

The Life and Teachings of Sri Saibaba: A Biographical and Philosophical Study

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Abstract: Before we go into the wonderful life and teachings of Sri Saibaba we should first of all know about some of the great men born in the 19th Century and some in the 20th Century. All these great devotional men kept nothing for themselves and gave away everything for the welfare of all. They were Lord Ram Krishna born in February 18, 1836 and died in August 1886 after spending glorious life of 50 years and lived through Swami Vivekananda who spread his mission by establishing Ram Krishna Mission throughout the world. Then came the famous Trilanga Swami believed to have lived for 300 years with death at 1887 and established his mission at Varanasi. Except Jenne clement almost all the saints built their monastery at the places where they resided. B. N. Giri at Haridwar Ashram, S. K. Mitra Jan Kalyan Ashram at Calcutta, Saibaba at Haridwar. So we find that the greatest of all Divine saints have nothing to keep for themselves but give everything for the poor and down trodden.

Keywords: Sri Saibaba, Devotees, Cholera epidemic, Necessity of a Guru, Mission of saints.

1. Introduction

How the saint Sai got his name

When the marriage party came to Shirdi, it alighted at the foot of the Banyan tree in Bhagat Mhalsapati's field, near Khandobas temple. The carts were loosened in the open courtyard and the members of the party descended one by one and the Fakir also got down and accosted and young fakir getting down and accosted him, "Ya Sai" Welcome Sai! Others also addressed him Sai" and hence forth, He became Saibaba.

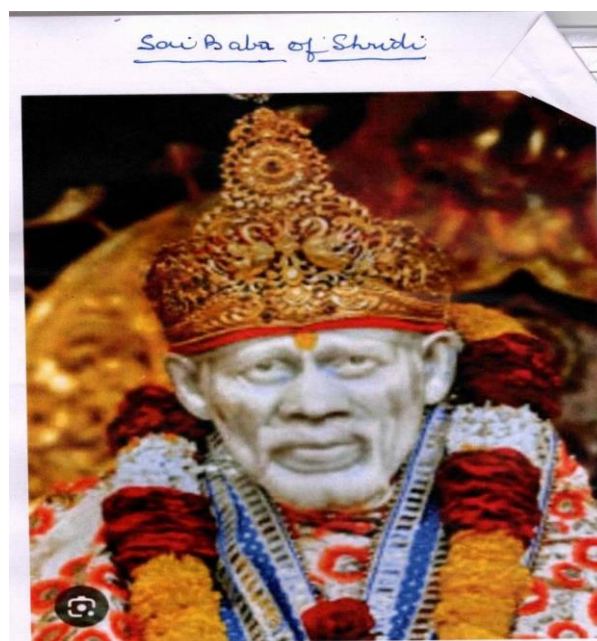
Object of Writing this article

Sai Babas miracle of checking and destroying the cholera epidemic by grinding wheat and throwing the flour on the outskirts of the village were known to all and so were other miracles and this delight burst forth into his poetic work. It shows the true and great path. The premier poet – saint of Maharashtra, Sri Dnyeshwar Maharaj has stated, that the Lord loves those who write the lives of saints, and the saints have their own peculiar method of assigning the service, which the devotees long for. The saint inspires the work, the devotees become only an indirect cause or an instrument in achieving the end. For instance, in 1700 Shakta Year 1, the poet Mahipati aspired, to write the lives of saints who inspired him and got the work done, and so also, in 1800 sakta year 2 Das Guru's service was accepted. The former wrote 4 works Bhakta Vijaya, sant vijaya, bhakta Leelamrut and Saint Leelamrut in which the lives of modern saints were described. In chapters 31, 32, 33 in Bhakta Leelamrut and in chapter 57 of saint Katha murut, the life and teachings of Baba were depicted. The life of Sai Baba is as wide and deep as the infinite ocean, and all can dive deep into the same and taking out the precious gems (of knowledge and bhakti) and distribute them to the aspiring people. The starrier, parables and teachings of the Baba are very wonderful. They will give peace and happiness to the people, who are affected with sorrows and heavily loaded with miseries of this worldly existence, and also bestow knowledge and wisdom, both inwardly and in spiritual domains. N these teachings of Sri Sai Baba, which are interesting and instructive as the Vedic lore, are listened to and meditated upon, the devotes will get what their long time wishes are viz. union with Brahma, mastery in eight

fold yoga, bliss of meditation etc.

