Let us keep aside the practices and beliefs of other religions for a while. In our country we are aware that the *Vedas, Puranas, itihasas* are the ancient scriptures and have been the standard works for ages together. We imagine God as Sri *Narayana* with a conch (*Sankhu*)- wheel (*Chakra*)- mace (*Gada*); lotus in hand, wearing crown with precious jewels, clad in '*Pitambaram*' (golden yellow doth) seated on '*Garuda*' (a carrier of *Lord Vishnu*); or as Sri *Sankara* – with the '*Ganges*' in his matted hair, wearing serpents as '*Bhushanas*' (the ornaments) with trident and '*Dhamaruka*' (a musical instrument) in hands seated '*Vrushaba*' Sacred Bull, (a carrier of Lord *Sankara*), wearing the skin of '*Gajasura*' (demon). Further we could never imagine the *God* can who appear as a poor '*Fakir*' (mendicant) with a '*Kupni*' and head gear. *God's* in carnation as *Sai Baba* is only underline the fact to the world that *God* has no specific form: that He can take any form, exhibit divine miracles and bring solace to the sufferers. He, who sees *God in Sai Baba* shall never resent even a beggar in the street. He feels only Love for all living beings. The incarnation of *Sai* is to inculcate the *true Spirit love* and to remove the false pride because of wealth, power education, sense of belonging to higher caste, and attachment. material things due to influence of western culture and civilization.

We should not think that all these things have already been taught to us by *Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, and Goutam Buddha* and that there is nothing new in His preachings. It may be seen: that different people taught the same things, that are already in our ancient *Sruties* and *Smrities*, again and again. If good righteous things are repeated, it is neither defective nor does it in any way belittle others. Out of our ignorance we still grope in darkness even after studying, listening and experiencing. God ever merciful and has immense love for His children. In order to bring them to the right path, He cajoles them, teaches them, brow beats them, pretends anger and subjects them in many ways to constant introspection. God takes the physical form, whenever there is a need. We see every now and then God's '*Abhaya Hast*' (the posture of the hand giving assurance) protecting

blessing guiding us with His invisible hands. Knowing fully well, we still succumb to the temptations of '*Eswara Maya*' (Illusion created by God).

'Sai showed his wonderful divine powers in all his actions during the last 18 years of his life (1900-1918). Even the great scholars knelt before-Him in awe and humility. All those, who – tried to test Baba, failed miserably. Those, who came under his spell realized the truth that He was their *Antaryami* (Inner Soul). He appeared to them in the form, they used to worship Him. Baba was neither angry nor annoyed at the ignorance of the people who prostrated before Him. Sai was full of love and compassion. If He was angry with some one for some reason, it was only to make them realize their mistakes. He always drew them nearer to him. Baba had eyes on all those who took refuge at his feet as the '*Divine Father*'. Haunted by their past evil deeds and actions, some had condemned Baba and propagated that all His actions were only the sleight of the hand and a magician's tricks. During the time of *Lord Krishna* also, it is said in Puranas, that the people whose minds were filled with *Asura Bhavas* (evil thoughts), resented miracles performed by the *Bbagawan* in a similar manner. They could not understand that his birth was only to establish *Dharma* and justice in all walks of life.

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: (Bhagavadgita 9-10)

"Fools, not knowing my supreme nature spread over the entire universe, think low of *Me*. They do not know that / am the *Creator*, in human form".

It is very difficult for the common people to understand the secrets of an *Incarnation* and of *God* in its totality. The minds of people cannot visualise the real truth as their minds are polluted with the ephemeral, earthly things. They do not even care to know the truth. We cannot obtain the divine grace, unless we have the fruits of our good deeds carried over from past births. our noble actions will beget the blessings of noble saints. We get liberated from the cycle of births and deaths only when we have the blessings of the saints.

**Third reason :**

Kabir spoke thus: "Our path is not known without the mercy of *Sadguru* (noble teacher)". In some other context, he says,,: "He, who obtains the mercy of

his *Guru* (teacher), imbibe the wealth of knowledge and wisdom. Even though., human he understands the divinity o *Narayana* with His grace, and becomes one with Him just like a small creature like a worm transforms itself into a bee".

Adi Sankaracharya says :"*Jiva* is the reflection of *Brahmam*".

On any matter we should first practice before we preach others and relate our experiences by actions and not by words This has been well demonstrated in the incarnation of God *Sai Baba*. From an ordinary person He attained the state divinity by His actions. He practiced first before preaching others. God, in the *Avatara* of *Sri Rama* followed a *Dharma* (Deeds based on certain principles) and this *Dharma* only taught in the *Avatara* of *Sri Krishna*. If some one tries to preach before putting into practice he should be considered a cheat a deceitful person.

Let us observe one thing. With fire beneath and water above we cannot boil water without the help of a container. Fire extinguished if the water is more. If the fire rises high, water evaporated. Like wise, a good *Guru* is the main prop between man and God. Only a *Sadguru*, nearer to the man by humanism, close to God by his divinity, can improve the lot mankind. By removing them from static state he can elevate them to a higher sphere of life. The incarnation of Sai is to make world know this truth. It will be further clear if we follow the world the life history of Sai from the beginning to the end.

Baba said to his disciples: "*My methods are unique I have nothing to speak into the ears of my devotees*".

Baba in all his discourses and deliberations revealed the truth that he had attained his present state only because of the bountiful mercy of his *Guru*.

At first we must realize the great potentialities of a *Samardha Sadguru* (able, efficient teacher). We should get the idea of seeking such a *Guru*. In fact a strange fear sets in at the sight of such a person. This fear (fear of God) gradually develops into a feeling of devotion. This devotion in turn becomes mutual love and affection As it grows, they come closer. Finally the *Seeker* and the *Guru* unite with each other. This is the greatest secret revealed in the incarnation of Sai. He preached it after practicing the same in the service of his

*Guru*. A living being, who has been blessed with the good and noble actions of his previous life, attains '*Mukti*' (Salvation), when he seeks refuge in *Baba*.

