

PART II

I

18TH OCTOBER, 1936

4 P.M

W.Pradhan, B.A., L.L.B High Court Pleader & J.P. aged 56, residing at Sai Baugh, Santa Cruz, says:

Nana Saheb Chandorkar was the cause of all my relations going to Baba and therefore the cause of my going also. It was the first week of May 1910. A group of my brothers and other relations were chatting with Mr. Chandorkar. Then my brother Rama Rao asked "Is there any one nowadays of the type of Akkalkote Maharaj?"

N.C:

Do you want to see one?

R.R:

Yes

N.C.:

In that case, go to Shirdi. In Sai Baba of Shirdi you have one.

R.R.

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

N.C.

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

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

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

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

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

to garland Baba and gave him all the presents. When I looked quietly into his face and eyes, I felt confirmed in my impression that Baba is a really great saint and said within myself "Thank God. I am come". This deep impression was quite opportune. Baba at once proceeded to put my faith to the test.

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

When I went to him next, he was giving *udhi* to a number of devotees crowding round him. He caught sight of me as I stood at a distance, beckoned to me to draw near, addressed me as Bhavu (as he did ever afterwards) and said "It will be alright in 2 or 4 days." Then he gave me *udhi* and I left the mosque. Persons who were present and wondered at

such deep interest of Baba in me and his regard for me, like Mr.Noolkar and Mrs.Jog came to me. Noolkar embrace me. Mrs Jog wanted to know from me what sacred reading I went on with (to find out how I should deserve the marked treatment accorded to me by Baba). Baba, every one knew, did not care for mere wealth, gold or family position. I humbly admitted to Mr.Jog that I could boast of little sacred study, *Pothi* etc.

I thought I would return by the next day. But when leave was, Baba declined it in his characteristic fashion by saying, “Go tomorrow”. He did so on succeeding days and kept me there for eight days. I was arranging for a special dinner or *Biksha* to Baba the next day and requested him to inform me who were to be invited and what the menu was to be. Of course, *Puranpoli* was to be the crown of the dinner and for quests, he said I was to invite Babu (the nephew of Dada Kelkar), who was Baba’s favourite and Baba. He said ‘I also will come’ 'mihye innu'before I invited him. The next day the dinner was prepared as directed and plates were served. Babu was invited and sat at one plate. Another was served and set apart for Baba. A crow came and lifted a puranpoli off the plate and carried it away. All hailed it with delight as evidence that Baba was going in the form to take away his own.

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

On a Thursday, during that period Baba was preparing food in “*Handi*” (i.e.,pot) to feed large numbers. He drove away every one from the masjid and was alone with his *handi*. At that time, to the great surprise and alarm of the spectators, my self and the two sons of Chandorkar went in. Baba far from being angry, received us very well, as though he had intended the expulsion of others for the very purpose of granting us a wholly private interview. Then after a little while Baba appeared to be singing out something. At least I thought it to be so. But I found that when he repeated the

words for the third time, they were. At on "kayare apala kayahmanave Sriram jayaram jaya jayaram. At once, on hearing these words I was overcome with emotion and I placed my head on Baba's feet and tears flowed freely. These words were the guru *mantra* that I had received from my family guru Haribua (whose grandfather Atmaram Bua who has a temple built for his worship Thakurdwar Bombay, was the guru of my great grandfather). And Baba was so kindly reviving my interest in and regard for that guru mantra in this fashion for my benefit. Baba was attending to my spiritual benefit without any question from me and his loving interest in me was too deep for me to return and too great to acknowledge except through tears of gratitude and joy. At the "handi", I noticed with wonder that when the contents of the cauldron were boiling, Baba used his own bare palm and not a spoon nor a ladle to stir the contents thoroughly to secure even and uniform consistency in the food or *sira*. His hand was not scalded or swollen by such use. Thence suddenly at noon, he took us three to the Lendi, a very unusual hour for him to visit the Lendi; and there he dug into the earth small hollows, gave me some corn and made me sow that corn in those hollows. Then after turning up some earth to cover the seeds, he made me water the patches sown; and then we returned to the mosque. It is that lendi garden which 7 or 8 years later (i.e., immediately after he passed away) I have purchased.

After detaining us for a week, Baba gave us permission to go away. At that time Babu Chandorkar placed a plate under Baba's feet and pouring water on them collected the water to be used at home. That was departure in the traditions of Shirdi. Till then only *udhi* was allowed to be taken away, and *PadaTirtha* was immediately used up at the *Arathi* or at any rate at Shirdi. I took my cue from Babu and took Baba's *Padatirtha* home for the use of my mother and others. On our way, at Manmad we had only 3rd class tickets; and under the Railway rules then obtaining, we could only board a later train but not the Punjab Mail. But by a happy thought we rushed in and contrary to the rules, got into that mail and reached home 4 or 5 hours earlier than if we had conformed to the rules. These 4 or 5 hours I discovered were specially valuable and it was obviously Baba's

grace that enabled us to be so early. As soon as I reached home, I learnt that my mother had an attack of paralysis. She was having the attack of hemiplegia in our house at Bombay, when Baba was saying "My side is giving me excruciating pain." Doctors had been brought in. My sister and other relations were discussion if I should be informed at Shirdi about the event. Mr.Chandorkar who was then present, remarked, it seems, that it was needless and that everything would be safe for my mother so long as I stayed with Baba and that Baba would himself send me back, if and when there was need. On the night when we were starting from Shirdi the attendant doctor noting the high temperature, the constricted state of the bowels and her restlessness declared that her condition was critical and that if however the bowels should move in the course of the night the situation would be more hopeful. It was that very night about 4.30 or 5 a.m. I reached my mother's place. At once I gave her Baba's udhi and *tirtha*. She then go somnolent and sometime later, her bowels moved and consequently her temperature fell. The doctor came and found that there was improvement and that things had taken a favourable turn. Quite obviously our timely dismissal from Shirdi, with Baba's tirtha and udhi, our timely catching the Punjab Mail and arrival on the critical night were all seen or foreseen and willed by Baba and the favourable turn was what he intended and foretold when he said to me at Shirdi "in 2 or 4 days it will be alright". Truly.

Sai moves in mysterious way.

His wonders to perform.

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

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

One night, Das Ganu Mahraj performed his splendid *Kirtan* (always in praise of Baba, whatever the main and express theme of his kirtan may be) at my mother's place. Then I invited him and Mr.Chandorkar and all the friends then present to go over to Santa Cruz for rest. They all came

with the entire musical accompaniments and set. It was suggested that they should proceed with a fresh kirtan here at my house. That went on from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. the most impressionable hours of the night. My wife listening to the kirtan got a burning desire to visit Shirdi. Baba came to her in a dream she told me; and this considered as a sufficient indication that she should be taken to Shirdi. "But what of my or sister-in-law, who still seemed to be in advanced pregnancy?" I thought over it. My wife and sister-in-law were prepared to take risk of labour pains on route. I engaged a special second class railway car, paying the price of 12 tickets and arranged that the same car should be taken on via Manmad to Kopergaon and taken off to a lay-by there. We all started and throughout the journey there was not the least trouble. When we were nearing Kopergaon, my wife said that Mr. Chandorkar would perhaps be at the station to receive us. I replied that it was impossible, though I had intimated our starting to him. Yet strangely that very thing happened.

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

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

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

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

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

Are Alla abhikarasath poora kara. mere balabachhe ghar janevale hai. unko sukhse janede.

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

II

19TH OCTOBER, 1936

SANTA CRUZ

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

On this occasion, Baba pointed to the village wall stone arch and said "**Whoever rebuilds this, will get blessings.**" My wife asked him for permission to rebuild it and he gave it. Then I paid Rs.600 to N.Chandorkar to rebuild it. On this occasion, Baba said "Babu's bungalow is beautiful and ready". I guessed that Baba meant that I should buy the Bungalow I now live in. So within two months, I got a lease of it and occupied it and in six months thereafter I bought it. Baba's words thus were fulfilled by my purchase and Babu had a beautiful bungalow in 1913.

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

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

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

B.B: Baba, today is Thursday.

S.B: What if?

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

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

B.B: To please you.

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

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

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

Eversince my first visit , I was having my dinner at the Mosque with Baba. Baba with his own hand stuffed all food into our plates and cups in such large quantity. Instead of throwing away such valuable prasad I asked my niece to come up and take take away about three fourth of what was served to me and that sufficed to feed my family. Yet what I ate warded off all hunger or appetite for a night meal. Baba almost

invariably gave desert (i.e., fruits &c) at the end of the meal. But when I went up with Babu, Baba noticed that Babu did not care for cooked food and served mangoes and fruits first, so that Babu might have a full meal. When other children were born, I would take the three children with me including Babu, to the Mosque to dine with Baba.

My last visit to Baba was in May, 1918. I had taken with me Rs.3,800 and overstayed my intended period, on account of Baba's insistence. Baba's unuttered but evident practice with those whom he loved was to deplete their resources. "Ysyangurahamicchmi tasyavith Haraham" **"I take away the wealth of those I love"**. So when I returned from Shirdi after the month's stay, my money was reduced to minus Rs.1200. Infact I had borrowed that sum from an acquaintance, a veterinary Doctor of Poona and returned it to him after coming home.

An incident relating to Babu's illness as an infant ought chronologically to be placed before this. When Babu was 3 or 4 years old, he had serious illness. We had Madhava Bhat, a learned and pious (and on the whole well-to-do) Telugu priest at home who was greatly attached to the family and carried on Mantra Japa and Pooja in our house for our benefit. He noticed Babu's serious illness with concern. He had first no sympathy with our worship of Baba. He fancied that Babu's illness was due to our worshipping a Moslem Saint viz SaiBaba but he dared not give utterance to his thought. One night he had a dream. He saw a figure (which from the photo we had, he recognised to be Sai Baba) sitting on the top of the staircase, holding a baton (sota) in one hand. That figure (Baba) told him "What do you mean? I am the Lord of this house". The priest kept this dream to himself for a time (He had asked us to go and make a vow to Datta for the child's cure but he had been told that Baba was Datta himself).

Later Babu's condition was much worse than before. The priest noted with concern. He ran up at once to Baba's photo and loudly prayed thus "if the child should improve sufficiently by 4 p.m. so as to be brought downstairs, then I will agree that you are Datta". Within a short time of this prayer, the child's temperature was getting lower and by 4

p.m. he wanted to be carried down for amusement and his mother took him downstairs. Madhav Bhat was converted and felt that Sai Baba was really Datta. And he vowed he would pay him a dakshina of Rs.120 and paid it. The Pandit wanted to get a son and vowed he would pay Rs.108 if he got one. He got one and then paid Rs.108 to Baba. But at that very time, the Pandit vowed he would pay Rs.1,008 if my (i.e., Pradhan's) ambition should be achieved. When Mr. Deshpande referred to the gift of Rs.108 as large, Baba belittled it and said, "He is giving me much more" evidently referring to the vow of Rs.1,008.

Baba gave some words of advice to my wife (1) e.g., "If anyone talks ten words at us, let us reply with one word if we reply at all. (2) i.e., Do not quarrel or vie with any one not to be outdone. Early during the 32 days of my last stay with Baba, 1918, all of us escorted him with umbrella and all paraphernalia to the Lendi, we all left him there and retreated. But me alone he recalled to himself and put his palm over my head and said "**Bhav, will you do what I ask you to do?**" I said 'yes'. Then he said "**Pay me Rs.100. Bring it in a bag and deliver it to me at the Masjid quietly**". In this way he made me give him all the sums I brought and the extra sums I borrowed. Then he made some signs which were not clear. They seemed to mean "Even if the heavens tumbledown on you, do not fear. I am with you". Baba at my first visit said that for the previous six years, he had been smoking the *chilm* that I had given him. I could not make out his meaning.

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

When we left Shirdi Baba said, tuyiyakar, vamoyeyin i.e., that he would accompany us. Physically and with a visible body he did not accompany us. But our journey was pleasant and free from danger. That indicated that he accompanied us with his invisible body and warded off all danger and trouble. After Baba blessed me and passed away, I had the following benefits. I was appointed 2nd class magistrate of South Salesette from 1920-26 and as a J.P. since 1926. I was elected fro Thana as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council and sat during 1921-23. I was made a Rao Bahadur in 1927.

III

Mrs. M.W.Pradhan's account of experience is found in 321. (1) all my children took ill of measles. The doctor despaired of young Babu. All were hopeless. I prayed to Sri Sai Baba. He appeared and said "Why weep? The child is alright. Give him at 6 or 6.30 a.m. a good feed." The child began to play in the morning. The doctor came and saw it with surprise and said "Give him no food" But the child ate everything and digested it.

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

324 (3) Baba appeared in my dream and told me to place turmeric and saffron on his foot. I worshipped them in the dream. I told N.G.C. of the dream and he said, take silver *padukas* to Shirdi, place them before Baba and get them for worship. So I did, Baba himself stretched out both legs and asked me to place each paduka on each foot and worship. I did so. He handed them over to me, telling N.G.C.: "Nanahine maje pay paha kapun nele"

325. I feared once Baba would shout and get angry at the Masjid. That day Baba did no such thing and said "See, I did not shout against anyone, is it not so?" Once, at pooja at the mosque, Baba knew of my baby crying in our *wada*, and in the middle of the pooja sent me away saying "Go home", I went and pacified the child and returned. "Now", said Baba "do your pooja".

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

328. On 16-10-98, i.e. the night after Baba's departure, I saw his body in a dying condition in my dream and said 'Baba is dying'. Baba replied 'People do not talk of saints as dying, but as taking Samadhi'. His body was still. People were mourning. Such was the dream I felt sad. I woke at 12.30 midnight. In the morning we got from Anna Chinchinikar, a card that Baba passed away at 3 p.m. on *Dusserah* 15-10-1918,

329. On the 19th night I dreamed that Baba came and gave me 3 rupees, and that I felt distressed, as dream receipts of rupees are not auspicious. Baba said 'Receive, Receive it and give me all the money you have stored up in your box'. I woke up and sent up all that money for the ceremonies. The same night, Baba appeared in my sister-in-law's dream and asked her to send up a yellow '*pitambar*' to be placed on the samadhi. That also was done.

S.L.M.III (4) 353: I was in an advanced stage of pregnancy at Santacruz. A midwife and nurse attended on me. Four days of difficult labour made the nurse despair of my case and she went and told my sister that Mr. Pradhan must send for a doctor at once. But my sister began at once to pray before Baba portrait with the nurse by her side. As she prayed, the child was delivered at once without anyone's help. I wondered and the nurse wondered how great were Baba's power and mercy.

III (5) 381-384 Pradhan's account of experiences about the change in *TelungiSastri*.'

We had a *Telungi Sastri*, Madhav Bhatji of advanced age, a Karmata, worshipping Sankara night and day with '*Rudrabisheka*' etc., In 1912 or so, our child Babu was one year old and go ill. Bhatji thought it might be due to worshipping a Mussalman at home and thus rousing the ire of Shiva. One night Baba was very ill and we wanted to rouse

up the Bhatji. But just then he himself came up and sat before Babas' picture and he prayed "If the dream or vision I got be true, let the child's temperature go down in 5 minutes and let him play from tomorrow and let the doctor declare that he is alright; then I will agree that you are a siddha, I will bow down and in 15 days go to Shirdi and pay Rs.108 Dakshina." His dream, he said was this "A Moslem clad as in Baba's picture, with *sota* (i.e., a small club) in hand, came near my cot and roused me and then went up the steps of the storey saying 'What do you know? This house is mine. This child I have given. You think you make the child improve. The boy mine and so at once, i will show it to you.' He went up, I woke up, and so at once came up and prayed. If he cures Babu at once, I will take Baba for a *Shiddha* Purusha and worship him" In one hour Babus' fever stopped and he became active. His coughing etc. also ceased. So the Brahmin fell prostrated before Baba and later went to Shirdi. Then Baba looking at him said, "This man calls me dog, cat and Moslem. At once Bhatji recognised his *Antarsakshitwa* and bowed at his feet. Baba said to Shama, 'How often does this Bhat worship me every day! Then Bhat prayed (1) that he should be blessed with a son and that he would pay Rs.108 (2) that if his master should attain his ambition he would pay ten times more. When he went in the afternoon Baba asked him dakshina. Shama said he had paid it in the morning. Baba said "He gave me very little in the morning. Hi is to give ample dakshina." Bhatji said that Baba knew his inmost thoughts. In one year Bhat got a son and he paid Rs.108 to Baba. Then he put up Baba's picture for worship in Datta temple, which his brother constructed in his own village.