Significant and Prophetic Title

The son of a friend of mine at Lonavala fell ill. My friend tried all means, physical and spiritual, but the fever would not abate. Although he got his Guru to sit by the bed sick of his son but tis too was of no avail. Hearing this I thought "What was the utility of the Guru, if he could not save my friends son ? If the Guru can't do anything for us, why should I go to Shirdi at all ? Thinking this way, I postponed by Shirdi trip but the inevitable must happen and it happened in my case as follows Mr Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was a Divisional Officer was going on tour to Bassein. From thana he came to Dadar and was waiting for a train to Bassein. Meanwhile, a Bandra local turned up. He sat on it and came to Bandra and sent for me and took me to task for putting off my Shirdi trip. Nana's argument for my Shirdi trip was convincing and delightful, and so I decided to start for Shirdi the same night. I packed up my luggage and started for Shirdi.



The Necessity of a Guru

After Hamad pant's meeting with Sri Sai Baba, Kakasaheb went to Baba and asked "where to go?" Baba said "High Up". Then the man said where is the way? Then the Baba said, "There are many ways leading there, there is on way from here (Shirdi) also. The way is difficult. There are tigers and wolves in the jungles on the way." Kaka Saheb asked, "But what if we take a guide with difficulty. The guide will take you to your destination, avoiding, wolves, tigers and ditches on the way. If there is no guide, there is the danger of being lost in the jungles or falling in the ditches. Mr Dabolkar was present on the occasion and he thought that, this was the answer Baba gave to the question, whether Guru was a necessity (vide Sai Leela – Vol I, No 5 P/47) ³ and he, thereupon took the hint that, no discussion whether man is free or bound, is of any way use in spiritual matters bit on the contrary real Paramhans is possible, only as the result of the teachings of the Guru as is illustrated in the Chapter of the original work, in the instances of great Avatars like Rama and Krishna, who had to admit themselves to their Gurus, Vasistha and Sandipani respectively for getting self-realization and that, the only virtues necessary for such progress are faith and patience.⁴

Mission of the Saints

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagwat Gita P/16 (Chapter IV 7 - 8) ⁵ that "Whenever there is a decay of Dharma (righteousness) and an ascendancy of unrighteousness, I manifest myself Age after Age".

This is the mission of he Lord, and the sages and the saints, who are His representatives, and who appear at appropriate times and work in their own way to fulfill that mission. For instance, when the twice born, i. e. the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas and the vaishyas neglect their duties, and when the Shudras try to usurp the duties of other classes, when spiritual preceptors are not respected but humiliated when nobody cares for religious instructions, when everybody thinks himself very learned, when people begin to partake of forbidden foods and intoxicating drinks, when people under the cloak of religion indulge in malpractices, when people belonging to different sects fight amongst themselves, when Brahmins fail to do sandy adoration and the orthodox leave their religions practices, when yogis neglect their meditation, when people begin to think that wealth, progeny, wife are their sole concern, and thus turn away from the true path of salvation then saints appear and try to set matters right by their words and actions. They serve us as their beacon lights and show us to follow. In this way many saints viz Nivarutti, Muktabai, Namdeva, Gora, Gonayi, Tukaram, Narsi Rai, Sajan Kasai, Sawata, Ram das and Various others did appear at various times to through the right path to people, and so, the present advent, came as Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi.

Shirdi – a Holi Truth

The banks of the Godavari river, in the Ahmed Nagar District, are very fortunate for they gave birth and refuge to many a saint, prominent among them being Dnyaneshwar, Shirdi also falls in the Kopergaon Taluka or the Ahmed Nagar District. After crossing the Godavari river at Kopergaon one gets on way to Shirdi. When you go three Kos (9 miles) you come to Nimgaon, from where Shirdi is visible. Shirdi is as famous as well - known as other places

like Gangapur, Nrisinhawadi, Audumbar, on the banks of Krishna river. As the devotee Damoji Ramdas at Sajjangad, as Shri Narsimha Saraswati, so Sainath flourished at Shirdi and blessed it.