***Sai desires from his children two qualities only -***

**(1) *Nishta (Intense Faith)***

**(2) '*Saburi*' (Patience with Courage).**

If one offers these two coins as '*Dakshina* (offering of a disciple to his Guru) and completely surrenders to Him, He will take care of all his burdens and leads him in the safest manner to his ultimate goal.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

Before dwelling upon the second question, "*Is Sai Baba, a God?*", it is essential for us to know briefly about the life history and the mission of Sri Sai Baba.

We are not exactly aware of the actual details of the birth Sri Sai Baba. But according to the information given by Sri Baba himself to his close confederate devotee, Sri Mahalsapati during his last phase of life (in the year 1910 or about) and also as per the writings of other devotees like Das Ganu Maharaj; Hemad Pant, Kaparde etc., the following details emerge.

Baba was born to a Brahmin couple in 1838 in a village Pa near Manwath in Parbhani taluq in the erstwhile Nizam state (A historian wrote that Jamuna Bai and Nandalal were the names of Baba's parents - how far this is reliable, is not known). The parents entrusted the child in his second year to a fakir (mendicant). The fakir and his wife brought up the child for years. In their custody, Baba learnt good conduct and discipline. The fakir, before breathing his last, asked his wife to entrust the care of the boy to Sri Gopal Rao Deshmukh of Selu village.

Sri Gopal Rao was then the Zamindar of the Jintur Paragana appointed by the Pishwas of Maharastra around 1800 AD. was a staunch devotee of *Lord Venkateswara*. And he, being perfect embodiment of divine wisdom and detachment, endowed with all *Siddhies* (super natural powers). The people served him as the incarnation of Lord Venkateswara and fondly called him *Venkusa*.

As directed by her husband, the fakir's wife brought the six year-old boy to Selu and entrusted him to the care of Sri Gopj Rao Deshmukh. Baba served him as his Guru for twelve years with utmost faith, veneration and devotion. It was only by the grace of Venkusa that Baba inherited all the divine qualities and super natural powers. This is called *Saktinipatha*, the transfer of super natural powers from the teacher to the disciple.

Baba arrived at Shirdi for the first time in the year 1854. With face glowing bright with divinity, Baba, then an young lad of eighteen, always used to sit and meditate under a sweet neem tree. He left the place after a few days, wandering here and there, details of which were not known.

### ***The Naming of Sai-Baba***

Baba again reached Shirdi for the second time in 1857 from the village, Dhoopkeda along with a marriage party consisting of the relatives of Chand Bhai Patil. The marriage party stopped their carts under a Banyan tree outside the village of Shirdi. The temple priest Mahalsapathi (Khandoba temple), noticed Chand Bai and the young lad getting down from the cart. On looking at the boy with a divine aura around him, Mahalsapathi was astound. The handsome appearance of Baba struck a wonderful impression on him. He first thought him to be a Muslim lad as he was wearing a Kupni and a piece of cloth around his head .He addressed him: Ya! Sai! Baba! Ya! Sai Baba!" (Welcome Sai Baba welcome Sai Baba). This is the will of God. How powerful that great name *Sai Baba* is to be! This name' given by Mahalsapathi has become a *Mahamantra* for the millions of people in the world and the very name provides solace to all the troubled, depressed people in their day-to-day life. Sayee or Sai is the Hindi form of Sanskrit swamy. So, the words Gosai, Goswami have become popular. Mahalsapathi who named the incarnation of *Samardha Sadguru as Sai Baba* is worthy of our veneration and we salute He is worthy to be remembered at every dawn. The people then started calling the (*Siddha Purusha*\* as Sai Baba from that moment onwards, Sai Baba's name has gradually spread to surrounding areas. The word Sai (Swamy) signifies the lord the universe: and Baba means

father of the universe. It may noted by the readers that the name Sai Baba, Lord and father of the universe, has great significance.

### **Name-Named**

All the incarnations of God are great, but each incarnation has its own specific purpose. The name and the form of that incarnation are of paramount importance to us. In the incarnation of *Sai*, the *Name* and the *Named* have great distinction, as in case of Lord *Sri Rama* and *Sri Krishna*.

The incarnation is not the work of anybody, but is the will of *God* only. The *Name* has greater power than the *Named*. What can not be bestowed by the *Named*, can be achieved by his *Name*. *Sakara Brahmam* (God with certain physical form) vanishes after fulfilling its mission, but the *Name* remains forever. The *Named* is attached by the force of the *Name* and the *Name* itself will take us across the ocean of this mundane life. If we observe the *Sahara Mantras* (holy words), we do not understand any meaning; but they have wonderful significance. The arrangements or order of the prime letters (Beejakshara) is very great and its fruits wonderful.

We fail to understand the reason for the magnificence of. *Sri Sai Baba*, whether it is due to special nature of the incarnation or the wonderful powers transmitted to him by *His Guru Venkusa*, The name *Sai Baba* has greater powers than the form manifested at *Shirdi*. Those, who drink the nectar of significance of the *Name*, can only understand its real greatness

### **Named-Form**

Generally, the form, incarnation of God, in which the divine powers (Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience) were exhibited is worthy of our worship. In that form, God had established *Dharma* and saved the poor, weak and oppressed from evil forces. He showed his love and affection to all and granted many rewards to his devotees. That form is pious and worthy of our adoration (Puja) from top to toe. We can worship that form as a photo or as an idol. The results are the same even if we had worshipped Him, when he was physically present He will grant the fruits we deserve in whatever form we seek Him. People should understand the preachings of *Sri Sai Baba*, try to see Him in

all living beings and show love and affection to all in practice in their day to day life. They will surely get his *Divine* grace and reach nearer to their Goals.