IV

Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe, Retired Deputy Collector, Deccani, Brahmin, Aged 81 (born 1855), Residing at 108, Shukrawar Peth, Poona says:

I had a daughter by my first wife. I then became a widower before my forty fourth year. Many friends and acquaintances were pressing me to get married, e.g. Mr.Brave, Mamlatdar of Kopargaon. I was declining to take the extraordi-

nary step of marrying at about fifty, though I was no doubt anxious to have son to continue my line. But what guarantee or probability was there of one getting a son so late in life? So I told my importunate friends that I would wed if and only if a great Saint should so advise me.

On or about April 1904 I went with Mr.Brave to see Sai Baba at the Mosque. Then after a short time, I took leave of Baba and had got down the steps of the Mosque. The Mr.Brave told Baba "Saheb (that is how Baba called me or referred to me always) has no son". Then Baba replied: "Shadi karega to Alla bachha denga" If he marries then God will give him a son". I heard thee words myself and Brave and other began to press me again to marry. But the question of the choice of a bride would take time. I went back to Ahmednagar which was then my headquarters. About the end of that year, I learnt that an able astrologer had arrived at Poona. I consulted that man and found that his reading of the facts about my past and my daughter's past were really correct. He said that my horoscope showed that I was to have male progeny after my fiftieth year. That further strengthened my idea of marrying.

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

daughter and it would have to be dropped. But I insisted that he should go and find if Baba approved. So, after all D.K had to go to Shirdi with his girl and await with Madhav Rao's aid, Baba's orders. When D.K. went to Baba, Baba at once told him "send the girl to Ahmedabad" i.e., to me. Baba's approval was communicated to me and then I married D.K's daughter in 1905 i.e. in my fiftieth year. I have a son and some daughters by that marriage.

Sathe Wada

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

I went and resided at Shirdi for sometime. Baba's Arati and Pooja on ordinary days were started but for some time there was no celebration of Guru Purnima by special worship of Baba on that day. Baba himself sent for my father-in-law and said "Do you not know that this is Guru Poornima? Bring your worship material and do your Guru Puja. Then we had Guru Puja on that day and this practice of celebrating Guru Poornima by all the devotees worshipping Baba then begun, has continued upto-date.

Baba never called me "Hariba" etc. He always called me and referred to me as "Saheb". The account in the Santkathamrit that in the presence of myself and some others Baba went into a long disquisition on the nature of God and Sadhana Chatushtaya, defining Viveka Vairagya. Samadishatka and mumukshtwa, Brahma Satchidanand etc.,

is not correct. Baba never talked of such subjects in my presence. I do not know if he addressed others on those matters.

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

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

About 1909 or 1910 I was on a committee along with the Revenue Commissioner Mr. Curtis and the Collector; and we were to meet at Manmad on a particular date and move from there to other camps. On the previous day I was at Shirdi and I wanted to take formal permission of Sai Baba to leave Shirdi, expecting that it would be granted as a matter of course. My father-in-law went and asked Baba to leave. Baba refused leave and my father-in-law came and told me of the refusal; but I told him that I could not trifle with such important official engagements except at the risk of being turned out of Government Service. He again went to Baba to make further representations and intercede on my behalf. But Baba did not grant leave. He on the other hand told my father-in-law to prevent my starting by actually confining me in my room.

Even on the days following the particular date, I was not allowed to go. After three days, I was made to start for Manmad. When I reached that station, I found the other members of the Committee had not gone to Manmad on the appointed date that the original programme had been altered

and that the committee's meeting had been postponed. I had ordered, on the faith of the old programme, my tent and articles to be sent from Manmad to the other fixed camps. By a strange inadvertence on the part of the Railway authorities my articles had not been sent away from manmad. If they had been sent, great inconvenience would have been caused to me to hunt them up and re transport them. So by detention at Shirdi I lost absolutely nothing except my peace of mind, and I was saved a lot of unnecessary trouble and enabled to spend more time with my family and with Sai Baba. Of course Sai Baba knew all things and arranged all things. But in my ignorance, I felt my position at Shirdi to be very delicate and risk. Such instances strengthen one's faith in and reliance on Baba.

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

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

RE.MEGHA

Megha was a very simple yet very devout brahmin whom I found living at Viramgaon, when I was deputy Collector there. He would simply repeat "Namah Siva" always. But he did not know Gayatri much less the whole sandhya mantra. I

got interested in his welfare, and got him taught Sandhya and Gayatri. I sent him to Broach to worship Siva there, and paid him Rs.8 for his fare and expenses. He would worship Siva standing on one leg only all the time. Then I told him that Shirdi Sai Baba was really the embodied form of God Siva and made him start for Shirdi. At the Broach Railway Station he learnt that Sai Baba was a modern and his extremely orthodox and simple mind was highly perturbed at the prospect of bowing to a Moslem and he prayed to me at the station not to send him to Shirdi, I however insisted and gave him a letter to my father-in-law at Shirdi to introduce him to Baba. When he went to Shirdi mosque Baba was indignant and would not allow him to go into the mosque. Kick out that rascal, he cried at the very sight of him and he was also angry that I should have sent him a man with such hopelessly crude ideas. Megha then went to Trimbak and worshipped at Gangadhwar' for a year or a year and a half. Then again he came to Shirdi. This time at the intercession of my father-in-law he was allowed to go the mosque and stay at Shirdi.

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

Leaving Shirdi

In the durbar of Sri Sai Baba and when he issued out in solemn pomp, I carried the mace before him. Many were jealous of me on account of the distinction I enjoyed. These and the villagers leagued together and used Nana Wali to molest me and drive me away from Shirdi. Once as I was carrying the mace before Baba, Nana Wali came up and scratched the back of my head with the sharp point of broken glass. In self defence, I had to seize him and press him down on a pile of logs lying on the roadside. Sai Baba cried out "Saheb, do not do so". I notice how the wind was blowing

at Shirdi and kept careful watch. One day, as I intended to go to the Mosque to offer Naivedya to Baba very early (as I had to proceed on a particular trip) my Father-in-law rushed in and adjured me to desist from going to the Mosque, as NanaWali was standing at the entrance, hatched in hand, with deadly intention, and as he would make short work of me. So without taking any leave, I went away and left Shirdi for good. Evidently Sai Baba did not want me to reside there at Shirdi any longer. As Sai Baba did not protect me from the attack of Nana Wali, some people called upon me to give up my faith in Baba. But I pointed out that the same argument could be used against Vittal of Pandharpur Gangadhar Shastri, the lawyer of Gaekwad, was a Vittal Bhakta and sought help and refuge in the Temple of Vithal. But there right in the Temple itself, before the face of Vittal he was murdered by his enemy, I find that leaving Shirdi and settling here at Poona ultimately have been for my good. Sai Baba is protecting me here as he did at Shirdi.

Once about 1916 or so, in pitching a tent for me, at Kothrud (a suburb of Poona) certain Mangs (untouchables) went and put it up under a sacred Audambar tree, touching it and trying ropes to it. I did not know it then. Finding that I was having mishaps thereafter I enquired into the cause and learnt of that regrettable incident I prayed to Sai Baba to help me and he advised me in a dream to get a Brahmin first to perform the purification ceremony of that tree and next to instal Datta Paduka there. I have done both and I am maintaining a *Pujari* and conducting *Pooja* through him of he *Paduka* (at Kothrud) twice every day.

Rao Bahadur H.V.Sathe (continued on 6-8-1936 and 28-8-1936)

Baba expressed my nature aptly by saying i.e. Saheb is quite simple and unsophisticated. And as that was his view, he never beat or abuse me, though he beat and abused others. Only once he threatened to beat me, and I knew that I was then at fault. It was a Dhanur Masa celebration at my Shirdi lodgings and living away from my father-in-law as we were not on the best terms I then invited others for the ceremony but not my father-in-law. I went however to invite Baba. Then he cried

“Fetch that stick.” I stood quiet. His mood changed at once and he said **“Never mind. I will come.”** There was another fault committed by me that day which also would account for Baba’s displeasure. That day I had gone to a Marwadi to intercede in one of his affairs or disputes. Baba did not like that.

When I had boasted that I was the only devotee of Baba who had not got a beating at his hands, Madhav Rao Deshphande communicated this to Baba in my presence and asked him the reason. Baba said **“Why should I beat him? There is his father-in-law to eat him”** Baba evidently conveyed thereby the idea that I was being constantly “Fined” by my father-in-law’s excessive demands and collections of money from me. Baba’s help to me on the spiritual side was often to keep me off from vanity, pomp or sin in thought or action. Here are some instances.

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

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

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

Another instance of his watchfulness over my conscience and morals was this. I was once proposing to visit for the first time the residence of a female devotee of Baba out of mere curiosity. Just before the visit, Baba asked me if I had gone to such and such a place. I did not understand the names of places and missed the point of his question. Baba then dropped the subject. I then went to her lodgings and was engaged in some conversation. Very soon evil thoughts began to invade my brain. Suddenly Baba appeared in front of that house and pushed open the door which had been closed. But not bolted. He made some ironical signs to me to convey

the idea, “What an excellent thing you are now launching into!” and disappeared. His timely interference before any evil was definitely lodged in my mind or could take shape in action saved the situation. Consciences asserted itself; tendencies to evil were definitely checked and I retreated from the place at once and never visited it again. Some time thereafter I learnt that the place I visited was locally known by the very name mentioned by Baba in his question that day.

Baba’s help to me came in family affairs, official matters, dealings with Saints, other spiritual matters etc.

Family Affairs:

Baba said in 1904 just before my second marriage that God would bless me with a son if I married and he approved of the match in 1905. Then my father-in-law Dada Kelkar (or Damodar Kelkar) became deeply devoted to him and made Shirdi his permanent residence. I built the wada here at Baba’s bidding in gaav kus Bandha 1908 or so; and my father-in-law with my wife and family (and I also sometimes) lived there though its chief use was for the visitors that came to Baba. There was no other lodging (except the village Châvadi) available for respectable visitors. The foundation stone laying has already been mentioned. When the construction was to go on, the walls had to be raised and some of the branches of the Neem tree (under which Baba had practised his early Sadhana or penance) had to be loped off. As the tree was held sacred by all, none dared to cut the branches and Baba was approached. He then said **“cut off so much as interferes with the construction. Even if our own foetus lies athwart the womb, we must cut it.”** But even with his permission, the work men feared to cut it as it seemed so sacrilegious. Then Baba himself came and cut off the obstruction. Later the steps for going upstairs and a niche over Baba’s Guru’s Tomb were put up. Baba made me spend monies in this and in other matters also so as to help on religion and charity e.g. when DasGanu had his “Lives of the Saints” ready for printing Baba made me pay Rs.75 towards the expenses.

The first two children born of this second marriage were girls. My father-in-law and mother-in-law then ap-

proached Baba with the prayer that the promised son should be born and asked him "When are we to have a grandson". Baba then answered "**I am requesting Allah. He will comply with my request**" A year or two later (i.e. in 1913) my son was born. That boy is with me here (by Baba's grace) hale and hearty and the prop of my age.

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

Baba was greatly attracted to Dada Kelkar's (i.e. my father-in-law's) nephew - Babu. He was measurer under my assistant, Limaye (I was then Assistant Superintendent of Revenue Survey of Kopergaon and Yeola). But instead of paying due attention to his official work, he would go and stay at Shirdi, doing service to Baba. My assistant complained to me that my brother-in-law (Babu) was always going away to Shirdi and neglecting his work. I communicated this to Kelkar and he said "What is to be done? He is guided and ordered by Baba." In fact, Baba knowing evidently what was happening to babu very shortly, made light of his service and said "**Blast the service. Let him serve me.**" Babu was always attending on Baba and rendering as much service as he could; and Baba would always see that Babu got the choicest delicacies whenever they were available. So Limaye let him do as he liked. Babu's end was drawing near in 1910. He ate mangoes (which were always pouring in upon Baba since 1910) rather too freely. Baba warned Kelkar and told him to have some care of his nephew's health. "Babu kade laksh tteva-" He said, Babu contracted fever and as he was nearing death, Baba asked Kelkar "Are to aahe kay?" "**Is he alive?**" In a few days Babu passed away (1910) aged only 22 leaving an issueless widow.

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

Religious matters

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

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

Baba in the early days of my moving with him at times favoured the extension of his worship and at times did not. He made me and my father-in-law start the group congregational worship of Baba as Guru by all the devotees on Guru Poonnima day as I have stated already. But when I tried to do Pooja to him as Mahadeva or Siva on "Shivaratri" midnight he did not favour the proposal. When he was first asked for permission that day he said, "No" Then we (i.e. my self and Megha) thought over it, took some Bilwa leaves and wished to do silent pooja at the steps of the Mosque at midnight (which is the time observed in all Siva Temples). When we went there, Tatyta from inside the Mosque waved his hand warning us off. But as Baba seemed to be asleep we dared to put some sandal and Bel on the steps in silence. Baba at once got up and hurled wild abuse without naming any one as the object of his abuse. The whole village was roused and they flocked to the Mosque and blamed us for trying to steal a march over the rest of the devotees and in defiance of Baba's wishes to obtain clandestine punya by midnight worship at he steps of the mosque. Though Baba did not want me to take upadesha from others he yet desired that I should show

due respect and hospitality to Sants (saints). In fact, he made one Sant go to me.

Kaka Maharaj of Dhopeswar (near Rajapur) was a well known Sant. Some 25 years ago, he visited Poona and lodged with one Devle. He was besieged by a crowd of devotees inviting him to their place for meal and c; and I also made the same request. He regretted his inability to comply with my request. This was in the morning. Later at about noon of the same day, when I was at my office, I was surprised to learn that the maharaj had sent word to say that he would visit my house and so I sent him my tonga and went home to receive him. When I met him, I asked him how he happened to change his mind so suddenly since morning. Pointing to Sai Baba's portrait on my wall the maharaja replied "He would not allow me to rest till I came and saw you."

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

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

Dakshina Bhiksha Samstha

In December 1915, I got a call from Baba, when I was at Poona and at his bidding I helped in forming the above

Society. I was made the president of it. We ran the Journal "Sainath Prabha" as its organ. This was not read to Baba previously or submitted for his approval.

It had a short career and was a failure. Hardly any copies are traceable. Parts 1 and 2 which alone are now available give some account of the state of affairs that prevailed at Shirdi Samsthan in 1915 to 1917 or 1918. The attempt to control monetary matters led to increase bitterness against me, resulting in Nanawali's action that drove me away from Shirdi and even led to issue of legal notices. Sometime after the formation of the Sabha (say some 11 months) Radhakrishna Ayi died. She had been in charge of all stores used for purpose of Sai Samsthan. When she died as she was an intestate Brahmin widow without heirs the Police came and took possession of all the properties in her custody. Then we had on behalf of the Sabha to apply for the return of all the articles for the Samsthan from the Kopergaon 1st class Magistrate. On the strength of local Mahajars also he passed order (M.E.R23 N2 1916) handing over Samsthan properties to the Samsthan i.e. Sabha on behalf of the Samsthan; yet internecine bickering continued. Some misguided devotees made use of the loss of a few silver appendages to the Samsthan horse trappings (worth very little after all) to issue a lawyer's notice to me in January 1918. I consulted Baba and he told me to give a reply and I gave it in the terms mentioned by Baba himself. Baba told me that he would protect me and that no proceedings would be taken. That proved to be true and no proceedings were taken against me or the Sabha. I do not know what has become of Mr. Sunder Rao Narayan who was the editor and soul of "Sai Nath Prabha". It is he who signs his "apothegms" and his "vision" in part I under the Nom de plume "Ramagir"

Baba and other Sants: his Antarjnana.