Baba's Stories as Beacon Light

Light houses are constructed at various places in the sea, to enable to boatmen to avoid rocks and dangers, and make them sail and safely. Sai Baba's purpose serve a similar purpose in the ocean of worldly existence. They surpass nectar in sweetness, and make our worldly path smooth and easy to traverse. Blessed are the stories of the saints. When they enter the hearts through the ears, the body consciousness or egoism and the duality of the senses vanish, and when they are stored in the heart, doubts will evade, pride of the body will fall, and wisdom will be stored in abundance. The description of Baba's pure fame, and the hearing of the same with love, will destroy the sins of the devotee and therefore, this is the simple sadhana for getting salvation.

Motherly love of Sai Baba

Everybody knows, how a cow loves her infant calf. Her udder is always full of milk and when the calf wants milk it dashes at the udder, outcomes the milk in an unceasing flow. Similarly, a human mother knows the wants of her child before hand and feeds him, at her breast in time. In case of dressing and adoring the child, the mother takes particular care to see that, this is well done. The child knows or care nothing about this, but the mothers joy knew no bounds, when see her child well dressed and adorned. The love of the mother is peculiar extraordinary and disinterested, and has no parallel. Sadgurus feel this motherly love towards these disciplines. Saibaba had the same love towards all.

Baba's sweet and Nectar like words

One day noon, after Arati, devotees were returning to their lodgings when Baba gave this following advice:

"Be whatever you like, do whatever you choose, remember this well that what you do is known to me. I am the Inner Ruler of all and seated in your hearts, I envelope all the creatures, the moveable and immoral world. I am the controller the wire puller of this show of the universe. I am the Mother origin of all beings the harmony of three gunas, the propeller of all senses, the creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Nothing will harm him, who turns the attention towards me, but Maya will lash or whip him, who forgets me. All the insects, the visible, moveable and immovable world, is my body or form. " ⁶ Those who listen to Sri Sai Baba's stories will destroy their ignorance and will secure for them salvation. A miser may stay at various places, but he constantly thinks of his buried treasure, so let Baba be enthroned in the hearts of all.

Personality of Shri Saibaba

He conquered this Sansar (worldly existence) which is very difficult and hard to cross. Peace and calm was His ornament, and He was the repository of wisdom. He was the home of Vaishnava devotees, most generous (like Karma) amongst all, the quaint essence of all essences. He had no love for perishable things, and was always engrossed in self realization which was his sole concern. He feet no pleasure

in the things of this world or of the world beyond. His Anatarang (heart) was as a mirror, and his speech always rained nectar. The rich and the poor were the same for him. He neither knew nor cared for honour or dishonor. He was the Lord of all beings. He spoke freely and mixed with all people, watched the acting's and dances of nautch girls and heard gazal songs. Still he swerved not an inch from Samadhi mental equilibrium. The name of Allah was always on his lips. While the world awake he slept and while the world slept He was vigilant. His inner self was so calm as the deep sea, His 6 Baba's advice. Ashram could not be determined, nor his actions could be definitely determined, and though He sat (level) in one place, He knew all the transactions of the world. His Darbar was imposing He told hundreds of stories daily, still he swerved not an inch from his vow of silence. He always leaned against the wall of Masjid or walked morning, noon and evening towards Lendi (Nala) and chavadi and He all times abided in the self. Though a Siddha, He acted like a Sodhaka. He was meek, humble, egoless, and pleased all. Such was Saibaba, and as the soil of Saibaba was trodden by Sai Baba's feet, it attained extraordinary importance.

Baba's Dress and Daily Routine

In his young days, Sri Baba grew the hair on His head, never had his head shaved. He dressed like an athlete when he went to Rawata (3 miles) from Shirdi. He brought with him daily small plants of merrigold, jai and jui, and after cleaning them he planted and watered them. A devotee by name Vaman Tatya, supplied him daily with two unbaked earthen pitchers. With these Baba used to water the plants. He drew water from the well and carried the pitchers on his shoulders. In the evening the pitchers were kept at the foot of the Neem Tree. As soon as they were placed there, they broke as they were made of mud and not baked. Next day, Tata supplied two fresh pitchers. This course went on for 3 years and with Sai Baba's toil and effort these grew a garden on this site at present, stands a big mansion Samadhi mandir of Baba, which is now frequented by so many devotees.