### ***Sai Baba's arrival at the Masjid - Naming it Dwarakamayee***

Sai Baba wanted to stay at Khandoba temple, located at the outskirts of Shirdi. As he was about to enter the precincts of the temple, Mahalsapathi objected to it considering him to be a Muslim. Baba paid respects to Khandoba from outside, and left the place to take refuge in a dilapidated Masjid on the other side of Shirdi. In its front yard, there existed a neem tree which was the seating place of Baba four years ago when he had first arrived. The Masjid was the living place of Baba and he named it *Dwarakamayee* (the mother, named Dwaraka). Baba used to spend some time in the masjid and some time under the neem tree. The *Dwarakamayee* had its doors open to all at all times. It became a famous place for all devotees to visit and pay respects, as it gave shelter to Sri Krishna Sai (Baba). Baba identifying himself with it (*Dwarakamayee* -Divine mother), gave his assurances and blessings to the devotees.

### **Bhagavatha Purana Says: (Skanda 10 - 11 to 17)**

"The seer who is engrossed wholly in *God (Atma)* wanders like a foolish person".

Always in meditation, Baba used to wander about in the near by forests without caring for food and sleep. Some villagers considered Baba to be a mad man. Some even hurled stones him. Baba received the praises and condemnations with equanimity and behaved exactly like the *Bikshu* as mentioned in the *Bikshu Gita*.

The headman of the village Shirdi, Ganapathirao Patel Kote and his wife Bayaji Bai were attracted by Baba's divine form. Mahalsapathi, who initially objected Baba from entering the Khandoba temple, became his first disciple. His two friends Tukaram Darge and Appa Bhil showed utmost devotion to Baba. Others treated Baba as a mad fakir.

Baba, used to wander in the forest without food. Bayyaji B; (Patel's wife) used to search for and feed him with great affection. Baba reciprocated it in a similar manner stating that she was his sister in her earlier birth. Her son Taty

Patel used to address Baba as uncle. Mahalsapathi and Tatyā are said to be the two arms of Sai Baba.

Baba stopped wandering in the forests almost after a year and started collecting alms from five fixed houses Shirdi. Whatever was given, he would eat a little and share it with others. He went on curing the patients suffering from diseases without accepting anything in return. The medicines given . the patients were prepared from herbs. Baba used to grow flower plants at *Tulasi Brundavan* (the place where the present *Samadhi mandir* is located.) He dug a well near the masjid, and used to water the plants.

Baba used to keep the *Dbuni* (sacred fire) always in the Dwaraka mayee masjid. He used to light the lamps in the Mosque at night with the oil given to him by some merchants. One day the merchants had refused to give oil to Baba. He filled the earthen lamps with water, soaked the wicks in it and lighted them. Lo! The lights shone more brightly with water than in oil. The merchants were aghast at the miracle and prostrated at his feet. Baba forgave them. He told them not to be liars and warned them that if they utter false hood they would be away from God.

The Hindus worshiped Baba, considering him to be a great *Siddha Purusha* and *Chalte Bolte Dev* (walking and talking God). The Muslims loved him, believing him to be a *Avalia* and *Pygambar* (prophet). Mahalsapathi first worshiped Baba with sandal paste, flowers, and with the sacred rice thinking him to be *Sadguru*. The other Hindus followed him but Baba never showed any liking to it. What else could he do? He is the saviour of his devotees, as well as their follower. He consented to their worship. The ritual continued. Some Muslims did not relish the way the Hindus worshiped him and they were bent upon harming the worshipers in the Masjid. Soon they changed their minds, fearing that they might incur the wrath of Baba and walked away from the Masjid.

### ***Baba a Hindu or a Muslim!***

This question has often been tormenting the minds of the people who gathered around Baba. From the information available Baba was born to a Hindu

couple. As a proof of this fact, his ears were pierced in the early years. (Piercing the ears is a custom of the Hindus but not that of the Muslims).

Baba came into contact with a Muslim Fakir when he two years old. The fakir's name was not known to us. It is difficult for us to infer the nature of the Fakir who might h belonged to the village Manwat near Patri. Baba used to refer the Fakir in some important contexts and often repeat his words. We can very well understand that Baba, imbibed exemplary conduct and discipline with the close association he had with his mentor, the Fakir, in the formative years. He (Fakir) seemed to be a noble and saintly person who had conquered his senses, an embodiment of pure dispassion, and above all a faithful devotee of the Almighty.

Baba acquired qualities necessary to realize God from the training he had received from the Fakir. (Second to sixth year) Infact the Fakir was his first *Guru*. The Fakir must have belonged to the *Sufi* sect. *Sufies* often attain a state of *Samadhi* (deep meditation) and utter in Arabic *Anal Haque* (Aham Brahmasmi), indicating the state of mind that realizes the Ultimate within them. Several followers of Baba heard him repeating the words *Anal Haque* - (Mai Allah Hum - I am God) every now and then. He revealed himself to the devotees in the form of *Lakshmi Narayana - Ganapathi-Dutta-Maruthi-Vittal-Sri Rama-Sri Krishna*, and said all those are the forms of *Allah* and that He Himself was in all such forms.

Baba often uttered Arabic and Parsi words in the beginning when he arrived at Shirdi and was singing lyrics especially that - of Sant Kabir. He used to sing and dance in ecstasy with Chiru in hands (wooden pieces with metal that produces rhythmic sounds) and Gajjalu (anklets with bells).