When I was at Shirdi one day Baba was at the Mosque. The time for his moving on to Lendi had arrived and yet he was not inclined to move out. He lay stretched beside the Mosque wall. When he had thus delayed his visit to Lendi by one hour, we asked him "It is high time for you to go the Lendi, Why do you not go?" Then Baba answered "Are maja Gajanan gela" i.e. '**Hallo! My Gajanan is**

gone'. Someone wrote that day from Shirdi to Shegaon to ascertain how Gajanan Maharaj the famous Saint of that place was doing. The answer came that he expired on the very day when Baba apprised us of the sad event.

Baba's Prophecy.

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

Baba's activities

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

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

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

Baba's talks (Goshties):

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

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

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

(4) the brahmin of Paithan (evidently referring to Eknath) I

knew. Brahmins of such excellent sort are not now-a-days seen.

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

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

V

June 1936, Poona

Das Ganu Maharaj, i.e. Ganpatrao Dattatre Sahasrabuddhe, Brahmin, Kirtankar, aged about 78, residing generally at Nanded. (Nizam's State) says:

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

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

sion and pastime. He told Nana Saheb even in my presence. **“This man is fond of Tamashas, and of his service. Let him give it all up”**. He told me the same and NanaSaheb also. But I liked my pasttimes and service. Gradually I gave up taking part in Tamashas i.e. village plays. As for service, I could not think of giving it up. Each time I was advised to give up service, I said “I will see.” Baba then said that only by sheer compulsion i.e. by being impaled, I could be made to quit service. So for about 10 years. Baba went on dinning into me directly and indirectly, that I should give up service I shall mention later how in 1903 I was reduced to giving up service after several disasters in which Baba’s grace saved me from punishment, disgrace, trouble of various sorts, and even death.

First I shall narrate how some facts about Baba’s antecedents were revealed at an examination of Baba as a witness. There was a thief charged with theft etc., of jewels in the Dhulia Tahsildar Magistrate’s Court. The accused pleaded that Sai Baba of Shirdi had given him the jewels and cited Baba as a witness. Summons came. Baba refused to receive it and had it thrown into his dhuni (fire). Anyhow the report was sent the summons had been served on Baba. But Baba did not go to Dhulia for the trial. So a warrant was issued by the Dhulia court for producing Sai Baba to give evidence at Dhulia. The warrant came to Ganapatramji, the Chief Constable of Kopergaon. He brought the warrant to Baba and informed him of its contents and requested Baba to go with him to Dhulia. Of course he had not the courage to arrest Baba. Baba was defiant. He cursed and swore and asked the constable to throw the warrant into some foul place. The constable was perplexed. I was there and told him to consult Baba’s devotee Nana Saheb Chandorkar then Dep. Collector at Ahmednagar. N.S.C was consulted and he said that if Sai Baba and the devotees disliked his going to Dhulia, the people should get a Mahazar prepared and get numerous signatures to it and send it up to Dhulia. This was done. The mahazar stated that Sai Baba of Shirdi was an extraordinary person, worshipped as God by vast numbers of devotees, that the enforcement of ordinary court’s process against him was neither proper nor desirable in view of the consequences that might follow etc., and that if his evidence

was necessary, a Commissioner might be sent to Shirdi to take his evidence. The Dhulia Court then sent a Commission. One Nana Joshi, Ist Class Magistrate, Assistant Collector came down to Shirdi to take the evidence of Baba. Three hours before his arrival Baba had sent for chairs and a table and improvised a Court at the Mosque. The Commissioner came and began Sai Baba's examination: and an extraordinary examination it was.

Commr: What is your name?

Baba : They Call me Sai Baba

C: Your father's name?

B: Also Sai Baba.

C: Your Guru's name?

B: Venkusa.

C: Creed or Religion?

B: Kabir.

C: Caste or race?

B: Parvardigar (i.e. God)

C: Age, please?

B: Lakhs of years.

C: Will you solemnly affirm that what you are going to say is the truth.

B: Truth.

C: Do you know the accused so and so?

B: Yes, I know him and I know every one.

C: The man says he is your devotee and that he lived with you. Is that so?

B: Yes, I live with every one. All are mine.

C: Did you give him Jewels as alleged ?

B: Yes I gave him. Who gives what to whom?

C: If you gave him the jewels how did you get them and become possessed of them?

B: Everything is mine.

C: Baba, here is a serious charge of theft. That man says that you delivered the jewels to him.

B: What is all this? What the devil I have to do with all that?

The Commissioner was floored by such answers. He did not know what to take down. Baba was mostly in a mood to say yes to every question. Then it was suggested that the

best course would be to sent for the village diary. The arrival of every stranger and the dates of his stay in the village are duly noted in it. If the accused who was of course a stranger to the village was not there at or about the time of his alleged receipt from Baba, that might be taken down. The diaries were sent for and they showed that no such person like the accused was at Shirdi at the time in question. Of course, it was well known that Baba never left Shirdi or its neighbourhood. Then the commissioner put it to Baba, that no such person was in the village of Shirdi and with Baba at Shirdi at the time in question and that Baba gave him no jewels and Baba said that was so and this was Baba's final statement. The examination was then over. Baba was not asked to sign or put his mark. The commission's evidence was sent to Dhulia. The accused was convicted and sentence to imprisonment.

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

Baba however himself spoke about his earlier years occasionally. About his guru, Baba has several times said that 'Venkusa' This is found in Bhaktalilamrita (ch.31) was his guru and that by the grace of 'Venkusa' Baba had attained to his position. Most things about him were mysterious. Some of his miracles etc. were witnessed by me and some mentioned to me by others. Baba's converting water into oil and burning his lamps for a whole night with water alone was reported to me by numerous villagers who had seen it. Premchand Marwadi was one of those who refused to supply him that day with oil. I myself saw Baba sleeping on a plank suspended from the ceiling by a few slender shreds of torn cloth. The wonder was how he got up that plank suspended so high i.e. 7 or 8 feet above of the floor and 1 or 1 1/2 cubits below the roof. Four lamps were on it. People

watched to see how he got up or climbed down but could never discover either or how it supported him.

The passages 121 to 141 in Bhakta Lilamrit about Mr. Pense were mentioned to me by him. These three chapters 31,32 and 33 of the book were read as *Poti* (i.e. holy scripture) at the mosque before Baba: and he said **“It is Alright”** when Nana Saheb Chandorkar gave him the book. Baba did not say his five Namaz or even one Namaz, as Moslems do. When Fatia had to be done he generally ordered it to be pronounced by some one present. Sometimes he uttered the Fatia. He occasionally repeated parts of Quoran.

The instruction given to N.G.Chandorkar by Baba was mentioned to me by N.G.C. I expanded it with my own learning and gave it its present shape. But the kernel of it was given by N.G.C. Baba has several times talked Advaitic philosophy in presence. “I am God”. “You are God” “All are God”. He has said this many times. There is nothing Baba did not know. Baba was not explicit about what he did mostly. Here is an instance.

Once Valambi Master was Ry.Station Master at Kopergoan. He has no faith in Baba. He told me and other devotees “Baba is a mad man. Why do you all lionise him?” I, however, persuaded V.M. to go with me to see Baba at Shirdi. When we saw Baba, he was washing pots and placing them on the floor, mouth down and bottom upside. V.M. asked Baba, “What is all this?” Baba said “Every pot coming to me comes with mouth downwards” i.e., not to receive what could be put into them but in an unreceptive fashion like pots with their mouths downwards. There was at about 1898 or 1899 a notorious decoit named Kana Bhil who was robbing British and Native States, in parts of Ahmednagar and Bid districts. For three years the police were on his track, but could not catch him. I was only a havildar (co) at the time. But I and three others were put on special detective duty and directed to watch and report his movements. K.Bhil was so cunning and desperate and his C.I.D was so perfect that he spotted the three men and killed them one after another. I had done little work and my Inspector reported that I was useless and I had to put forward strenuous efforts. All that time I was passing for a Ramadasi and doing kirtans in the

Ram Temple at Loni Varni, the headman (Patil) of, which was a friend and receiving visits from K.Bhil. K.Bhil found out all about me, my name, number (727) station, etc., and came one day to shoot me. I went and bowed to Sri Ram and prayed for life. The dacoit left the place with a warning to me that I was watched. I was really watched by his men and I could not leave the place. Again I got information from the village boys as to the programme and movements of K.Bhil and communicated it to the Police. The police came and put a cordon round the hill in which K.Bhil was hiding but he escaped further detective duty. Then Rale, Mamlatdar, tried the villages of Loni Varni for harbouring a dacoit. I gave evidence in favour of the Patil that he helped me with information and he was acquitted.

Absent from my jurisdiction without leave, I visited a holy place and returned up to Godavari and there I prayed and vowed to Baba holding Godavari water in my hands that if he would save me I would give up service. Then I discovered a gang in H.S. there with some booty and I got an excuse for my visit. The situation was saved miraculously. Still the ambition to become a Fouzdar was dominating me. I appeared for an examination and passed it to qualify myself. Baba told me that I was not going to get the Fouzdari post. I was posted to some place and I had to cross Shirdi on my way-but I did not wish to call on Baba as he would not approve of my continuance in service. So I was simply marching straight (and without turning into the village in the interior of which was the Mosque) on the main road touching Shirdi. Then as fate or Sai Baba would have it he came to the main road near the Lendi just as I came there and so I got down from my horse and fell at his feet. He then asked me to go over to the masjid. At the Masjid, he asked me, "Ganu! who took the vow taking a palmful of Godavari water in hand?" I answered "What harm is there? I am really going to resign". Baba said, "Wait. You will not listen to me while things are thus (i.e., smooth running)".

Then I got into another scrape without any fault of mine. A convict's fine Rs.32 was realised and sent up to my station to be credited to Govt. That was received by my

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

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

I: which Nanded?

Baba: Nanded in Nizam States.

I: How am I to get bread?

Baba: I will provide for you.

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

I went on a pilgrimage to Puri and on the way, one Tembe Swami (Vasudevanand Saraswathi) whom I had known already met me and asked me if I was going to Shirdi. I said "Yes, not immediately but a few months later". Then he gave me a coconut saying, "Present this as mine to Sai Baba". I took it and kept it in my bag. During my further travels, my companions, took it out and then ate it up. When I went to Shirdi, as soon as I approached Sai Baba he said "Here is the thief. Where is the coconut given by my brother?" A friend gave me plots of cultivable land for a very nominal price. They yield me enough to live upon. These are now maintaining me. Bere's tonga escaping highway robbery which is described in B.S. Is personally known to me. I went in that tonga with Bere.

I receive no money for my Kirtans. I never did. The hat was not and is not sent round either before or after my Kirtan for contributions. My bhaktas write and invite me to their abodes in various parts of the country. I go and stay with them and perform Kirtans and write books etc. I am a single individual without any family and my needs are few. I was not one of those who got moneys from Baba. Several of those that he was regularly paying everyday were subjected to Income-Tax. After Lokamanya Tilak visited Baba (1915-1917) the Income-Tax department directed its attention to the

Shirdi Samsthan. Some officer came to Shirdi and watched the income. They wanted first to tax Sai Baba, but (perhaps seeing that he had little left with him to proceed upon) they taxed his regular donees; viz. Tatyapa Patel, Bade Baba, Bagia and Bayyaji Patel. For me as also for Mahalsapathy, Baba took care to see that we were not pestered with money and its cares. He has given me spiritual benefit far superior to monetary gifts. He has created and confirmed my faith in various ways. He has taught me valuable lessons and given me precious experience.

Once for Mahashivaratri, I was at Shirdi and I wanted to have "Gangasnan" (i.e. a dip in the river Godavari) at Singaba (three miles off Shirdi) that day. Megha daily brought that water for sprinkling or pouring (Abhisheka) over Baba as Ganga must naturally fall on Mahadeva's head. But Baba did not allow me to go. He said "Ganga is here at my feet. Do not go" I felt depressed. Theoretically, I knew that he was God Narayana and that Ganga flowed from Narayana's feet. But that was a poor weak faith insufficient to give my heart the pleasure which a tangible Ganges bath would give me. Baba knew my mentality and asked me to approach his feet and hold my palm near the feet. The water began to flow from both his feet. It was not a few drops like perspiration. It was rather a slow and thin current. In a short time, say a few minutes, I had collected a palmful of that water. Here was Ganga and I was delighted. I bathed i.e. sprinkled the water over my head. I did not drink this water. Usually I do not drink the Tirtha offered at Baba's Arati. On one occasion Jog complained to Baba about it. Baba then said that I should abide by my own convictions and sampradaya and that Jog should not trouble me.

But Baba did not always respect orthodoxy at least in some matters. My orthodoxy keeps me off from eating onions in any form. Baba on the other hand, liked onions and would seldom have a meal without onions. He told me to prepare Pitla i.e. sauce of onions, give to him and eat part of it. I prepared it and brought it to him. He asked me if I ate it at my lodgings. I said yes. But really what I did there was to touch the onion dish with a finger tip and touch my chin with it and draw a line from my chin to the nether lip as a token of my tasting it and I would wash my hand and face thereafter.

Baba knew (what is it he did not know?) how I practised this trick and he showed others how I did the trick. **“He pretends he eats but only touches it with his fingers and applies the finger over the chin”** was what he said and showed. Then he told me that I should really eat onion. He had a high opinion of onion as an item of the daily fare-though orthodoxy rejects it, chiefly on the grounds of its immediate and ultimate odour and its aphrodisiac properties, “But if one digests it i.e. overcomes it injurious i.e. lust producing tendencies it does no harm but good” was what Baba said. So at Shirdi, as long as Baba was alive I would take onion except on Ekadashi days.

Q: Did Baba rub coins smooth with mantra?

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

Baba did not grant me some of my spiritual prayers. I wanted to get Sakshatkar (i.e. vision) of the God that I worship-just as Namdev and others got. So I went to Baba several times with the request that he should give me Sakshatkar. He was saying each time “wait, wait”. Finally

(probably in 1916 the above period) I asked him “Baba you have been long putting off my request. When will you give me Sakshatkar?” Then he said **“You see me. That is Sakshatkar. I am God”** I replied that I expected that he would say so; but that I was not satisfied with that. I consoled myself with the explanation that my destiny did not provide for my getting Sakshatkar and that Saints could not overcome destiny. After Baba passed away, I have been seeing several Saints. But hardly any of them satisfied me. There was one that specially impressed me. Near my place- Nanded in 1919 there was a *Virakta Brahmachari* staying on a rock having no possessions and caring for nothing. I saw him first, when I was performing my wife’s ceremony and was powerfully attracted. As I went there, to take his Darshan he turned away from me and prevented my taking Darshan. This happened thrice. I was deeply disappointed, nay mortified. Anyhow, let me have the merit of feeding him. I thought, and went home, I sent up a man to that Brahmachari with food. I was agreeably surprised to learn that he accepted it. Then I was emboldened to go to him once again and asked him why he would not permit me to bow to him and to take Darshan. He said no reply.

“You call yourself a Kirtankar. Have you left off Ahankar i.e. Egotism?”

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

He: Did you not feel ahankar, when sending me food, feeling that it was you taht were sending food etc.?

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

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

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

I: yes.