The Story of Padukas (foot prints) under the Neem Tree

A devotee of Akkalakot Maharaj by name Bhai Krishnaji, worshipped the photo of Akkalkot Maharaj. He once thought of going to going Akkalkot (solapur district) take the darshan of the Padukas (foot prints) of the Maharaj and offer his sincere prayer there, but before he could go there, he got a vision in his dream. Akkalkot of Maharaj appeared in his vision and said to him. "Now Shirdi is my resting place, go there and offer your worship.¹" So Bhai changed his plan and came to Shirdi, Worshipped Baba, stayed there for six months and was happy. As a reminiscence of this vision etc he prepared the Padukas and installed them on an auspicious day of shraavan, shaka 1834 (1912 AD) 7 under the Neem Tree with due ceremonies and formalities conducted by Dada Kelkar and upasani. One Dixit Brahman was appointed for Worship, and the management was entrusted to devotee again.

Turning Water into Oil

Sai Baba was very fond of lights. He used to borrow oil from shopkeepers, and keep lamps burning the whole night in 7. Installed the Padukas on Shravan Shaka 1834 (1912 AD) some time. The Banias 8 who supplied oil at grates once met

together and decided not to give him oil. When as usual Baba went to ask for oil, they all give him a distinct No. Unperturbed Baba went to the Masjid and kept the dry wicks in the lamps with it. The Banias were watching him curiously Baba took the turmoil (pot) which contained very little (a few drops) of oil, put water into it and drank it, then forced it out to fall in the container. After consecrating the tin - pot in this way. He again took the water from the tin pot and filled the lamps and lighted them. To the surprise and dismay of the watching Banias, the lamps began to burn and kept burning the whole night. Thus, the Banias repenting and apologized and forgave them, and asked them truthfully to be in future. This was the Charismatic Baba. This were the few words with which he pacified them and never wounded them.

Efficiency of the touch of the Guru's Hand

The word Sadguru brings to mind Sai Baba the Perfect Master. He appears to all as if appearing before them and applying Udi (Sacredashes) to their forehead and placing his and of blessing on their head. The joy fills their heart and love overflows their eyes. Wonderful is the power of the touch of Guru's hand. The subtle body (consisting of thoughts and desires) which cannot be burnt by gross fire is destroyed by the touch of the Guru's hand, and the signs of many past truths are cleaned and washed away. If any one prostrates before Sai and surrenders his heart and soul to him, then all the chief objects of life, viz Dharma (righteousness) Artha (wealth) Kama (Desire) and Moksha (Deliverance) are attained easily and unsolicitedly. Four paths, viz, of Karma Dhyana, Yoga lead us separately to God. Of these, the path of Bhakti is thorny and full of pits and ditches, and thus difficult to traverse, but "if you, relying on your sadguru avoid the pits and thorns and walk straight, it will take to your destination (God)" 9 as says Sai Baba.

Wonderful Incarnation

Sri Saibaba knew all yogic practices. He was well versed in the six - processes including Dhauti (stomach cleaning, by a moist red piece of linen 3" in breadth and 22 1/2" in length), Khandayog, i. e. separating his limbs and joining them again and Samadhi etc. If you thought him to be a yavan he looked like a pious Hindu. No one definitely knew whether he was a Hindu or a Moham medan. He celebrated the Hindu festival of Ram Navami with all formalities, and at the same time permitted the sandal procession of the Mohammedans. He encouraged wrestling bouts in this festival. When the Gokul Astami came, he got the Gopal Kaa ceremony duly performed, and on Eid Festival, he allowed the Mohammedans to say their prayers (Nawaj in his Masjid).

Baba's Yogic practices

Baba knew all the processes and practices of yoga. Two of them are described here –

- 1) **DHAUTI KRIYA & CLEANING PROCESS** – Every third day, Baba went to the well near Banyan tree, at a considerable distance from the Masjid washed his mouth and had a path. On one occasion, he was throwing up this intestines, clean them inside and outside and place them in a jamb tree for drying.
- 2) **The second process in Khanda Yoga** – In this practice Baba extracted the limbs from the body and left them at separate places in the Masjid once a gentleman went to

the Masjid and saw the lying separately at different places. He was terrified he first thought of running to the village offices and informing them of Baba being hacked to pieces and murdered. He thought perhaps he would be held responsible as he was the first informant and knew something of the affair. So, he kept silent. But the next day when he went to the Masjid, he was very much surprised to see Baba hail and hearty as before. He thought that what he had seen in the previous day was only a dream.