It is stated in the Sufi religion: 1) It is our ignorance alone that leads us astray. 2) Only God is the doer; our minds and should be absorbed in God, and He does all his deeds through *us*..3) *All we need is only a "Guru"*, who elevates us not only with preachings but also with the message, showing his wonderful powers of affection and love. The *Guru* transmits His wonderful spiritual powers to his disciple. He merges the soul of his disciple with his own and transforms him to his state of divinity.

These qualities are revealed in Baba's behaviour towards his devotees like Nana Chandorkar and Upasini Baba (His contemporaries) whom he set on the right path. The Fakir carved Baba into a perfect person of good qualities and made him a deserving disciple to seek the shelter of Gopal Rao Deshmukh (Venkusa). How fortunate Baba was! Baba reached the hands of a Sufi saint from Hindu parents and came back to the tender care of a Hindu saint from a Muslim saint. No wonder, Baba was the culmination of two different religions; Baba assimilated the great ideologies of the two great religions and then started preaching socio unity between the Hindus and Muslims.

The Islam religion believes in one *Nirakara* God where as the Hindu religion has many Godly forms in it and we see the pictures of them like *Sri Rama*, *Sri Krishna*, *Venkateswara*, *Lakshmi Narayana*, *Datta*, *Ganapati* etc., in their dwellings. They worship them on several occasions, with a belief as per the *Puranic* stories. Yet, all these are the many forms of the *Infinite* and the *Absolute Brahman*, In Islam, God is one, and the prophet comes next. They have none other than these two.

Our vedas and Vedantas proclaim '*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*, -'*Angaananya Devataa*' (every thing in the form of Brahman and all the *Devatas* are parts of limbs of that absolute self) In the Hymns it is said "Surya (Sun God) Agni (God of Fire) Varun (Rain God) are all considered to be godly forms.

The non-Hindus fail to understand the messages from '*Upanishads*' like '*Matru-Devo-Bhava*', '*Pitru-Devo-Bhava*' and '*Atbidbi-Devo-Bhava*' (consider your mother to be God your father to be God; and your unexpected guest to be God Even the Muslims agree to some extent with the Hindus on the statement '*Acharya-Devo-Bhava* (consider your Guru to be God). The Sufi sect underlines this truth only, '*Guru is God* and he is to be placed in the hearts of the seekers. Their basic principles are- loving their Guru, meditating upon Guru and seeking union of their soul with the '*Guru*'. The principle of '*Acharya-Devo Bhava*' is propounded in the '*Taittaireya Upanishad*.

Having gone to seek refuge under Venkusa from the Sufi fakir, Baba followed the basic tenet '*Acharya-Devo-Bhava*' which laid unshakable foundation for Baba's

spiritual advancement. Baba revealed how he had spent twelve years of life in the holy presence of Venkusa. His Guru wanted from him his Love only. The Guru wanted Love and Baba wanted Guru only. This is the concept of Sufi culture. Baba served his Guru with Love forgetting every thing in the world. This is what the followers of the path of devotion (Bhakti Marga) like Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu have propounded. The single-minded devotion to the Guru will yield unparalleled results. Baba, therefore, faced no hindrances in spiritual development when he was transferred to the care of Guru Venkusa from his first Guru Fakir. The path is the same-the objective and the result are also the same. The final result to merge into the ocean of love of the Guru. This principle of love, which Baba imbibed at a tender age under the service Fakir, reached its zenith under the care of Venkusa. Thus the principle of Hindu-Muslim unity bore excellent fruits in Baba

The essence of the principle of these two religions is to reach the goal of perfect blissful state by decisively following the path of pure unbridled love towards all living beings.

The concept of Hindu -Muslim unity found its full expression – in Baba. He often used to utter the words **Allah, Fakir** or **Hari** while referring to God. For him chanting of *Allah* is synonymous with chanting of *Hari*. In Saint Kabir, who became the Guru of Sufies, one can observe this harmoniousness and unity. Baba pronounced once that Kabir was his Guru. In one context he said: "I had heart trouble, I started chanting the name of **Hari** and **Allah**. I placed the book *Vishnu Sahasra Namam* (thousand names of Lord Vishnu) on my heart. **Hari** alone occupied my mind and heart. Soon I recovered from the ailment." On another occasion he said: "I started reciting the name of **Hari** along with Kaka Dikshit. In my recitation, I forgot everything and saw the form of **Hari** (*Lord Narayana*). Since then I stopped giving medicines to the sufferers. Instead I give only the **Udhi** (ash from sacred fire in Dwaraka mayee)".

We infer, therefore, that **Hari** and **Allah** are one and the same. All those seekers who are under the protection of Baba should have the same concept of unity of religion and God.

### **72 Hours Of Samadhi**

In the year 1886, an unique incident happened. With the grace of his Guru (Venkusa), Sri Sai Baba imbibed all the yogic Powers of his Guru without seeking them. He never craved for powers, paid no attention to them and never tested their efficacy. It is observed that many great Yogies succumb to such powers. All these supernatural powers resided with Sainath for 30-35 years waiting for his grace.

Baba had the habit of chanting the name of *Hari* with great love and devotion and without caring for the powers he possesses, like the sage Rishabha - (Bhagavatha Purana - Fifth Skanda). The elders say that our mind cannot be trusted. Just as a small amount of rawness in the seed makes it capable of germination, similarly if the mind is not ripe enough, it can be the cause of *Karma* and lead us astray. Unless the seed is thoroughly fried, it will not lose its power of germination. So also, mind should be purified. With the most miraculous incident in 1886, Baba transformed himself from the state of divine appearance to the state of *Absoluteness*, (from the state of *Sakshatkara* to *Parabrahma* state), the state of *Universal Pervasiveness*. (*Omnipresence and Omniscience*), Baba wanted to do *Seemollanghanam* (crossing the boundaries of this mortal coil) in 1886, 32 years before *his Maha Samadhi*". (1918) It was a full moon day in Margasira (December), Baba was suffering from an attack of Asthma (he might have suffered for the sake of some devotee); He determined to regulate his Prana (life force) and attain Samadhi state. He informed Mahalsapathi, "I am going to see *Allah*. Protect my body for three days; if I return, it is alright. If I do not come back, bury my body at that place outside (pointing to a particular spot), and have two flags fixed in the ground as a sign of the burial". So saying Baba fell to the ground at 10'o clock in the night. His breathing stopped his pulse also came down, it seemed as if the life force had left the body.