Then he quoted a few lines of verse taht I had just composed six days previously and not published in any way. I has taken aback by the *Antaryamitva* of his. Again he asked

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

I: Yes.

He: What did you do with it?

I: I sprinkled it over my head.

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

Seeing his nature and powers, I daily spent three or four hours alone with him at night. Some of those who were going to me and having a good opinion of me and a poor opinion of that Brahmachari wondered at my conduct and one of them (let us merely give him some random name) Beake began to heckle me about it. I told him that the Brahmachari had psychic power and could even know the contents of other minds. Beake doubted my veracity and I had to take him once to the Brahmachari and tell the latter of Beake’s unbelief. Then followed a very interesting conversation.

Br : (to me) what? You want to make an exhibition of me, as though I were a monkey!

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

Br: (to Beake) Shall I tell you some fact then about yourself.

Beake: Yes.

Br: Had you not immoral relations with Z?

Beake: No

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

Beake: No.

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

Br: Shall I tell you what is in your pocket?

Beake: Yes.

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

Then the Brahmachari gave full details of the contents of the letter. My friend was flabbergasted. He had placed the letter in my hand. Every word spoken of it by the Saint was

true, and it proved that consequently what was said about z also must be true. As my friend felt humiliated and would make some progress if I left him alone with the Saint, I felt him there and went away. My friend did improve in giving up his bad associations and his other bad habits. The Saint's name and fame spread so quickly that he Tahsildar insisted on my producing him one evening for delivering a Pravachan. The Tahsildar the Autocrat of Cham of the Taluk, of course, believed that the Saint could not decline to go the meeting nor decline to speak. But before the day fixed for the meeting, it was discovered that the Saint left that place. He left it for good and was never again seen or heard off.

The books I wrote about Sai Baba are:-

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

II. Next came Bhakti Lilamrita. This was published in Baba's life time- 1906.

III. Lastly came the Bhakti Saramrita. The two chapters viz; 52-53 therein relating to Baba were placed in his hands and he said "alright". But other chapters were composed later from time to time mostly after 1918; in 1925 this book was printed as a whole.

The account given in it (in chapter 28) about Baba's antecedents at Selu is based partly on Baba's statements and partly on what the villagers of Selu told me. The only thing Baba said of Selu and the Selu period was that he came from Selu. So I started while I was in service and went to Selu to make enquiries. I cannot specify any villager as having told me anything in particular. My inquiry was 35 years back. The villagers said that there was an old Saint that a young

Fakir boy was being trained by him, that some got vexed with the Saint and threw stones at him and killed him and that the boy escaped and that all this took place 100 years previously. Sai Baba told me, in the presence of Chandorkar, that the brick he used as a pillow at Shirdi and which is still retained as a relic of Baba at Shirdi was given by his Guru to him, that his Guru was "Venkusa". The version about Baba's telling Chandorkar is my own, as I wished to avoid dragging my own name into my own work and figuring in it too prominently. Chandorkar did not know if he maintained a diary or note of his experiences. As for Ratanji incident, it was a small affair. He invited me to tea and then the Nanded Moulvi came also. Nice dishes of almonds, pistachio etc. were supplied. The cost of all would not be very great, say anything more than 3 or 4 rupees. Then Ratanji went to Shirdi. Baba told him that Baba had already received this amount and asked him for the balance. When Ratanji came back to Nanded, he narrated these facts and wondered what Baba meant by saying that he had received the sum. I asked him to see the amount entered in his accounts on the evening of the tea given to the Moulvi. The exact amount entered in that account (viz 3-12-0) was what Baba said had been given. This is the truth. The rest is all elaborated out of this. The Tomb referred to is that of Sai Baba's guru and was not visible when we saw it first. It was merely land and underneath it was the tomb. Sath Saheb built a flight of steps over it leaving a niche for worshipping that guru.

When I first went with Nana G.Chandorkar to see Sai Baba, that was out of a desire to ingratiate myself with N.G.C, . and with no particular desire to see Sai Baba or esteem for him. I had no spiritual or other temporal desire or object in seeing Baba. One year later, I chanced to see Vaman Sashi Islampurkar, an old Brahmin of Islampur near Osmanabad (N.S) a graduate (of the Madras University) and a married man. I had to attend upon him at Saigonda in obedience of my superior's orders. Finding him to be highly devout and spiritually advanced and believing that a Guru was necessary to obtain Moksha, I asked him to give me Upadesh as and he agreed. He gave me Siva Mantra Upadesh as desired by me, for then I was an out and out Shivbhakta. He told me to go on with my Mantra. I then asked him as I was visiting Sai,

whether that was harmful. He said that no harm could arise if one was firm in his faith, whatever Saints he visited. I asked him what sort of person Sai Baba was and he replied that he had himself visited Shirdi and stayed with Baba for three days, that Baba was a great Saint and Ramabhaktas, whom none had yet properly understood and that people would get to know and appreciate him later on. With this estimation in my view I had more regard for Baba and I went to him with more faith.

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

Baba and Orthodox Moslems.

Baba some times came into some conflict with the local Mussulmans, as very often his acts and ideas did not agree with their Orthodoxy. Bade Baba and other once asked Sai Baba to go outside the town for saying the Kutba prayers. Baba said, "Yes, Let us go", at first; but when they finally came to take him, he declined to go. Another time they came up and offered prayers inside the Mosque. But Baba did not join them in that group prayer. At Moharram, some local Moslems came up to Baba and said they wanted to bring into the Mosque a Tajia. Then they constructed a Tajia and brought it and installed it on the fifth of Moharram at the Mosque. Baba allowed it to remain there for a couple of days and then dragged it out and placed it on his fire saying "I do not want a corpse in the Mosque". The Moslems who were working up their Tajia dared not do anything against this powerful Baba. An orthodox Moslem brought a 'Sera', i.e. an ornamental arrangement of flowers, to decorate the niche in

the Mosque and wanted Baba's permission. Baba said "Take it and put it on Hanuman". The Moslem replied that he was a Moham-medan and could not decorate a Hindu idol. Baba fulminated some foul abuse (in which Hanuman was depicted as superior Allah) and the Sera was taken away.

Baba's respect for Hanuman or Maruthi:- There was a small image of this God in a corner of the upper platform of the Chavadi. Baba was in the lower platform and when showers began to drive into it, some one told Baba that he should go up into the upper platform. Baba refused to do so saying "How can we be seated on the same level as God?" Fakir Baba alias Bade Baba brought up a recent convert from Hinduism to Islam to the Mosque. Baba slapped that convert and taunted him with the remark "**You have changed you father**". Even towards Hindu Gods as to Allah, he would use uncomplimentary expressions in some moods. People occasionally asked him for permission to go to Pandharpur and he would reply "Go" but would add some abuse. On the other hand, when Arati was sung of Jnanadev or Tukaram, he would sit up and fold his palms in reverence.

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

It is he who is qualified to know it that gets it. The lesson is “Deserve before you desire (Brahman)”.

As for miracles, I have hardly seen any of Baba. I saw him about 1898 sleeping on a plank suspended about 7 or 8 feet above the ground. The wonder was how he got into or out of it, without a ladder. How he could swing himself up or down, none saw.....They supporting threads were weak and lamps were loosely placed on it. They would fall down if one swings into it. When I went to see him as he lay in it. He got angry and drove me off. Baba was occasionally doing something strange between 1p.m and 2 p.m at the mosque with a cloth screen in front of him and when he was alone. He would take out of a pouch 10 or 15 old coins. They were of various values and descriptions i.e. 0-0-3, 0-0-6, 0-1-0, 1-2-0, 1-4-0, 0-8-0, 1-0-0. He would rub his finger tips constantly yet gently against their surface (whether with or without mantra, I cannot say). Their surfaces had all become worn out and smooth. He would say, as he rubbed his finger against the coins, “This is Nana’s, this is Bapu’s, this is Kaka’s, etc.” If any one approached, he would gather the coins, put them back in the pouch and hide them.

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

Baba once spoke thus: “My mother was greatly rejoicing that she had got a son (i.e., me). I was for my part wondering at her conduct. When did she beget me? Was I begotten at all? Have I not been already in existence? Why is she rejoicing over this?”

Once at Shirdi, somebody had prepared “Sira (i.e., sweetened semolina pudding). Baba asked me if I had been given ‘Sira’. I then said that I was not on good terms with B.....a and that I had not been given ‘Sira’. Baba then gave me

instructions. **“Who gives what to whom? What is this ‘Sira’? Who eats it? Do not say of anyone that he is inimical. Who is whose enemy? Do not entertain any ill feelings towards anyone. All are one and the same.”** That idea is brought out at the end of Ch.II of my commentary on Amritanubhava.

A religious person of Satara once offered to teach me Vedanta but I said that I could rely on Sai Baba’s help in taht mater. Then that person jeered at Baba and said taht as a Moslem he knew nothing and could teach nothing of Vedanta. I did not waver in my faith and so I went to Sai Baba and told him that I wished to write a commentary on well known Vedantic work. Amritanubhava. Baba placed his hand on my head, blessed me and gave a permission to write. I found that the numerous goshties I had heard from Baba furnished me with fresh analogies and similies to embellish my commentary with and avoid a repetition of the stock similies. I have composed numerous Kirtans and Stotras and written other works. A list of them is given in Ch.63 of Bhakti Saramrita P.333 including Manache Sloka-Jalada Dhus.

Baba occasionally sang Musalmani songs that I could not understand.

VII

May, 1936

Dattatreya Damodar Rasane, alias Nana Sahib Rasane (or Daulatshah), Son of Damodar (or Anna) Savalram Rasane, Kasar, aged 40, Ravivarpet, Poona says:

My father is an old devotee of Sai Baba. He went to Baba about the time Nana Saheb Chandorkar went to him. Then my father had no issue and wanted to go to Baba to get his blessings for obtaining issue. About 1900, a devotee had sent Baba a parcel of excellent Goa mangoes. Of these he kept apart six and distributed the rest as prasad to persons present. They wanted him to distribute the remaining six also. But Baba said he had reserved some for Damya (i.e., my father). But they said ‘Damya is not here’. **“He has arrived at Kopergaon and will be here soon”**, said Baba. Soon after that, my father went to Baba and presented him with flower gar-

lands, *chadar* etc. Then Baba said **“Damya! Take these fruits now. Eat and die.”** My father was frightened at these words. But Mhalsapati who was there told him that it was a blessing to die at Baba’s feet. Thus encouraged, my father thought he would eat the fruit. But Baba came to his relief with these words. **“Do not eat the fruits yourself. But give them to your junior wife. You will have two sons first. You should name the first Daulat Shah and the second Thana Shah”** etc. My father returned to his home at Ahmednagar and gave the fruits to his junior wife. He then noted the names to be given to the promised sons in a notebook. One year after that, I was born. When I was 15 months old my father took me to Sai Baba at Shirdi for *darsan* and he then asked Baba **“How shall I name this child?”** Baba replied **“have you forgotten what I told you? You have written it at page 3 of your notebook. Did I not say that he should be named Daulat Shah?”**

In my fifth year (i.e. in 1900) I was taken to Shirdi for my tuft ceremony and given my first initiation into the mysteries of the Alphabet. Sai Baba held my hand and wrote on the slate etc. Thereafter I was taken to the school at Shirdi. When I was to be married, four girls were offered to me. My father never acted in any serious matter without previously consulting and getting the sanction of Baba. He went to Sai Baba and placed before him all the four horoscopes (i.e. of the offered girls) one of which had 2,500 or 3,000 rupees dowry and asked him which was to be chosen. Baba selected a poor girl’s horoscope and gave it into the hands of my father. That was the girl I married. My father invited Baba to attend the marriage which was to take place at Pandharpur. But Baba replied, **“I am with you. Do not fear. Whenever you think of me, there I am with you.”** My father pressed him further to attend the marriage. Baba, however declined the invitation with these words: **“Without God’s permission nothing can be done by me. I will send Shama (i.e. Madhav Rao) to attend it as my deputy.”** And Shama attended it at Pandharpur.

I have a younger brother and he was named according to directions of Baba. As for the issue of my marriage, two girls and a boy were born but expired within a few months of their birth owing to fits. The male child died in 1926, my wife’s health was bad and I was in great depression of spirits;

and in that state I prayed to Him thus; instead of giving me many babies that die quickly give me at least one child that will live long". When I was sleeping there at Shirdi. Baba appeared in my dream and said that male child I was grieving over was born in Moola Nakshatra (i.e., under the constellation Moola) and that was harmful to the parents. I saw in that dream a bright circle like the sun on Baba's breast. Or rather inside the sun, Baba was sitting with my deceased child on his lap and he said "I took away this dangerous child from you. I will give you a good child. Do not fear." Before this time our family had migrated from Ahmednagar to Poona. When I went home I looked up the dead child's horoscope and noticed that Moola was really the constellation under which the child was born. In fifteen months of the visit I got a son who is still alive. This was in 1918.

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

In 1927 my stars were not auspicious and my health was bad. I went up to the temple of Sitaram Uttareswar (i.e Siva) 2 miles from Junner (about 40 miles from Poona) and worshipped the God every Sunday. One Sunday at 9 p.m when I placed flowers on the God with the words, 'Namaskar (i.e., Salutation) to Sai Baba", I saw a light at the image of the God and in that light the form of Sai Baba, whom I am always thinking of. Then my health improved and my drooping spirits revived. A saint, Janaki Das is living there. Every Sunday I went and bowed to him also with Sai Baba's name on my lips. He then told me "You have resorted to a great saint. Why do you come to a poor saint like me? People like myself seize the feet of Sai Baba. Then I went to my lodgings and slept. Sai Baba appeared in my dream as a fakir and said "You are full of anxiety. Give me *biksha*, your entire

body and mind as biksha.”

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

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

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

Then Sai Baba took my body up in his palm and put me into his breast pocket. I was filled with bliss at the thought that he was so kind to me as to put me near his heart. When I woke up I found myself happy and my mind at once attained indifference. *Udasinata* or *Vairagya*. Things did not attract me and hold my mind as they did formerly. Two or three months later i.e. in 1928 (phalugun vadya) a son was born to me at Pandharpur. Fifteen months later, when I and my father went to Shirdi, he prayed to Baba that I should have one more son. In 1931 I got another son and that child was named Saidas. On the second day of its birth, it had high fever. Baba's *udhi* and *tirtha* were given to it and cloth relics of Baba were enclosed in a *Tayath* and tied to it. It recovered and got alright. When it completed its first year, it was taken to Shirdi; abhishek was done, clothes presented to Samadhi and Brahmins were fed. In 1931 I was placed in charge of the bangle business. I insisted that it should be named after Baba. It is called (after getting Baba's permission by casting lots before his picture) Sri Samartha SaiNath & Co. It is conducted on lines of probity and God conscience. Any *udhi* and *Tirtha* that I give in Sai Baba's name cure and bless the person that receives these.

On 1-9-1932 I was on pilgrimage of Muttra and had an attack of cholera. Death appeared imminent. My father asked me what were my last wishes. I said I merely wanted to be taken to Shirdi, to be burnt there if I die as Sai Baba was my Krishna. But with Baba's photo placed over my head (*udbatti* being burnt before it) and with the frequent application of Baba's *udhi* and *Tirtha* at Muttra, I was somehow pulling on. At midnight, my sister-in-law Subadrabai who was there had an *avesam*, that is, the spirit of Miradatar a saint of Unava (in Gujarat near Sidpur) spoke through her mouth. Miradatar was a renowned Mohammedan Wali (i.e., Saint) and spoke thus (through her) "You are calling on Sai,

He is old and cannot easily move. He is my uncle (Kaka). On his behalf and as he sent me, I have come. Have no fears. You will have his blessing. You will see him in spirit tomorrow. Prepare a cup of coffee and give it to the patient.” Coffee was prepared and I took it with a little of Baba’s udhi in it. Thereafter fever ceased and I had no more motions. The cure was so sudden as to surprise the doctor whom I went to see the next day. “Yesterday, this man was at point of death and how does he get so quickly cured as to come here today?” Was his question. I replied that Sai is a doctor of doctors and that his sacred udhi saved me.