Baba's all pensiveness and Mercy Importance of Human Birth Special Value of human body Babas begging food. Baba was always merciful and never ill treated anyone. He knew the importance of birth and why a human body has special value and why was he dependent on others for food. He always begged for food and took what ever he got in his bowl. Sometimes he had to fast for days together without and food or drink. The food he collected was kept in an earthen pot from where dogs and cats were freely to eat.

2. Summary

If we go through the article from the beginning to the end we find that how the saint got its name, how the title is significant and prophetic and why the Guru is a necessary part of worship etc and what is the mission of the saints. How Lord Krishna says that whenever there is a decay of Dharma (righteousness) and an ascendancy of unrighteousness. He manifests himself age after age. He has given his stories in the form of bacons and how his motherly love affects the children. A very good example of how the cow loves her calf. His sweet words are like nectar and he says I am the Inner Ruler of all and seated in everyone's hearts and how is the controller wire puller of this show and he acted as the mother origin of all beings the harmony of the three gunas, the propeller of all saints, the creator, preserver and destroyer. We should know how he was simple in wearing his dress and how simplicity was his hall mark as a result of which his behaviour carried the hall mark of his character. (Please read para 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13)

Conclusion

There is nothing much to say except that he had a wonderful Bed -stead comprising of 4 arms in length and only a span in breadth for sleeping upon. Instead of keeping the plank on the floor and sleeping on it, Baba tied it like a swing to the rafters of the Masjid with old shards or rags and were commenced to sleep upon it. He has the manifestation of a Brahma and looked like a man three cubits and a half in length still he dwelt in the hearts of others. Inwardly, He was attached and different but outwardly, he longed for man's welfare. Though inwardly he had the state of Brahma,

outwardly he, looked engrossed in the world. Sometimes he looked on all with affection and at times he threw stones at them, sometimes he scolded them while at times he embraced them and was composed calm composed, and tolerant and he always abided and glossed in the self, and he was well exposed towards his Bhaktas.

Babas Mission and Advice

Saint Ramdas (1608 - 1681) flourished in the 17th Century, and fulfilled to a great extent his mission of protecting cows and Brahmins against the yavanas (Mohameddars) but within two centuries after him, the split between two communities, Hindus and Mohammadians burdened up and Sai Baba came to bridge that gulf. His constant was to all was to this effect. Ram the God of the Hindus and Rama the God of the Mohammedians were and the same and there was not the slightest differences between them then why should their denotations fall out and quarrel out among themselves? You ignorant folk join hands, and bring forth the communities together and safely thus you will gain your object of national unity. It is not good and dispute to argue so don't argue and emulate others. Always consider your interest and welfare. The God will protect you.

3. Conclusion

There is nothing more to pen than what has been mentioned above regarding the greatest devotion said that the world has ever seen. His plain living and simplicity is always to imitate. His miracles are worthy of. Whatever he says is ready to acceptability. Babas touch of the earthy land and his mission for saints and his missionary advice are to follow. Baba's sweet and nectar like words and stories serve as a beacon light to others. He never kept anything for himself he only had a begging bowl from which the ants, crows, parrots etc are there for all. Sometimes he had to live for several days without any water and food and was always satisfied. These are his golden rules.

References

- [1] 1700 SA + 78 = 1778 AD + Vikrama Year
- [2] 1800 Bhakta Year 1878 AD
- [3] Sri Sai Leela Vol - I No.6, P 47
- [4] Sri Sai Charitra Chapter II, 192
- [5] Bhagwat Gita (Chapter IV) 7 - 8
- [6] Baba's Advice
- [7] Install the Padukas on Shravan Shaka 1834 (1912 AD)
- [8] The Baniyas.
- [9] If you relying on your said Guru avoid the pets and thorns and walk straight it will take it to your destination (God)

Photo's of Saibaba's Guru Sthan and Nanda Deep