The people of Shirdi, who gathered thought him to be dead and bury his body but Mahalsapathi objected to this and did not allow anyone to touch the body. He protected it for three days and nights keeping the head on his lap. On the fourth day at about 4'o clock at dawn, there appeared some signs of life in the

Baba's body. Soon Baba started breathing. The movements of his stomach were noticed while breathing. Baba opened his eyes and touched his hands and legs. Baba woke up to full life again!

Baba informed Mahalsapathi that he had seen God, but will main in his present body for some more years to fulfill the tasks assigned to him and that he will assist the people -in their welfare.

**There are two kinds of *Saints* in the world.**

*First category* : He relinquishes all the mundane bonds and stays in a state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, enjoying the bliss of the *Aatma* (inner soul). Such a person may not have any direct contact with the people in the world, but their *Universal Love* spreads all over. He blesses the people who tread in the right-path. His very presence encourages *Dharma* (*righteousness*) (as demonstrated in Ramayana) and *Satyam* (*truthfulness*) (as preached in Gita)

*Second Category* : It is said in the "*Narada Bhakti Sutras*" that some saints attain salvation and enjoy the bliss and also make others attain the same. Such *Samardha Sadguru* is called *Adhikari*, the chief *Purusba*, or *Avatar* (incarnation). (Sutras 3-32)

Such persons mingle with the people in the world, but never swerve from their *Brahma Nista* (steadfast nature in the Brahman) . Nothing attracts or casts any spell over them. This *Sadguru* behaves as the '*Inner Self*' of the universe. This great soul outwardly does not appear to be performing anything, but really is the cause of every thing.

Lord Krishna says: (Gita: 3-22)

- Arjuna there is nothing in these three worlds for Me to do nor is there anything worth attaining; yet I continue to work"

Hence, all that is done by the great saints and seers is *only* for the welfare, and upliftment of the people and nothing for themselves. They are the veritable fountains of love. They appear and move in this world only to elevate all those people, who tread in the wrong paths. They have compassion and love for every one without any exception.

Saint Kabir says: " Like the water ponds, the trees, the saints exist only for others. The ponds and rivers give water to the thirsty but do not drink. The trees satisfy the hungry ones with its fruits but do not eat any. Likewise, the saints perform everything for the good of others. They never think about themselves".

#### **CHAPTER-FOUR**

A detailed and attentive study of the life of Sri Sai Baba reveals , fact that his *State* before and after the 72 hours of *Samadhi* (the year 1886) were altogether different. He informed Mahalsapathi while leaving his mortal body "I am going to see *Allah (God)*". On the fourth day he reentered the body proclaiming "I *saw Allah*". \* *Seeing Allah*' means '*Assuming the form of Allah*'. He who realizes *Brahmam* becomes *Brahmam* himself. It is the state of all pervasiveness and becoming the '*Inner Self* of all living beings.

Sri Krishna says about such a person as follows: (Gita 13-14)

"He is all pervading with hands, feet, eyes, ears and mouth spreading everywhere in this universe."

He is God only. He is the perfect being possessing wealth of all sorts. He is *Omnipotent - Omniscient - Omnipresent* and dictates terms to all. He can do anything, anywhere and at any time. He dwells in the hearts of all. He is beyond the purview of five elements (Earth, Water, Air, Fire & Sky). He is their Lord. He knows everything - Past - Present - and future. He is the embodiment of Love - Universal Father - Universal Mother. He is the only person who can listen to the prayers of all and competent enough to bless them. He is God, Almighty.

#### ***Baba Saguna and Nirguna Brahmam***

##### ***(With and without specific attributes, form etc)***

After attaining the state of *Omnipresence* and *Omniscience*, *Baba* entered his body consisting of five elements. If it is so, "Can we call him *God*?" This doubt may arise to some. After reaching that state, mere possession of a mortal body is immaterial *Baba* once said: "The body you see is only an abode. With love my Guru had already taken me (my Self) away from it long back". *Baba* is everywhere even if we see him talking to devotees or doing his routine works. He sees and knows everything even if we are thousands of miles away. With his

protective he looks after his children and saves them. Baba has become *Sagun.. Nirguna Brahmam*. (with and without specific attributes form etc) A layman may not grasp its full significance easily. Even though He possesses a form, He is formless. While performing Karma, (actions), He is not bound by it.

It is said in Prabhoda Sudhakaram:

"The Sun shines brilliantly all over the universe. Though is one, it appears differently to people at different places. Similarly God is one, but appears as different to different beings"

Thus, Sri Sal Baba is not at Shirdi alone, though he appeared to be there. Although we see him in the physical form, He is not bound by it. He is present in all. He answers to the mere call of his devotees. He is beside us even as we think of him. Such a State is possible only to God who is *Omnipresent*.

"*Yemee Ninnupekshintuna?*" (What! do I ignore you?) book written by the author, (in Telugu) describes in detail varied experiences of several devotees of Baba and how he is present with them in their hours of distress and moments of gloom how he transformed their lives. It will become voluminous if the details are narrated here. We may not be able to convince a sceptic about Baba's real nature, even if we cite thousands instances proving his capabilities.