When I was young, say seven years old I went to Shirdi and was massaging Baba’s foot. At that time Baba began the distribution of sweets with his own hand to the children present. Naturally my attention turned to the sweets and I grew slack in massaging. My mother was at my side and she beat me saying “You are thinking of sweets and neglect the service of Baba”. “You, old woman” cried Baba, “Why do you beat the boy?” My mother requested him to give me a good desire to perform service to Baba. Baba answered “The boy will serve me well. God will endow him with pure desires. Do not fear. Do not beat him.” When I was twelve years, I went with an elder cousin to Shirdi. We had 100 rupees with us. Baba asked for dakshina, 10 rupees once, 15 rupees another time etc. Only 25 rupees were left with my cousin in his pocket and we at once wrote home to Ahmednagar for more money to give Baba and for our return journey. That evening Baba asked my cousin for 25 rupees and he replied that our money had been exhausted and that we required money for our return journey. Baba’s retort was quick. “Why talk all this humbug? You have got 25 rupees in a corner of your pocket. The M.O. you have written for will come here tomorrow. Do not fear.” My cousin paid up the 25 rupees at once.

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

VII

Damodar Savlram Rasane, Kasar, alias Anna Rasane S/o Savalram Rasane, formerly of Ahmednagar now at Poona says:

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

I always took Baba's advice and acted up to it and the results were always satisfactory. Once I had an appeal in the High Court, and the lawyer had written to me to go to Bombay. Then Baba detained me and prevented me from going. Yet the result of the appeal was in my favour.

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

I remembered always Baba's treatment to low creatures and men of low position as his equals or as himself. Once when I went to Baba and knowing that he would not care to go to my lodgings and have his dinner there, requested that he might send Bala Patel to be my guest. Bala

Patel was of a low caste. So Baba in granting my request said “Don’t cry Dhut Dhut at him” i.e. do not humiliate the guest by giving him place far away from your own place of eating. I agreed. When I had prepared sumptuous meals, I spread one plate for Baba and filled it with all eatables and then called out “Baba, come!” A black dog came in and ate from the plate. I waited reverently till it finished its meal and then gave meals to others and took my own. I gave Bala a plate and made him sit near me and not outside the house.

My mind is always dwelling on Baba, and often I see him here. Sometimes Baba abused me and beat me even fiercely. But I knew that as with Akkalkote Mahraj, blows and abuse have an auspicious ending. So I never resented or grumbled and I never gave up my attachment to him. He has asked Muslims to do their namaz and then go to him to read their Quran; he has talked with moulvis on their religion. I was not asked by nor have I given any information regarding my experience to Das Ganu Maharaj or Dabholkar. I went to Baba for the first time about 1895. In the year after I went Ramanavami Utsav celebration began and for these 40 years. I have provided one ornamental standard for that occasion every year. That was before Nana was born.

The Statement I had three wives is wrong. I had two both living when I went to Baba, I had consulted astrology, Ketu was in the fifth place in horoscope and so there was the difficulty of getting issue. But Baba, a Satpurush, over came all that. He anticipated and provided for the issue of so many years. He said 8 children will be borne to my younger wife, to whom I was to give the four mango fruits he gave me. As for business consultations with Baba, the proposal about speculating at Bombay in cotton was from a broker. He was not to be partner. I was to be sole venturer. I went to Baba, thinking I would allot a share to him in the profits and I was massaging his feet. Then Mahalsapathy, I and Baba alone were the three present. Baba replied expressly that he did not wish to get involved in any Samsara (like sharing profits). So I gave up that idea. On another occasion, I went to Shirdi and there I expressly asked Baba if I could trade in grain, wheat etc. He said that the prices would fall and that I would have to sell at a lower price than the price at which I bought. I gave up that proposal. But when I mentioned the prophecy

of Baba to a merchant friend, he showed me the prophecy was falsified by the steady rise in prices for many days. But Srawan came and there were good rains. The prices suddenly fell and the grain storers had a serious loss. Baba saved me from that fate.

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

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

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

II. My second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how am I to fare then? To this, Baba answered that he would be with me whenever I thought of him wherever I thought of him. That promise he has kept up before 1918 and after 1918. He is still with me. He is still guiding me. This was about 1910-11 when my brothers had separated from me and my sister died and there was a theft and Police enquiry, all of which incidents upset me very much.

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

VIII

8th December, 1936

Abdul, Son of Sultan of Nanded in Khandesh, Aged about 65, Mussulman, residing at Shirdi says:

I came to Shirdi 45 years ago (1889) from Nanded on the banks of Tapti. I was under the care of Fakir Amiruddin of Nanded. SaiBaba appeared in the dream of that Fakir and delivering two mangoes to him directed him to give those fruits to me and to send me to Shirdi. Accordingly the Fakir told me of his dream, gave me the fruits and bade me go to Sai Baba at Shirdi. I came here in my twentieth year. Even Nana Saheb Chandorkar had not then come to Baba. Baba welcomed me saying "mera kavala ala" i.e. "My crow is come" Baba directed me to devote myself entirely to his service. From the beginning, I lighted and fed with oil five perpetual lamps i.e. those at Lendi, Masjid, Chavadi, etc. As for food, Baba was not giving me or any one else food. I got some food somehow and lived 5 or 6 years in what is now the stable. I was always by Baba's side rendering service. I read Koran near him at the mosque. Baba occasionally opened the Koran and made me read the passages at which he opened the book. He occasionally quoted passages from the Koran. I went on writing down what Baba was uttering. This is the book (in Mahratti and Modi script) which contains the gracious utterances of Baba. Everything which fell from his lips is sacred.

I make use of this record in the following way. By Baba's blessings, I have full faith in what he has said guiding me and every one aright. When any one wished to know about the future or other unseen and unknown matter, he comes to me and states the problem. Then I reverently consult this book of Baba's utterances and the answer that comes out of the page opened comes out correct. This has been tried and proved many times. This gift of prophecy is due to Baba's grace. I shall give two instances of such consultation. When the well in the Sai Mandir was dug, the water proved brackish. Baba had attained Mahasamadhi at that time. I consulted his utterance book. Baba's reply was that as a result of deeper digging the well water would be-

come sweeter. I dug the well deeper by two feet and well water was no more brackish. A second instance is Barrister Gadgil's. He wanted to know if his son would return from England. I said he would and he did. I use this manuscript book of Baba's utterances along with and just like the Koran. I go on reading it reverently, getting absorbed in it and go on rolling my beads at the same time.

Baba sat behind what is now a pillar like structure at the Lendi in which a "Nanda Deepam" or perpetual lamp is kept up. I found generally that Baba sat behind the Lendi pillar which enclosed the lamp and not in front. From there the lamp was not visible to him. I never saw him gazing at that lamp. I was the person to do the required service at the Lendi and at other places for Baba. I used to fill pots with water and place them near Baba at the Lendi lamp place. He would sit near two such potsful of water; and he would go on pouring out the water in various directions. What that was for and whether he would utter any mantra while doing so, I cannot say. Except me none else was present when he poured out water as stated above.

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

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

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

**10th March, 1938,
Shirdi.**

No Mussalmans came and read books like Koran and Shariff to Baba or asked him for explanation. Several Fakirs and Saints came here. But I do not know if he talked with them on Koran and Shariff. I was busy with activities (physical) in the service of Baba, sweeping and scavenging all streets here, and then read Koran etc., near Baba, keeping awake all night. Baba's practical advice to me was that I should not go to sleep over my Koran reading. He said "Eat very little. Do not go in for variety of eatables. A single sort i.e. dish will suffice. Do not sleep much." I followed the advice. I ate very little. I kept awake all night and in a kneeling posture was going on repeating the Koran etc., near Baba or meditating. Baba told me to have *Dhyan* on what I read "Think of whom I am" he said to me.

One night I was tired and tried to sleep, holding my palms in front of me to rest my drowsy head. Then Baba said "Are you trying to see the Moon?" That night I fell asleep and fell upon Baba and his gadi in that sleeping condition. Baba gently stroked my feet and I awoke. Next day, strange to say when I took water in my palms and looked, there was a big moon in that water. It was 2 p.m. This was what Baba had spoken of. I used to look after the Lendi place and its light i.e. the ever burning light maintained by Baba there. It was in those days placed in a hollow in the earth scooped out to the depth of about 2 feet and protected with a cover to save the light from being blown out. There was a *pandal*. A zinc sheet was the top of the *pandal*. Some 20 curtains of cloth were tied all round, to form something like a tent. I remained in it and looked after the lamp in the centre of it. That light has been shifted from its place now, very slightly, and is put in a raised pillar of bricks and mortar containing an enclosed chamber for the lamp. When Baba sat near to lendi he would sit close to the light. I filled two buckets with water and placed them near him. This water he would scatter around that lamp. He would get up from the Lendi and walk a few yards in each direction and go on gazing at the direction.

My service to Sai Baba was service to him and to all. I washed Baba's cloths in the streamlet (odai) flowing at the

village boundary. I swept the mosque, the chavadi and surrounding places and lit the lamp in these places and fed them and the lendi lamp with oil. I not merely swept the village streets but also removed the night soil. Baba called me Halalkoor (scavenger) and “my miriambi” I fetched water and did sundry services. Ayi during the early years of her stay did part of the street sweeping work. Even then, my work supplemented hers. Baba protected me and protects me by giving me the needed food and ensuring my safety and progress.

About 1927 i.e. after Ayi and Baba passed away. I was in Ayi’s sala, reciting Quran, The three walls of that dilapidated mud building suddenly collapsed and I was buried waist deep in the debris. But Baba saved me from any hurt. Baba has given me his blessings and kept me with him. First my Guru himself directed me to be with and serve Baba, and I did so. But later my Guru came to Shirdi and wanted me to go away with him. I replied that I could do so, if Baba so ordered. But no such order having been issued I stayed on with Baba and my former Guru went away from Shirdi. Baba’s blessings to me were strange and sometimes concealed in abuse and violence. He has beaten me and Jog many times. He said to me.

*1. Tereku dariyakupar uttar diya

2. Tere matti sunana bana diya

3. kya badi madi mandhiya

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

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

(Here Abdul takes out and shows an old book parts of which are written in Devanagari character, parts in Modi and parts in urdu. He does not wish to say who wrote out these pages. His own knowledge of these scripts, according to

some of his fellow-devotees is too poor to enable him to write these well. But he went on, at the request of this writer to read out Baba's utterances from the book. Baba said of the Avatars, what follows:-

Baba said, First was Omkar. From Omkar Bhavakar.

IX

11th September, 1936

Abdul Rahim Samsuddhin Rangari, Mussulman, Painter, aged 65, residing at Mahagiri, Thana says:

In 1913, there was plague at Thana and also, I believe, at Shirdi. My wife was then suffering for about a month from some disease. Her throat, cheek etc., were swollen and she could eat nothing. Medicines were tried in vain. A neighbour of mine Mr.R.G.Gupte, a local pleader advised me to take my wife to Sai Baba at Shirdi as that would cure her. So we went. When the journey began, she was unable to eat anything. But as we went on, at Igatpuri, she was able to take tea and again at Nasik something more. This was an auspicious indication. She was fast improving. We went to Shirdi. Then I went into the Mosque and bowed to Sai Baba. He spoke to me in Hindustani.

Baba: Whence are you coming?

I: Thana.

Baba: What for?

I: My wife has swelling in the throat etc.

Baba: Ask her to come up the Mosque.

I took her up the steps and she bowed to Baba. He touched her hand, and said "**Khuda Achha Karega.**" (i.e. God will set matters right). I gave him rupee 1-4-0 without being asked; and he accepted it and gave me Udhi. I stayed two hours thereafter. Her swelling was fast subsiding. So we started back at once without the permission of Baba. He had told me to stay. But as a cure had been effected, I thought, we could start off. I did not like to stay in a strange place, unnecessarily, especially with my wife and a two year old son.

The tonga by which we came, was in the village. We took it and started off to Kopergaon. We went up half the distance, without any trouble, but thereafter, the axle of the tonga broke, and we were stranded on the road. It was about 10 p.m. No conveyances were available. We could neither walk back nor go on so many miles at night. The road was a lonely road and we felt the great danger we were in, exposed to the inclemency of the night and the chances of molestation

by highwaymen. Our predicament was unenviable. We repented the scant regard we had shown to Baba's words. Two hours passed in this condition. After midnight, we heard the rumble of some carriage and a voice crying out "Thanawala, Thanawala." Then a tonga came; it was the driver calling to "Thanawala". I said I was "Thanawala" and asked him how he happened to know our plight and go there at a most unusual hour. He said that Sai Baba had sent him. "What for?" I asked. "To fetch you" was the reply. Then we took the tonga and went to Shirdi. It was about 1 or 2 A.M. When we reached the Mosque, Baba said "you went away without permission. So you fared in this way." I answered "Yes, I beg your pardon. This way my lot for having left without permission." Then Baba made us stay near the Mosque for the rest of the night, and he went in and carried on his usual meditation. In the morning, he went out for his Bhiksha (i.e. to beg his bread) and brought bread and vegetables. After taking part of it, he gave us the remainder and asked us to eat it. We ate it. My wife was able to eat that solid food. Then he gave us leave to go. I went out, looked for a tonga and turned saying that no tonga was to be seen. Baba said "Go and see, there is a tonga." I turned and looked and found there was a tonga. How it suddenly happened to be there, we could not make out. Baba blessed us and we left. My wife retained her good health. She died several years later. This was my only visit to Shirdi. But it gave me firm faith in Sai Baba. I remember him and other Saints when I go to bed. Whenever I think intently of Baba. I actually see him before me. We had very little talk with Baba during our two hours stay in the day. I found Baba was smeared with sandal paste over his hand, face, etc. Moslems do not smear themselves like this. I asked him how he put on all this. Baba said " 'jaisa desh thysa vesh' (i.e. Do at Rome as the Romans do). Instead of worshipping their own Gods, they worship me as their God. Why should I object and displease him? I myself am a devotee of God."

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

I: Why

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

I: Why did they abuse you?

Baba: When I say “abused”, people do not understand, But you will understand.

I thought that “abused” was amused” really.

(Some Saints show their indifference to their praise by speaking of it as “abuse”. In the Bhajan referred to above, Baba would have been highly praised and all the time. He would treat it with the same indifference as if it were abuse. Again in the praise, melting music would be wedded to pathetic appeals to God. At these Baba would weep)

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

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

I: Yes. Habee Baleeshah Chisthi Nizami.

Baba: That is why you understand.

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

X

27th September, 1936

Rajaballi Mohammed Khoja, Contractor, Turner Road, aged 49, Bandra says:

I saw Sai baba some eight years or so before he passed away. I went, as I had heard good accounts from people here. I had work at Nasik and I went there. Some carts of tanning bark were being delayed delivery at Nasik, even after I went there. So I had nothing to do and I used my time by going to Baba. I regard him as a great saint with vast powers (which are possible only to those who have “*atmajnana*”) I went and presented him a coconut and sugar candy. I was not asked for dakshina and gave none. I asked leave to start the day of my reaching Shirdi or the following morning. But Baba said “That man is not yet ready to deliver your goods.” I therefore had no object in wasting more time at Nasik and spent two or three days in Baba’s company. I had nothing particular to ask of him. I wanted only increase of

faith. I wanted that at my death, I may die possessed of full *Imam* or faith so that I may have a good end. I prayed to him (mentally) for that and asked for his blessings. He placed his hand on my hand and blessed me. From that moment his blessings have borne fruit. My faith has steadily increase. Besides that I have a great benefit from my faith in him and in his Udhi. For example five years back, my she-buffalo was in great travail, in trying to calve. Pained at her suffering I sent for the Veterinary Surgeon. He tried his best. Especially as I was the Chairman of the Sanitary Committee of the Municipality he would be glad to help me in such a difficulty. But he could do nothing. Then I besought myself of Baba's udhi. I placed some udhi on the head of the buffalo and hoped that Baba would kindly come to its aid. In about ten minutes, she safely calved; there was no more trouble. There are numerous cases in which I have used Baba's udhi, with signal success. I take it myself in this way. I apply a bit of it on my chest, eyes, forehead and think of Baba. Then all my difficulties are overcome.