Lord Sri Krishna says: "The man of faith, the devoted, the master of his senses, obtains true knowledge. Having gained it, he at once attains supreme peace (realizing God). The ignorant, one who lacks faith, the doubting self who is led astray from spiritual path will not have any happiness in this world or in his next birth." (Bhagavadgita 4-39,40)

We should know the incarnation of the *Almighty, Samardha Sadguru* by our own experience. No one can induce faith in others.

The essence of all religions is found in the maxim: "Holy scriptures - Teachings of Guru - Your own experience. These three should form a basis and combining them suitably, one should carefully formulate his ideals and practices to be followed by him to lead his life. He should adhere to them. It will be the greatest and best support for him to over come the obstacles, and difficulties in life and finally attain his objective". All those belonging to different religious sects,

and seeking Baba's blessings, firmly believed that they were before a *Divine Presence*, a *Samardha Sadguru* with whose grace only they could realize God. They felt that religious intolerance was ridiculous and should be detested at all costs. They considered Baba as their Guru, worshipped Him and secured his blessings. Baba inculcated the feeling of mutual respect and love among the people of different religions. He accepted their worship and showed them a path to follow, acceptable to all religions. He fostered in them noble qualities such as truthfulness, compassion, and good behaviour.

A Sai s devotee should keep away from the eight vices viz. Desire Envy, Greed, Hypocrisy, Falsehood, Blame Lust and Anger. Devotion to Sai Baba Means - following the basic tenets of all religions, equal feeling towards all, and unflinching faith in *Sadguru*, Sri Sai Baba. The devotees always felt that they before a Divine Form (God Incarnate) who is an embodiment Love, Holiness. Often, Baba used to say to them; "*As I love you. you should love each other*". Before him there were no rein barriers. The feeling of Love is, enduring, universal indescribable. As the *Inner Self* of all, He was able to know and everything happening around the world and rescued his children. With his grace, he made impossible things happen. They in turn loved him madly.

Baba clearly stated that he reached his present unique state only due to his Guru's blessings and the root cause for it is the intense Love towards him. Every one wants removal of the difficulties and fulfillment of their desires. Such things are possible through Love only. At Baba's feet, they can get their wish granted; now and in future also. Religious faiths do not pose problems to them.

### ***The sanctity of Hinduism - its unity***

Baba decided to bring about unity among the followers different sects of Hinduism. The tenet: "There is only one *Universal God*" was well entrenched in the mind of Baba, during his childhood, when he was under the care of Fakir, a Sufi Saint. Guru Venkusa imbibed in him (between 6 to 18 years) a thorough understanding as to the *Nature of God* and his manifestation He felt that *Lord Venkateswara*, worshipped by his Guru, is no other than '*Allah*' (*Supreme God*) -

All other forms of God, worshipped by his Guru during pilgrimages, are different forms of the same God and are called by different names.

It is mentioned in the *Sruties* "The truth is only one but learned express it in different ways". Baba understood this truth of the scriptural saying at a very tender age. Baba preached this to all his devotees. Let every Hindu realize this truth and inculcate in their minds that *God* and *Allah* are one and the same. Baba is another incarnation of God.

Thaittereya Upanishad says: "All forms of *God* Are different parts of the *Absolute*."

Possessing supernatural powers, Baba, is the embodiment of divinity and total perfection. Baba is always in Eternal bliss, - a state of '*Sat-Chit-Ananda*\*. As a perfect *Guru*, he has the capacity to lead his devotees on the right path. *He* is the embodiment of pure truth, real knowledge. He is the goal of all religions. Every aspirant should strive to attain this goal. All *Sadgurus* are different forms of God. Love is the fundamental principle of all religions. The essence of Baba's preaching is to realize this truth. This only brings unity among all religious sects.

The Hindu devotees are able to see their endearing forms of God in Baba.

\* A physician from South Africa, who was a devotee of *Lord Sri Rama*, was able to see *Rama* only in Sai Baba. Baba granted *Love* and *Bliss* to him.

\* Baba appeared as *Lord Hanuman* to M.S. Nimonkar, a inspector, and '*Bhakta*' of *Hanuman*'.

\* A relative of Nana Saheb Chandorkar called Binnewal who was a devotee of *Lord Dattatreya* saw that *form* in Baba.

\* To Megha Syam, Baba appeared as *Lord Siva*. Sri Prathan and family could see *Pandu Ranga Vittal* in Baba.

\* The brother of Bal Dev beheld in Baba, his favorite *Lord Ganapathi*

Krishna says in the Gita (4- 11):

"Oh! whoever seeks protection from Me and worships in whatever form, I will accept them in that form. All men follow my path."

It is sung in the Aarati (noon prayer) of Baba:

"Oh! Sai! You will give *Darshan* (appearance) to every one in the form they perceive you."

Baba showers motherly affection to a person who seeks protection. He promises to save anyone who merely prays to him. He drives away their difficulties. He is kind to all without discrimination. Baba is never angry with the devotees for mistakes committed by them. On the contrary, he tries to rectify them by removing their deficiencies. He shows them the most beneficial path, which is inaccessible to many. Hence, Sai is only source of solace in the present times. The devotees like Chanarkar, Mirikar, Nachne, Narke, Nulkar bear testimony the above facts (For details please refer to the Telugu Book by author '*Saimananam*' Second Chapter) Those who knew Baba well and those who had close association with him believed to be the incarnation of God only.

\* Hon'ble judge of Indore High court Mr. M.B.Rege, B., L.L.B., firmly opines, "Sai is the incarnation of God, who took this physical form to brighten the lives of his devotees with words and deeds. Baba as the indestructible *Soul (Aatman)* still exists, even though he is not physically present before the eyes thousands of his devotees. He grants their prayers, even better now, than when he was physically present at Shirdi.

Another judge of the High court says, "I find *Baba* to be the *Creator, Sustainer* and *Destroyer*. In my view he has not gone here. He still resides there where He had stayed before Mahasamadhi?. *He* is unlimited and beyond our imagination. His physical form is felt by devotees every now and then even today. I consider Baba to be the Supreme Embodiment of spirituality. Both the *Saguna* and *Nirguna Tatvas* are well established in Baba. Since the body, the physical form (*Saguna* nature) has been cast off, the *Infinite (Nirguna)* alone remains".

\* Prof. G.Narke, M. A, M.Sc., Principal of Pune engineering college and members of his family served Baba believing him to be God. Narke expressed his valuable opinion, when he arrived at the *Dwarakamayee* on the occasion of offering *Aarati* (Prayer). "In my earlier visit, I found Baba in a fit of rage. He cursed and threatened me for no reason. I thought in my mind, Is he mad? When I was massaging his feet in the evening, he stroked my head gently and said; 'I am not

mad'. What a wonderful experience! Baba read my inner thoughts. Nothing could be hidden from him. He is my *Antaryami* (the inner self). He spoke as if he was seated in my heart and knew all my intentions and thoughts. This feeling remained in all my experiences with Baba my faith grew further and is more deep-rooted now. I do not hesitate to say that Baba is *Bbagawan*, and is capable of doing any thing. He is *Omniscient*. He can make everyone move according to his will. He is all-powerful!!"

Dada Saheb Kaparde, a famous lawyer at Amraoti in Birar made this observation: "Baba knows the inner nature of all beings; He grants the wishes of all; He bestows peace and happiness to all- Sai is the '*Walking God*' on earth".

\* Das Ganu Maharaj says, "Baba is the primordial cause of the entire universe. He is the pure inner self enveloped with, compassion and love. He is the *Absolute Brahman* in human form'. He is the embodiment of compassion and love. He, removes at once removes all the difficulties of his devotees. He is the abode of eternal bliss. Oh, *God* I pray to you in all humility."

\* Hemadri Panth (Anna saheb Dabholkar) considered Baba a holy saint and served him; but finally came to the conclusion that Baba was God only - (*Parabrahma*).

\* The residents of Shirdi, Madharao Desh Pande (Shyama), a close associate of Baba and many others, called Baba as *Deva* (*God*).

Baba's existence still prevails even after his *Mabasamadbi* (in 1918.) Sai Baba is everywhere controlling, directing, guiding, and protecting all his devotees with vigilance and care. *He* bestows on them peace and tranquility.

The seers and saints propounded the theories on the incarnations of God in the Upanishads. Bruhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Kata and Swetaswatara Upanishads say: "God's, pervasiveness is always seen in the animate and inanimate things. in this universe and He lies in the '*Inner Self*, as the controller and protector". Sai Baba is the ideal example of this truth. [*Yemme Ninnupekshintuna*' (What! Do I ignore you?), a book written by the author (in Telugu), describes in detail the varied experiences of several devotees which bears testimony to the above facts.

Today devotion to Sai Baba has gained importance among millions of people all over the world. '*Saijyothi*' (*Light of Sai*) is illuminating in all directions and removing the darkness in the minds of the people. Can we afford to ignore it? *Sai's* devotion has become the life force - the vital force enlightening force - to many. It awakens the minds and guides them in the proper direction to reach their objective. His force continues to work whether any one accepts it or not. That is God's will. A person who has the good fortune of performing noble deeds in his past births will make the best use of the opportunity provided to him and will attain Salvation (Mukti). He will rejuvenate the society and make it a better place to live.

All the preachers, who advocated the path of reaching God through *Bbakti*, are generous and broad minded. Their sole aim is to rescue people overwhelmed by *Maya* and awaken them to realize the *Truth*. This noble aim is seen in every religion. In course of time, the followers of different religions formulated certain codes of conduct and imperceptibly sowed the seeds of jealousy. This led to mutual hatred and people divided themselves into separate entities, forgetting the basic principles of their religion. They started giving more importance to the outward manifestations of their faiths, customs, dress, manners, and religious practices than the inner values.

It is a *Dharma* enunciated in our scriptures that "Sweet things should not be taken all alone". It means all good and beneficial things should be shared with others. Following this, great saints Preached in public what they believed to be the truth to uplift the mankind. Over a period of time the nobler ideas disappeared. Instead they developed a narrow outlook, building dividing walls.

Once Ramanuja's Guru taught him a powerful Mantra and warned him. "This is a powerful Mantra, capable of providing Salvation. It should be kept as a secret. You will go to hell if you this to others" But Ramanuja thought otherwise. If this could lead people to Salvation he was ready to go to hell for their sake. He chanted this Mantra loudly from an elevated platform so that all could hear and attain salvation. Such is the spirit of a noble saint.

Baba made it clear to his children that all incarnations *are* His and He is in all saints. Akkalkot Maharaj, Nanded Moula Nagpur Tajuddin Baba, Vasudevanandaswamy, and all other have claimed to be one with *Baba*. The non-dual state of was proved beyond doubt.

Now, to the question, "***Is Sai Baba also a God?***" asked by my friend, we can say that those who had the experience of *Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient* nature of ***Baba*** will say that *Baba* certainly is *God*. He may not be a *God* to others who never had such an experience. But even they are bound to get good results, if they regard Him as a great saint treat Him with reference. For instance Fire provides relief to all those who are suffering from devastating morning cold in the winter season. For a traveller suffering from severe heat of the Sun, one need not say specifically, to take shelter under a tree. He knows very well where to take shelter and be happy. Similarly everyone knows and decides for himself how to get solace and happiness and takes refuge in it.