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

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

XI

15th December, 1936

Adam Dalali, aged about 70, Estate Broker, living near the Naupada Mosque, Bandra says:

I am an old Bhakta of Sai Baba. My experiences are already found in Sai Lila Masik. I have long been going to Sai

Baba. He was so kind and generous. He has helped me on many occasions. I shall give a few striking instances.

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

Another and later instance of his help was towards the close of Baba's career. I had acted as a broker between a Marwadi and the man who mortgaged a building to him, giving him a title deed purporting to be issued by the Collector. This title deed was impugned and the police charge-sheeted me and the mortgagor for using a fabricated document etc. I went to Baba and prayed for his help. He said "Do not fear. Everything will come right." Then I went to Mr. Tendulkar and entreated his wife to pray to Baba for me and say that I would be discharged. She said so. That day I was discharged and others, i.e. the Mortgagor were committed to the sessions, wherein I was examined as a Prosecution witness.

I have had numerous experiences, I have forgotten them. But they were all about earthly i.e. worldly matters. I did not read Quran or ask for spiritual advice; nor did Baba ask me to read Quran or speak to me of spiritual matters. Baba used to ask Bade Baba to go and read Quran or attend to his work. I do not now remember any prominent or scholarly Moslem that went to Sai Baba. He has come to me in other forms and dealt with me e.g. Once he came as a Brahmin and begged for something. I gave him two annas then. Once he came to me as a Marwadi and said he was hungry. I gave him four annas and asked him to go to a Marwadi's

hotel to get his food. Then when I went to Shirdi, Baba dropped significant hints showing me that he had visited me in those forms e.g. on the latter occasion, he said of me (at Shirdi) to some one else "I went to this man, he sent me to the Marwadi hotel to eat". I always used his Udhi and Tirtha. I have got his picture here at home and I burn *Udbathi* before it. Even in recent times, I have been going to Shirdi.

XII

8th December, 1936

Nandaram Sivaram Marwadi, Shroff, Merchant, aged 70, residing at Shirdi says:

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

XIII

15th October, 1936

Lakshman Govind Munge, Petition writer, aged 72, 43, Main Road, Nasik says:

I went to Baba over 46 years ago. I had relations (now dead) at Shirdi viz., Vamanrao Rangnath Vizapurkar and his brother Sakharam. I was a clerk under the Senior Mamlatdar, Chidambar Keshav Gadgil. That Mamlatdar went to see Baba, (as also Nana Saheb Nimonkar) and I accompanied

him. They took darsan of Baba. I followed suit. Yet I wondered how Baba was being worshipped by Hindus. When I was in this mental state, Baba told Mr. Gadgil "Give me my Karkya, my Udbattipoodi and my one rupee". This request for my rupee etc., at once arrested my attention. The previous night just before retiring to rest, when we three (I, Gadgil and Nana Nimonkar) were alone in our night's resting place, Gadgil set apart some dates (Kharka), one rupee, and a packet of scented sticks (udbatti) saying these have to be given to the saint. Baba's calling offer these showed clairvoyance or omniscience (Antargnan). These were given to Baba and he accepted them. Then Nana Saheb Nimonkar voluntarily offered a ten rupee note to Baba. Baba declined the gift, however, saying "I am a fakir. I will not take this." Baba at once disposed of the above articles. The rupee was given to the oilmonger for supplying oil to light the mosque. The sticks were burnt and the dates were distributed to all. These facts were very striking and I felt that Baba's worship was proper.

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

Baba: "What for have you come?"

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

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

I was looking at Baba as he sat robed in a sack cloth and holding a mere tin for his only utensil. "How will he give me all this?" Was the thought that occurred to me. I went then to the house of my relation i.e. maternal aunt's husband

and explained my need. He said that he had no jewels. I returned in a cheerless mood, as I felt that the marriage must fall through for the time being for want of jewels, and must be put off. Just at that juncture, a friend came to me and I told him of the exact situation. He at once came to my rescue and by his introduction or intercession, a Gujarati Sowcar at Sinner lent me some anklets, a nose screw and he took out 30 tolas of gold which were converted into jewels in one day, which also were lent to me (on interest). So Baba through this friend and the Gujarati fulfilled his promise and the marriage was duly celebrated without any postponement. After this event, I paid my yearly visits to Baba. For some years I was getting children but they died after a very short life. In 1912 I went and cried before Baba about this misfortune of mine, and prayed that he would give me one son blessed with longevity. Baba said to me, "Why do you ask me for one? I will give you two". I have accordingly got now 2 sons (aged 13 and 10) and 2 daughters (aged 27 and 18). I worship Baba's picture at home, and pray to it. My prayers are granted. Here is an instance.

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

XIV

29th November, 1936

Gangadhar Vishnu Kshirsagar (of Nevasa), Dehastha Brahmin aged 51, Telegraph Head Signaller in the Irrigation Department, Sonawadi, Kopergaon says:

I lost my father when I was 5 years old. We had lands. Bala Nevaskar "Jayagudi", Baba's devotee was our lessee. He claimed our land as his own. My maternal uncle, our guardian, represented us. Bala Nevaskar asked him to go with him to Shirdi and leave the settlement of our dispute to be done

by Baba. They came here from Nevasa with my mother. My uncle and mother were total strangers to Baba. As soon as they came to the Mosque (Dwarka Mayi), even before they bowed, Baba said to Bala Nevaskar, "Hand over the lands to the children. Why trouble them?" We went back to Nevasa. But Bala refused and we got possession through the court. Bala became mad. At that time I was then aged 16 (1901). After madness, he did not return to Shirdi. I never saw Baba. My mother and maternal uncle occasionally came here and saw him.

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

XV

9th December, 1936

Bayyaji Apaji Patel, aged 47, Mahratta, Land owner and Revenue and Police Patel of Biragaon, residing at Shirdi says:

I knew baba since my babyhood. My house was one of the few houses from which Baba took his biksha i.e., begged his bread from the beginning of his life here and up to the end. For some 3 years, Baba would go over about 8 times during the day to our house to beg for his bread. Next for 3 years he visited us for this purpose four times a day. For 12 years, he visited us twice a day and during the last 12 years he came to us for bread once a day only. From my 11th year, I used to serve Baba. In 1896 i.e., my seventh year, the Ramanavami Urus celebration began. It was then that Baba began to allow Hindus to affix sandal or to do pooja to him and Muslims to read Koran before him at the masjid. This

urus was started by Appa Kulkarni out of gratitude to baba for the acquittal in the embezzlement charge brought against him. When Hindus affixed sandal paste to Baba, the latter applied sandal marks with the hand (Punja marks) on the walls of the masjid and other Moslems did the same. Baba then applied sandal paste to Mahalsapathy's forehead and the some Moslems. Mahalsapathy applied it to Baba's forehead. Baba then allowed Namaz to go on at the mosque and enjoined silence on all others while Namaz was going on. Baba himself recited the Namaz sometimes. That was only on Saturdays. When Pedas or other sweets were brought to Baba, he uttered the Kalam (which is the same as Fatia) over the sweets etc., and then distributed them to all Hindus and Moslems alike. Baba finding that Hindus and Moslems would have differences as to the way and manner of celebrating the Urus allowed Sandal Panja to be put on all - Hindus and Moslems alike. My father, Nana Sahib Chandorkar, Taty Patel etc, all bore the expenses of the celebration.

One day, when I was 11 years old (1901-2) Baba stopped me from going away to tend my cattle. Then he suddenly spoke angrily at me and others, and broke four mudpots. Then he blew "Bum Bum" on the back of his hand indicating that death or some inauspicious event was coming. This was at 9 A.M or 9-30A.M. That night my father's sister's son Daji Kote, aged 30 died of fever. During the last 14 years of Baba's life, he gave me daily four rupees. Even on his last (Samadhi) day, he gave me four rupees. As to the use of his gift, Baba once told me neither to lend the moneys he gave, nor make a gift of them. "Do not eat and excrete this, Do not give it away to others." So I have invested it in purchases of land. I purchased 84 acres of land out of Baba's gifts. I have had already 10 or 11 acres of other land.

Baba has helped me with his wonderful knowledge of the future. (1) About my cultivation, there was the strong temptation to plant my lands with sugar cane as so many do. Baba's advice was "Don't". But I yielded once to the temptation, despite this advice. A loss of 300 rupees in the money invested on sugar cane planting and the going without the usual supply of dry crops I would have got on the land, that was the result of disobedience. (2) In 1913, my father who was over 70 years of age went out as usual on horse back and

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

Baba gave me his last instruction or moral lesson on the day he reached his last. After sending away Kaka Dikshit he gave me a moral lesson and enjoined silence on me with these words. "If you reveal it to any one, you will die." He added i.e., "me jato mereku badaku uchaude sagale brahmana majaya jabalur tahatilu i.e., I am" going. Carry me to Wada. All brahmins will be living near me." With these words, he breathed his last. After these words were spoken Nana Nimonkar poured water in to his mouth but the water came out. I held my hand below his chin to catch the water. Baba leaned upon me and expired. When Baba expired there were troubles of all sorts. Government took charge of all the properties. There was wrangling between two parties. Moslems said that Baba should be buried in a separate building to be constructed at the expense of people who (like me) had been benefiting by his daily bounty. We stood out for burial in the Dagdi Wada in accordance with Baba's wishes. The Kopergaon Mamlatdar Mr.Kulkarni was on the spot and the Rahata Foujdar Chakranarayana also. The Mamlatdar decided that the public including both Moslems and Hindus should express their views and he would agree that the wishes of the majority should be carried out. Moslems prepared Mahajar with 100 or less of signatures. We prepared Mahajars and got numerous (over 200) signatures including prominent names, e.g., H.S.Dixit, Bapu Saheb Jog, Bala Saheb Bhate etc. Therefore our view, being that of the majority, prevailed and Baba's body was

interred in the Dagdi Wada. In 1910, Shirdi had its second visitation of plague.

Four years ago, Baba gave me timely intimation and help. At Shirdi, a bull was marked with a trident and being thus dedicated to God Shiva was freely grazing all over the village and near our Lendi garden. It was injuring our gardens and we all contributed some 3 rupees and odd for the expenses of sending it to a pinjrapole at Yeola. The bull was entrusted to Bhiku Marwadi with the money and he took it away to be left at the pinjrapole. He returned and told us that he had performed that duty. That night Baba appeared in my dream and said “kuyn sothe. Merekoo kasaeke dari bandaya, i.e., “Are you sleeping? I have been tied to the door of a butcher”. I woke and consulted Tatyapa Patel and others. We concluded that the bull had been left with a butcher and not left at the pinjrapole at Yeola. So I started at once, went to Yeola and searched for our bull at the two pinjrapoles there. It was not there and we were informed that Bhikku had not brought our bull there. Then I went round and looked near the butchers’ quarters. Our bull was lifting its head over a wall. It was in a butcher’s place. It was to be cut up that very day by the butcher and he told us that he had purchased it for 14 rupees from Bhiku marwadi. The animal was rescued and placed in the pinjrapole, and Bhiku was charged, convicted and sentenced to 2 months’ imprisonment.

XVI

18th September, 1936

Ramchandra Sitaram Dev alias, Balabhau or Balabhat aged 55 (60) Brahmin, Lanlord, Varsova Road, Andheri says:

I saw Baba first in S. 1830 (i.e., 1908). I had already heard of him from Das Ganu Mahraj at his Kirtan at kalyan. I knew Amir Sakkar Khatik i.e. butcher of Bandra. He also spoke highly of Baba and asked me to go and see him. So I went to Shirdi along with Sri Krishna Patil. Sathé’s wada was the only resort in existence then. But we had our lodging at Ganapati Temple. On that day, there was no crowd of Bombay visitors but there were crowds of the locality and neigh-

bour hood. I was intending to go to Akkalkote and Amir Sakkar said “Shirdi is on the way. Call there and then go to Akkalkote.” So I wanted just to see Baba and start off for Akkalkote.” When we saw Baba he said “I must go to Akkalkot and thereby expressing the predominating idea in my mind. I was struck at once by his power to read what I had in my mind, and I decided to spend the day with him at Shirdi. But I had no end to achieve by my visit or stay beyond the pleasure of being near a great soul. Next day I went away, with his leave, to Akkalkote. I was being drawn to him. So I repeated my visit e.g. I went there next Deepavali. At that time there were crowds from Bombay with Baba. There were 5 or 6 accompanying me. I sat up between 8 P.M. and midnight with Baba (at the Mosque) and I then asked him to give me Upadesh and be my Guru.

Baba: “It is not essential that one should have a Guru. Everything is within us. What you sow, you reap. What you give you get. There is no need for a Guru. aapala javalachu aahe

It is all within you. Try to listen within and follow the direction you get, “we must look at our self. That is the monitor, the Guru”. aapana pahaya apala apan pahava

At the time I approached Baba for Upadesh and even now, I had and have my own Sampradai Guru at Ratnagiri. As my faith in SaiBaba grew, I gradually dropped my visits to Pandharpur and Akkalkote. I was doing two services, one was Asst. Master in a local fund School and the other stamp vendor’s work. Even the Shirdi visits dislocated my school work. Baba detained me beyond my leave days. The school authorities inquired where I was spending away my time and heckled me about it. I had to choose between Shirdi and school work. I gave up school teaching, but I retained the stamp vendor’s work till five years ago and then got it transferred to my son. That gave me a net income of 20 to 25 Rs. per diem. When I gave up service, I was only 32. But I kept up my faith and my financial position was satisfactory. I attended each Shri Ramnavami of Baba. When Baba was in the flesh, he gave me personal directions. After he passed away. I get my guidance from him by casting chits before his picture and getting one picked out after prayer for guidance.

Later on, (while he was in the flesh) I got afraid when I saw that in my place Andheri, there was a terrible robbery. I saw the inmates of the house that was robbed at the hospital with severe injuries inflicted by the robbers. I prayed to Baba in my own house to help me and save me and my family from such misfortune. That night Baba appeared to me in a dream and said he had come with ten Pathans and that I need not fear. Just at that time, the washermen using B.B.& C.I. Ry. Property for their washing, were refused further access to their usual washing places. Ten of them came to me and wished to build huts for themselves on my land. I readily agreed. They still pay me monthly 200 rupees as rent besides giving me their company by which we are safe from robbers' attacks. The existing well had no sufficient supply of water for their purposes. I consulted Baba and acting on his advice, I dug a new well in the place approved of by Baba and there I had abundant supply of water. In respect of this big building, I had to dig a well first and I went to Shirdi and asked Baba. Acting on his advice, I dug it and it has turned out into a very good well. Then I began the building after getting Baba's personal sanction at Shirdi. When I went there, I had funds only for putting up 5 suites of rooms and wished to build only these. But Baba drew on the floor before him 25 lines and said "one rupee for each line, i.e., each sets of rooms. Give 25 rupees." Though I was intending to build only 5, I paid 25 rupees. The work began, suits were slowly being added on till in 1920, the total number of sets of rooms became 25. It still continues to be only 25 rooms.

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

XVII

10th December, 1936

D.M.Mulky, M.B.B.S., Medical Practitioner, Gadag says:

It was in 1915 that a sad incident took place in my family. My eldest brother's son, a distinguished I class B.A., aged only 18 with all bright prospects before him, suddenly

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

It was in the month of October, 1916, that I fell very seriously ill and my temperature used to be ranging between 105 to 106. F without any intermission and the local doctors were doing their level best to relieve me. Unfortunately there was not the slightest improvement. After a week nearly, one Thursday evening at my brother's place, they performed the Puja in the evening and I heard the Bhajan etc., and this was very strange to me, because I had not seen such things there, and I confess I was also more or less atheistic in tendency and I don't know it may be that Shri Sai Maharaj, an Avatar of Gurunath, wanted to save me from an atheistic doom. My temperature was about 104.6 and that night, I got a dream wherein an old man with a long white kupni to cover his body and some white cloth tied over his head (after the fashion of what men and women do in South India after a head bath) appeared and said that I should not worry, that I should at once come to His darshan and that the fever would pass off at once if I promised to do so. The frightened me and I screamed and woke up at the sound of my own screaming. My sister-in-law- she was and is still more than a mother to me ran up to my bedside, found me in horrible perspiration

and in tears. I explain to her the dream and she at once brought a photo of Shri Sai Maharaj and asked me whether it was the same. I could at once recognise the old man of my dream and we at once decided that I should take the earliest opportunity to visit Him. The fever did not come on again; I was fully alright and went on with my duties; and being young and with all the temptations of a city life before me I did not go to Shirdi and entirely forgot about it.

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

About February, 1917 Shree Maharaj wanted to remind me about what I dreamt and how I was not keeping my word and he did it in such a kind way. I was transferred from Bombay to a place called Malegaon, a Taluka in Nasik District and the only way which took me there was via Manmad and Kopergaon is the station which takes me to Shirdi. I went over to Malegaon, and then in my heavy work, I forgot to do the needful with the result that I was once again given a reminder. I was conducting a forceps delivery case, and some decomposed fluid from (the operated parts of) the woman jumped into my left eye, which I did not realise till too late. The eye was swollen and it was very bad. I was all alone there; and I prayed to Him probably never more seriously than at this time; and He heard my prayer without trying to admonish anybody. I have since then been of the firm conviction that Shri Guru cannot see His Bhaktas suffer whatever Chandalas they may be. What He wants is nothing but unadulterated Bhakti entirely devoid of egoism. The Civil Surgeon at Nasik was of the opinion that I would lose my eye, but thanks to Sai Baba, it got alright in a week's time. I got my wife there and both of us vowed that we would not return to Bombay without seeing Shri Maharaj and as this was on our way back, we thought that it would not be difficult. At the end of a month, I was asked to go back to Bombay; and to act up to our vow, we came to Manmad a little early to catch the early morning train from Manmad to Dhond. While I was strolling on the platform a Deshastha Booking Clerk accosted me casually and we fell into general conversation. Somehow I mentioned to him the object of my staying at Manmad and then the fellow began a tirade against Shri Maharaj which

attacked even His moral character and this dissuaded us from going to Shirdi and we caught the next immediate train to Bombay and ran away as we would from a serpent. I regret this even to this day, whenever I remember it. After a month in Bombay, my sister in law did succeed in inducing us to go over to Shirdi and though there came some obstacles in the way. We never cared for them this time; and I thank God, that we remained firm and got the darshan. The station incident of a month previous was mentioned by Shri Maharaj; and I need not tell you that we were put to shame and tear for even thinking of having listened to that scoundrel.

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

XVIII

1st December, 1936.

Nagesh Atmaram Sawant, aged 42, Mahratta, Police Sub Inspector, Bombay City Police says;

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

dur (Malwan Taluka). In January, 1924, I went to Nasik for training at the Police school. My studies did not attract me. I was often thinking of Baba and hoped he would save me and I often prayed to him. I got a picture of Baba from a friend. P Dev for worship. I had failed in my departmental examination at Nasik. People who fail are not given a chance of becoming S.I. I continued as acting S.I. for about five years. I was unwilling to go to Nasik again as it was financially ruinous and I was fully confident that Baba would make me permanent S.I. without my passing the Examination. From 1924, I began my regular annual visits to Shirdi for each Punya tithi (i.e., Dusserah). In 1926, during Mohurram ordinary leave would not be granted, but I was anxious to go to Shirdi for the Dusserah. Baba appeared in my dream then and I saw him sign some paper in that dream I construed it to mean that I was to sign and send an application for leave. I did so and got leave without any hitch.

In 1929, February, there were Hindu Muslim riots at Bombay. I was on duty at Parel. Suddenly I had headache and fever. An European Police Officer (who was not of my division) came there to see the situation and he said to me "You do not look well". Then he went to my Superintendent, who was on the road and got oral leave for me to go. He took charge of my place. That was about 3-30 p.m. I went home. In an hour, I learnt that there was a riot in that very place which I had left and that the European Officer was killed during that riot. That sickness continued. I went to the Police Hospital and it was found to be typhoid. After 17 days, I dreamt one night that a big strong man with a black dress on his body and a black cloth on his head caught hold of me and was dragging me. I shouted out "Baba Baba". Immediately a white individual in white dress appeared and struggled with the black man and I escaped from the clutches of the black man. I shouted "Baba and Datta Maharaj". Then suddenly, Baba appeared before me out of the frame of the picture that I worship and disappeared. The black man and the other man had already disappeared. I had at that time the smell of soja, Udbath (i.e., Agarbatti). Since then my fever left me. In July, 1929 as a special case, I was exempted from the Examination and given a permanent appointment, as S.I. When I was lying ill in Hospital, my mother had a dream in

our village, wherein some one appeared and told her “Do not fear, I will bring your boy safe home, getting him leave.” In a week’s time, I got 3 months leave and went home.

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

XIX

2nd December, 1936

Kasibai Hansraj widow of Hansraj, caste Vani, age about 45, residence Sakori.

I and my husband went to Shirdi 20 years ago. In Margasir about December, 1916, just after Radhakrihna Ayi died, we went and stayed for about 6 months. My husband had Asthma. Narasing Baba Maharaj of Nasik had told him that as an evil spirit was possessing his body, we got no issue and that he should go to Shirdi Sai Baba who would give him two slaps and exorcize it. That is why we came to Sai Baba. Baba gave my husband two slaps saying “**Evil spirit be off**”. From that time we lived there. My husband’s Asthma abated. It was operating during the day but did not trouble him at night. Before we came to Shirdi it was troubling day and night. Baba was catching away at night when we lived there. At the end of our 6 months’ stay Asthma ceased to trouble my husband by day even. Before I mention that, a *chamatkar* on Baba’s part in healing him has to be mentioned. Soon after we settled here, Baba told my husband that he should be strict about his diet and avoid curds, and

other acid and pungent articles of food. When it came to acting on this advice, my husband found it hard to follow it, as these were what he liked most. He did not relish his food without curds etc. He would sooner give up life than curds, he declared. So every day for two months we were trying to prepare curds at home, for in this village curds are not easily to be had at noon. We kept milk heated and cooled for curdling every night and then we would go and attend the Noon-Arati of Baba at the Mosque. Everyday almost for two months a cat would steal into our lodgings in our absence, jump up the sling in which the curd pot was kept and drink it off. As our meal had to be after Arathi my husband found that there were no curds to take. One day he resolved to catch the thief in the very act and so stayed away from the Noon Arathi. The cat came in, my husband allowed it to get in, to watch how it could possibly reach the curd pot which was kept so high in a sling. But it did. Anyhow the cat had dipped its mouth into the curd pot and the curds were not fit for use. He quickly watched its drinking and when it got down he used his stick severely on its back, by way of summary punishment for its larceny. In the afternoon, people resorted to Baba at the mosque and got *udhi* from his hands. We went there; Jog, Madhav Rao Despande, Kaka Dixit, Buty etc., were there. Baba addressing them referred to my husband and said **“There is an (i. upantiya e., one who does the reverse of what he is asked to do) who wants to die by eatin g sour and pungent things. But I would not allow him to do that. To day I went to him in the form of a cat. That fellow has given me a caning on the back. See here.”** Then Baba exposed his back from under the Kupni; and there we could see a weal or stripe such as caning might cause, what a wonder!

Thereafter my husband wanted no more curds to be prepared and no more acids etc., to take. This accelerated his improvement very probably. Baba was not for giving him any medicines. First I gave my husband daily some medicine for the asthma. Baba then said that he also had Asthma and that as I was giving medicine to my husband he had thousands of women who would give him medicine; “ But what is the use?” He added “Allah Malik hai” (God is the Lord). So I stopped giving medicines. It is without resort to any medi-

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

Sai Baba used to say many things. I remember some, while he was all along living at Shirdi alone he would suddenly declare **"I have been to Kasi and had a bath and just now I have returned. Why do I want a bath here?"** or **"I have been to Kolhapur, or Audumbarwadi and I have just now returned."** Jog told me that Sai Baba gave him darsan of himself as Akkalkote Maharaj, at his (Jog's) request.

XX

26th September, 1936.

Dinkar Rao Jaiker, Son of Shyam Rao Jaiker, aged 38, Ville Parle says:

I have been with Sai Baba.

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

Then the storm abated very quickly.

XXI

2nd December, 1936

Bhiku Bai, wife of Bayyaji Patil Kothe, caste Mahrathi, aged about 42, residence Shirdi says:

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

serving Sai Baba (1908).

Gangagiri Baba of Vanjargaon was performing a huge Nama Saptha under the Tamrind trees (near the wada). There was a huge gathering every day and among many pilgrim groups that came, one was from Sangamner and when that returned to Sangamner, it brought from my friend R.Ayi a photo of Baba, a lot of Burfi *Prasad* and an invitation to me to go over to Shirdi and settle there. I accepted the invitation and came here without jewels and property. I then went and saw Baba. He told me to live with R.Ayi and be busy serving. About the end of 1916 i.e., 1 or 2 months after R.Ayi died, I had gone to Nagar to draw my pension as the widow of a man that died in the war at rupees 6 per month (which I still draw). On my way back, at Kopergaon, near the banks of the Godavari, I was reminded of the fate of R.Ayi, who was burnt there. My mind was all in a turmoil. I had brought over my garland to Shirdi for Baba. When I went to place it on Baba, he said **“I don’t want this garland of mental uneasiness”**. He did not receive it. H.S.Dixit requested him to take it as I had brought it from Ahmednagar for him with such great trouble. I then went near Baba lifting up the garland with both hands. Then I neared Baba, the garland somehow snapped into 3 parts; one was left in each hand and one fell on the floor. How it got severed like that I could not discover. Baba was simply saying “I don’t want it.”

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

Baba at his noonday meal daily gave me a vessel full of food which I took home. On the day of Baba’s expiry, I was

greatly agitated at his leaving me desolate and I was weeping at about 10 p.m., in my house saying "Baba I cannot see you again." I came out and outside my front door I saw a serpent and felt that it was Baba and said "I cannot recognize you in this serpent body I know only your Sai Baba form." The serpent disappeared.

XXII

3rd December, 1936.

Mr. Clerk, Parsi, aged 44. Clerk, Bombay Office says:

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

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

Baba used to come often in my dreams when I was 12 years old. (I was always looking at his picture and bowing to him.) If he came in my dream, that was a sure indication to me that some evil or other that was afflicting me or about to befall me was removed or averted. My experience with Baba was very happy. Whenever I went into his presence, I forgot everything. I had no trouble, no anxiety, no care, no fear. Everything was blotted out and I passed a blissful time in his company. That was most wonderful. Even now if he comes in dream vision, that effect is reproduced. He was so kind and all knowing, as I may shown even in his dakshina matters. I was very poor when I went to him. At first in 1913 I was on 60 rupees. He would ask me for dakshina. At times he would take away all I had in my pocket. Once 8 rupees was cash I had in my hand. He took it away as Dakshina. After I said that I had no objection to part with every pie, he did not go on asking any dakshinas from me. I never came to harm by giving away what I had. He blessed us by what he gives and even by what he takes away from us. I spent very little time here and had so very few visits during his life time that I have no spiritual experiences. I have not studied religious works, i.e. *Gathas* even now. I cannot say how Baba would affect a learned Parsi versed in Parsi sacred works.

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

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

XXIII

6th September, 1936.

Somnath Shankar Deshpande, Son of Shankar, Nana Saheb Nimonkar, Brahmin, Inspector of Police, aged 51, 37, Saniwar Peth, Poona says:

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

My father was an Honorary Magistrate of Sangamner and there he met Nana Saheb Chandorkar (the Collector's Chitnis) who also was an admirer of Baba and both would talk together about Baba. When Nana Saheb Chandorkar started the idea of rebuilding Baba's Masjid and collected subscriptions, my father contributed his mite and what is

more he supervised the building operations. Baba would not let the workmen to go on with the work as he complained of their work and undid their work. The building was long being prevented from completing even its foundation. Baba however had great trust in my father and my father hurried on the work all night when Baba slept at that chavadi. Baba showed his faith in my father by making him his banker during the years (1916-18) that he stayed with Baba. As funds came, Baba would hand them over to my father. Even Madhav Rao mistook them for gifts. My father stood in no need of gifts. We had about 500 rupees per annum from our Vatan and I was sending him all moneys he required. Besides, my father also knew the truth of Baba's often repeated statement. "Fakir's money is forced away". If one grasped at and swallowed a Fakir's money, he will in due course have to disgorge it all, to the last pie. My father desired and got from Baba gifts superior to monetary gifts i.e. our temporal and spiritual welfare. So my father paid up all the deposits for Baba's expenses. Baba himself frequently called upon him for these expenses e.g. (a) Burfi would have to be purchase and distributed as present (b) firewood on a large scale also had to be bought etc. We called my father "Kaka", so did the villagers; and so also Baba called him "Kaka".

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

S.B: Why don't you read Pothi?

N.N: I do not know Sanskrit.

S.B: Never mind. Masjid Ayi will teach you Sanskrit, and gradually you will learn. Begin.

Then with faith in Baba's words, my father began the daily reading of Shrimad Bhagwat and its commentary- both of them in Sanskrit- without understanding what he read. Gradually he began to understand all that the read, and he advanced so far as to proceed (at Baba's bidding) with the Gita and next with Jnaneshwari. All these he understood, and when Kaka Saheb Dixit and Jog had doubts, he cleared their doubts. They were learned scholars and had regularly studied Sanskrit. But my father had not, and so they said

my father's understanding was inspired by Baba's grace. But Baba once stopped his further explaining things to others. "Why should we explain things to others? That will make us puffed up with self-conceit." As for quasi spiritual benefits derived by my father instances will be given presently of the cures he effected when he spent his last two months with me here at Poona.

Temporal benefit may include not only the growing esteem in which he was held by all who knew him and the consequent increase of his influence, but also the safeguarding and advancement of the interests of all members of his family, including my self. I had been taken to Baba from my infancy by my father and Baba spoke to me and spoke of me always affectionately giving me the sobriquet, "Somniya."

In 1912, I was a police Sub-Inspector at Kopergaon; and Shirdi was within my jurisdiction. As soon as I got my first pay, I sent rupees two every month by M.O. to Baba. That was my father's order and possibly his vow. I continued that payment every month up to 1920 i.e. till shortly after my father's death. When I was at Kopergaon my father and I went down once to Shirdi. Then Baba asked me to pay a dakshina of 10 rupees and I did. It appeared to have no significance at that time. But about six months later, I got the order that my pay was increased by 10 rupees from that date (i.e. the date of my paying the dakshina). I got a transfer in 1912 from Kopergaon to Poona. Another instance of Baba's care for me was mentioned by my father, even before I got my service. It seems that Baba, sitting at his Mosque, would take up coins and be rubbing them with his fingers saying "*Kakacha*" "*Somyahca*" etc. My father said that showed that I was often in Baba's mind and that augured nothing but good for me. Of numerous instances of Baba's taking all care of us, Yogakshema bahamyaham the chief may be his looking after my father himself during the last 3 years of his life. In 1916, my wife was in the family way and we looked forward to my parents to come here, so that my mother may help in the delivery. We had no other help. My father and mother left Nimon on that account to go to Poona. But as Shirdi is near and as there were rumours that Baba was passing away, they first visited Baba. Once they went to Baba, he detained them and did not give them leave to go

away- either back to Nimon or forward to Poona. My father did not understand the reason for this refusal and Madhava Rao on his behalf asked Baba for leave.