To the second question: "***Are the existing Gods not enough?*** God assumed many forms several times out of His boundless Love for His children and taught *Dharma* and showed right path to them. But people could not grasp this *Dharma* with their religious intolerances. They lost happiness in this world and also denied salvation in the other world. They were constantly troubled and were unable to have any peace of mind. They lost direction. Under these circumstances God assumed the form Sri Sai Baba to alleviate their sufferings and remove ill will borne out of religious fanaticism. He showed these warring fractions, the right path. He brightened their souls with the truth that "*God is only one*". God came into this world as Sai Baba to teach the '*Prema Tatwam*' (Love towards all). He preached to the followers of different sects in Hinduism that "*All forms of Gods are One and the same*". He demonstrated to them by giving Darshan in that form in which they perceived of Him. They could feel from their experiences that Sai Baba is none other than the '*Godly Form*' which they worship. He could also make them feel that all saints are forms of Him only

'Sri Krishna' says in Bhagavadgita:

"Sages look with equal eye on a Brahamine, rich with learning and culture, or a cow, or an elephant or even a dog or an eater of dogs" (Gita - 5-18)

"He who sees Me in all beings, and all beings in Me - to him I am never lost nor he to me (Gita - 6-30)

Baba had taught this truth, as revealed in the scriptures to his devotees, not as some sacred words, but practically in their day to day experiences. Those who follow the teachings of Baba with infinite faith can attain peace and contentment in their lives. Baba has gone nowhere. Though He left his mortal body in 1918, He is still there, where He had stayed earlier.

It is my friend's query which prompted me to speak a few good things about Sri Sai Baba. It was the will of Baba instrumental in raising the question - and it was his wish only that made me press some of my thoughts. I bow hundred times to Sai in the form of my friend who has given me this opportunity. To sum up, I venture to state the following at the cost of repetition.

*Sri Sai Baba* is truly God. He is an incarnation of God. He knows everything. He dwells in the hearts of every one as the *'Inner Self'*. He knows our minds and directs us. He commands the five elements. He leads the entire universe according to his will. *Sai's* love is unparalleled on all living beings including the mean and low. He is *Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent*. His teachings are all of universal nature. He is the modern prophet. Those who surrender to Him with full faith, look to Him for solutions to their problems, and worship (love) Him with devotion will surely be rewarded. They will be successful ultimately in their pursuits. Their genuine wishes shall always be granted. *Sai* grace is not confined to persons of any particular sect, caste, religion or nationality.

*Sai Baba* wants only two things in return from all his devotees.

- \* *Nishta* ~ Complete Faith in Him
- \* *Saburi* - Patience coupled with Courage

It is beyond man's intelligence to understand *Sai's* mighty powers. He is *Samartha Sadguru*. He knows what is best for us. We should accept the results with humility and always crave for his love and grace.

Before concluding this booklet I wish to make the following observations: Even though '*Paramatma*' is devoid of all attributes - pure -perfect - infallible - immutable - free from defects, failings, passions, emotions, diseases - and is always in eternal bliss, He takes the form from his formless state occasionally for the sake of His devotees because of their '*Intense Love*' and '*Faith*<sup>3</sup> This is the eternal truth and the prime reason for all His incarnations.

It is said in the "Prabhoda Sudhakaram":

"Though the sky is vacant, it satisfies the wishes of the Chataka Bird in the form of a cloud and that of a Chakora Bird in the form of the moon. Similarly God fills the hearts of the devotees with the nectar '*Sat-Chit-Ananda*' after showing His '*Grace*' on them.

*To me, Sri Sai Baba is - Hari - Hara - Surya - Dattatreya -Ganesa - Kali - Fate - Brahmam - Christ - Goutam Buddha -Allah- and all other forms of God worshipped in this universe.*

May *Samartha Sadguru Sri Sai Baba* correct our minds and thoughts and give his blessings!

*May this be dedicated to Sri Sat Baba!*

*May all live in Peace and Happiness!*

*Om Tat Sat*

### **APPEAL**

The following Books written by my father *Late SriBapatla Rao Pantulu garu* are now available with me for distribution. (All in Telugu - Demy size)

1. Yeniece Ninnupekshintuna? - Life of Sri Sai Baba and Devotee's experiences - 2 volumes - 1024 pages
2. Sri Sainatha Bodhamrutam - 643 teachings of Sri Sai Baba - 410 pages
3. Sri Sai Karuna - 200 pages
4. Premamrutham - Narada Bhakti Sutramulu with Slokas and explanation - 300 pages
5. Sri Bhagavadgitamrutam - Bhagavadgita Slokas and Translation in Telugu Peoms - 270 pages

Now I wish to reprint '*Sri Sai Anusaranamu*' (in Telugu) -Complete philosophy of Sri Sai Baba - expressed by my father Sn B.H. Rao garu with his 30 years of surrendered experience. This book was earlier printed thrice in the years, 1976, 1990, and 1995. The estimated cost of publishing this book (450 pages) is about Rs. 56,000/- As you may be aware, I am publishing all these books solely with the donations received from the devotees.

I request the devotees to come forward and contribute Liberally for the Publication of this book.

- For a donation of Rs.550/- and above (inclusive of Postal charges of Rs. 500/-), all the books at S.Nos. 1 to 5 will be sent to any where in India by Regd. Book - Post. Their donations with their names will also be published in this book and a copy be sent to them free of cost.
- \* For those who contribute a minimum of Rs. 116 A book will be sent to them and their names will also be publish?-in the book as Poshakas'.

I also request all the Donors to give due publicity by giving the above information to their friends and relatives who are devotees of Sri Sai Baba. The books I intend to publish in English will also be informed to them after publication '*Sri Sai Anusaranamu*'.

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**B. V. Pardhasaradhy**  
**(Publisher)**  
**Cheruvu(PO)**  
**522113 (Via)**  
**Bapatla,**  
**Guntur (Dt.) A.P., India.**