Baba: Do you want to kill my people? Is Kaka eating away your father's property?

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

Baba: Arre 'Kaka' why are you anxious? God will help.

Baba also said to my father at that time, "bury me and then go." When Baba detained my father, he tied a cloth bandage to his own arm which he kept on for three years and removed only four days before his death. My father died four months thereafter. That is just what he anticipated and told Madhav Rao when he left Shirdi two or four days after Baba expired.

When my parents were being thus detained at Shirdi, we at poona were relying solely on their going to us for the accouchement and made no other arrangements up to the last. Suddenly one night my wife told me "I feel that pains are coming". At once, I ordered a tonga and took her at 10P.M to the Poona Municipal Maternity Hospital and left her abed. The nurse that ought to have attended on her was talking with me in an adjoining room. It was about 11 P.M. At once we heard the cry of the new born child, a male child. The delivery was over without any help. It was a safe delivery. At that time- or rather just before delivery, Baba said to my father at Shirdi: "There was a woman. She was taken to a place. There she was delivered safe, of a male child."

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

Another instance of Baba's care for our family is this. In December, 1917, plague was beginning its ravages at Poona; and during Xmas holidays, I started with my first son Gopal, then a child 2 or 3 years to Nimon where my brother's

wife had recently had a safe delivery. On the way, we halted at Shirdi. Baba in sending me away with the usual Udhi said "*Porala jiv lav*" which means "Save the child." Interpreting it as a mere blessing intended for my Gopal, I gave him the Udhi and started off in a tonga to Nimon. When we reached that place, my brother's baby, 12 days' old, was in a precarious condition. It had become cold and chill and the parents lost all hope and thought the child was dead. Then I be thought myself of Baba's words at parting and found that he must have referred to this child and not to my boy. I searched for the Udhi he had given me. But it had been lost during the journey. So I took the baby on my lap and sent up a fervent mental appeal with all my strength, with all my soul entreating Baba to save the child. In 15 minutes' time, the child improved and became alright gradually and is now called "Datta" i.e. God's gift, in consequence. Plague was still prevalent at Poona when I wanted to return. When I wanted to start from Shirdi back to Poona, Baba was loath to give me permission. But I had no "leave" to stay and must rejoin duty on 8-1-1917. So my father put Udhi in Baba's hands and practically forced him to give me leave. So we returned on 3rd January. My landlord was there down with plague and on the 4th, my wife was attacked. We could not escape elsewhere; my self, children and all stayed there. Baba saved her and saved us all. She i.e. my wife recovered her health but her eyesight was lost. At that time the question of leaving the town and going to a health camp was mooted before Baba; but he did not permit it. "Why leave home?" was what he said. We followed his guidance and were safe. When my wife was unwell, we had also requested my father to go to Poona. But Baba then told him again "Bury me and then go."

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

there and took us all to Shirdi, I had improved very little at Belapur and was very weak. When I went to Shirdi, Baba said I should be given a little *Kichadi* thenceforward. That was done. I stayed there a month and picked up my health and strength.

I was with Baba some days before he passed away. He was ailing and people were anxious about him. When I wanted to start he was unwilling to permit me to go. But I had to go and I went away to Poona. Some three days after Baba passed away, my father left for Nimon and then he went to Ahmadnagar and thence at my request (as I had pain in my side) he came and stayed with us, at Poona. Here he continued till his death which was some two months after he came there. My father had intense *dhyasa* of (i.e. absorption in) Baba during the closing days of his life and he treated (or looked on) all persons going to him as Sai Baba. He was a Ramabhakta all alone and he died with the words “Sri Ram” on his lips. Of course, Sai Baba and Sri Ram are not different. I was privileged to serve Sai Baba during his life for four days. My father had been called away to give evidence at Ahmadnagar and had to stay there four days. When he started for Nagar, he left me at Shirdi to do every service to Baba that he usually did. There was one difference however. He did the service sitting being an old man. As a younger man, I did the service on my legs. I found the service was physically taxing all my energies to the uttermost. To be at the beck and call of Baba all day and till he retired to rest was no little effort. During those days, I had a blessed vision. I was at the Mosque. Baba was in his usual place and Madhav Rao near the steps. Suddenly, Baba appeared to me in the form of Maruti. There was not more Sai Baba’s usual figure. There was the Maruti body. Only I did not see if there was a tail. Seeing that form I told Madhav Rao at once “Take his darshan. See He is Maruti”. Baba was undoubtedly a Ramabhakta. Baba on Chavadi days would stop opposite to Maruti Temple and muttering something, wave his arm towards Maruti fifteen or twenty times. My usual current of thoughts was worldly. But as I stayed near Baba, my usual current of thoughts was switched off; and there was a new current of thoughts within me. However, I had very little

touch with Baba - unlike my father whose powers and nature seemed to have developed greatly by contact with Baba.

When my father was at Ahmadnagar about November, 1918, I was suffering from pain in my side- as though it was the commencement of Appendicitis. So I wrote to my father and he came and stayed with me at Poona. He came and applied Udhi to me and from the very next day, there was no more pain. My brother was with me and he was showing signs of incipient consumption. My father gave him Udhi and Tirtha and he recovered. My nephew "Datta" had itch all over his head, My father gave him 'Udhi' and cured the itch. My father was always orthodox and paying strict attention to his religious duties. Baba respected his orthodoxy and would not give him any prasad that an orthodox man should not take.

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

XXIV

9th march, 1938.

Madhav Rao Deshpande alias Shama, Brahmin, aged about 80, Dixit Wada, Shirdi.

Upasani Baba when he came to Shirdi first was sleeping and boarding here. He was still unwell. He cried in his sleep, "I am dead," and he asked me to request Sai baba to help him. I told Sai Baba that Upasani Sastri was expecting death and getting frightened. Sai Baba replied maranakunaitaranakuye jaga that this place Shirdi is for saving and not killing people. At first I (like others) took Upasani Maharaj for a detective. But he assured me he was not one. Sai Baba at the first visit asked him to stay on or return within eight days. Upasani did not agree and pleaded distance from Dhulia, etc., as his reasons. Finally he put up in this (Deekshit) Wada for 21 years. Sai Baba told him to remain four years in Khandoba temple, and promised him Khandoba's grace at the end of that term. This was said by Baba about 15 days after his second arrival. G.S.Khparde held his reading classes down-

stairs. Upasani Sastri, etc., attended it. Upasani Sastri would spend much of his nights in talk upstairs, when he lived at Khandoba's.

Sai baba's statement that he was four years younger than myself cannot be understood as relating to this life. He looked my senior in point of age. He told me of my relations with him in previous births. Once he said to me "You and I were living in the same lane, in a former birth." The little girl of three Santi Kirvandikar who fell into a well and was upheld by Baba's hand, slowly left in the water and thus saved from any hurt by Baba's grace and who called herself sister of Baba is now alive. Her father Baba Kirvandikar (now dead) was then living here. When she fell into the well, H.S.Dixit, G.M.Buty: etc, were here. That might be about 1915. She is married and is now living with her husband at Malegaon, which is 30 miles off Manmad.

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

When I was still at School, Chidambar Keshav Gadgil came to Shirdi and asked me. "It is said a great sādhu is here. Where is he?" I replied that there was none at Shirdi and from the school I pointed to the mosque and told him. "There is only this mad Fakir." Mr.Gadgil went to the

mosque. Sai Baba showered abuse on him. But the abuse was productive of faith and joy. Gadgil had worshipped or paid his respects to a saint living at Bhima Shankar temple at Poona. That saint had asked him to go and see the saint at Shirdi. That was why he had come to Shirdi. Now Sai in his abuse referred to that and Gadgil felt sure that Baba was a Gnani, a great saint. Thence forward he frequently visited Baba and became his staunch devotee. At the first visit of Mr. Gadgil he was a Chitnis, and with him came Vaman, a special Munisiff, and Sitaram Patwardhan, an Educational Officer, and a *tongawalla*. I went with these up to the steps of the Mosque, Baba forbade us from climbing the steps and began his shower of abuse. Therein he said "I am a Moslem. Go and fall at the feet of the sādhu at Bhimashankar temple, etc."

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

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

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

I shall recite Baba's strange goat purchase. Once a man had a number of goats with him. Two of his goats were worth about Rs.4/- each. Baba went to him, paid 32 Rupees for them and bought them. I and Tatyapa Patel learning the price Baba had paid said that in the bargain Baba had been duped, as the goats were worth only 4 Rs. each. Baba then

got pulses etc., for about 11/2 Rs. and fed the goats with the pulses. Then he explained why he acted like this. He found he said that the goats were looking at him entreatingly. Then Baba notice them. They were in their previous birth two women that had served Baba. But they were fiercely quarrelling with each other and had killed each other. They took birth as goats. Baba then went and returned the goats to their owner.

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

When Nana Saheb Nimonkar was staying at Shirdi, his son and daughter-in-law at Poona were attacked by plague. Mrs. and Mr.N wanted permission to go to Poona. Baba did not grant permission. Mrs.N. then wept. Baba said to her "Why do you cry? In 15 days' time your son will come here." Accordingly the son and his wife recovered and the son came to Shirdi within the period fixed by Baba.

Sai Baba enabled people to escape the clutches of death in such "*gandas*". Compare this with the way in which Samartha Ramdas enabled one to escape such a *Ganda*. At a particular time death was to seize a devotee. But Ramdas told the latter to remain by his side and be vigorously holding on to the feet of Ramdas. The appointed time came and passed away. Death had been kept at bay by Ramdas, and his devotee escaped death on that occasion.

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

When our NanaWali came, he was old. Baba encouraged him and said Nana kulup laga diya killi tere pas hai. nereku daganai denga. Mai daga nai denga. Nana wali was a *Sakshtkari* Purusha, who had thorough *Vairagya*. He ate pig's filth. He kept scorpions in his mouth and also yakuli and. unner Once he spat the unner Wali on Sai Baba. He wore no sacred thread.

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

XXV

26th September, 1936.

Mr. Kolambo, i.e. D.V.Sambhare, Gowd Saraswat, aged 57, Ville Parle says:

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

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

Baba's dakshina demands were often associated with a moral, e.g., putting down boastfulness, cupidity, evasion of obligations etc. Some months after the above incident I was at Shirdi. Baba did not ask me for any dakshina at all though he was asking others for it. I concluded that my having corrected my vice was, in his eyes, the great merit which was recognised or rewarded, by immunity from paying dakshina. I was at the wada boasting of this immunity in the presence of

friends. At once came a call from Baba and when I went to the mosque. Baba asked me for 2 rupees dakshina and I paid it. There was another devotee who had gone to Shirdi, who had a balance of 18 rupees odd with him. He had handed it over to me in secret with the view that he might truthfully tell Baba that he had no money if Baba should ask him for dakshina. This man was at the Masjid when I went to the Masjid and paid my 2 rupees. Baba turned to him and asked for 2 rupees dakshina and in order to prevent his evasive excuses, added "Take it from this man (pointing to me) and give it". The man's device had been found out. He got 2 rupees from the deposit with me and paid it. That man is (N.V) a proprietor of a press, Mugbat, Bombay. This was some time before Baba passed away.

We were there a few days before Baba passed away. When we went to take leave, we had no anticipation of the coming catastrophe. But Baba evidently knew of it. He said "You are coming from Bombay. You must go on hearing me speak. I should go on hearing you speak. But you are going away. Well well, (i.e., with hesitation). Go, You are going to reach your destination tomorrow noon." Any how leave was given that evening and we started by that night's train via Kopergaon, hoping as usual to reach Bombay (via Manmad) by 7.30 or 8 a.m. But when we reached Manmad we learnt that the engine of a train had gone out of order and there was a consequent delay of some four hours. As we reached Bombay, it struck twelve noon. Baba's anticipation or prediction was fulfilled. Baba passed away a few days later and we could then see why he was rather hesitating to give us leave. That was the final parting.

Some fourteen years ago, one night Baba came to me in a dream and said "Boy, you speak of me to others as your Guru. Have I given you prasad, i.e. initiation?" Then he made me wash my hands, and gave me a Maharatta sloka to repeat. I repeated it very well in my dream. This was my initiation. But when I woke, I remembered nothing of the sloka and even now I cannot recall the sloka. Two years ago, I completed my fifty fifth year. According to the rules of our company, one should retire at 55. So I was getting ready to be relieved. But at that time, I had a dream. Our big boss, the director, came

in the dream, to me and made me understand that I should not bother about leaving the company. Up to this time none has asked me to retire.

I have responsibilities to my family as I have 4 or 5 daughters and a son. Baba looks after all my affairs. I do not pray to him for anything. He knows what I require and it is up to him to give us what we need, if that be his wish. Why trouble him with requests, as though he either did not know what we want, or knowing it would not give what is good unless pestered with requests? We are content to let him do his will for us; and we are happy.

XXVI

9th December, 1936

Tukaram Barku, Aged 40, Mahar, Landlord, Shirdi says:

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

XXVII

23rd September, 1936

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

I had heard of Sai Baba. I had lost my 7 years old son Dattatreya and was greatly upset. I was thinking that I should go and see Sai baba. One day, I had a dream in which I saw five sadhus seated. I asked one of them "Which of these is Sai Baba?" And he pointed to one as Sai Baba. Then I proceeded to (Sai Baba) Shirdi taking with me Sitaphal (custard apple), Ramphal etc., of my own garden at Janjira, and presented them to Baba, took darshan and sat before him. The figure I had seen in my dream as Sai Baba was the very figure that I saw at Shirdi. Baba began to fall foul of me and abuse me saying "Why does the fool go on lamenting the loss of a son? It is merely going to the earth. The body must go to the earth. Why go on lamenting for that?" Again he said "Scatter your Ramphal far and wide." That (I learnt) meant, scatter knowledge, of course after obtaining it.

Then baba began to describe to someone present my house and my garden and state the exact number and locality of my Sitaphal and Ramphal trees etc., with the accuracy and certainty of neighbour, who had actually seen it often. He told others of me that I had lost my son fifteen days previously and was vainly lamenting over it. He was going on removing my poignant grief and fortifying my faith in him, by abundant proof that he knew everything about me and about every one that came to him. I stayed there for four days. During those days, many came to him and he told them facts about them which they mentioned to me and others, as remarkable proof of Baba's knowing everything.

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

first got a stay by the sudden and unexpected obtaining by me of leave, funds etc., for my first trip to Shirdi. I noticed that during the 4 days I stayed at Shirdi. Baba was full of Udasinatha. He rarely spoke. Mostly he remained absorbed in himself, and looked as immobile as one drunk or insane. One grand instance of Baba's help to me (long after he left the body) may be now given. In 1932, my young son was attacked with severe fever. After 3 or 4 days of such fever the pulse appeared to have failed. Our medical man Mr.J., M.B.,B.S was brought down to see the boy. He said that the pulse had ceased and the child was dead. He began to console my wife. I was quite ruffled and unwilling to accept his view. I took up some Udhi of Baba and applied it to the child's face and had placed Baba's photo before the boy and I was intently praying to Baba. The medical man said I was superstitious. I declared that Baba was God and would save the boy. About three fourths of an hour passed. Then the boy regained consciousness and actually got up and later began to play.