

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapter X (10)

Sai Baba's Mode of Life - His Sleeping - board - His Stay in Shirdi - His Teachings - His Humility - The Easiest Path.

Remember Him (Sai Baba) always with love, for He was engrossed in doing good to all, and always abided in His Self. To remember Him only is to solve the riddle of life and death. This is the best and easiest of Sadhanas, as it involves no expenditure. A little exertion here brings great rewards. So as long as our senses are sound, we should, minute by minute, practice this Sadhana. All other Gods are illusory ; Guru is the only God. If we believe in Sad-guru's holy feet, he can change our fortune for the better. If we serve Him nicely, we get rid of our Samsar. We need not study any philosophy like the Nyaya and the Mimansa. If we make Him our Helmsman, we can easily cross over the sea of all our pains and sorrows. As we trust the helmsman in crossing rivers and seas, so we have to trust our Sadguru in getting over the ocean of worldly existence. The Sadguru looks to the intense feeling and devotion of his devotees, endows them with knowledge and eternal bliss.

In the last chapter, Baba's mendicancy, and devotees' experiences and other subjects are dealt with. Let the readers now hear, where and how Baba lived, how He slept, and how He taught etc.

Baba's Wonderful Bed-Stead

Let us first see where and how Baba slept, Mr. Nanasaheb Dengale brought, for Sai Baba, a wooden plank, amount 4 cubits in length and only a span in breath, for sleeping upon. Instead of keeping the plank on the floor and then sleeping on it, Baba tied it like a swing to the rafters of the Masjid with old shreds or rags and commenced to sleep upon it. The rags were so thin and worn out that it was a problem how they could bear or support even weight of the plank itself, let alone the weight of Baba. But somehow or other-it was Baba's sheer Leela that the worn out rags did sustain the plank, with the weight of Baba on it. On the four corners of this plank, Baba lighted panatis (earthen lamps), one at each corner, and kept them burning the whole night. It was a sight for the Gods to see Baba sitting or sleeping on this plank! It was a wonder to all, how Baba got up and down the plank. Out of curiosity, many careful

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observers kept watching the process of mounting and dismounting, but none succeeded. As crowds began to swell so to detect this wonderful feat, Baba one day broke the plank into pieces and threw it away. Baba had all the eight Siddhis (powers) at His command. He never practiced nor craved for them. They came to Him naturally, as a result of His perfection.

Sagun Manifestation of Brahman

Though Sai Baba looked like a man, three cubits and a half in length, still He dwelt in the hearts of all. Inwardly, he was unattached and indifferent, but outwardly, He longed for public welfare. Inwardly most disinterested, He looked outwardly full of desires, for the sake of His devotees. Inwardly an abode of peace, he looked outwardly restless. Inwardly He had the state of Brahman, outwardly He acted like a devil. Inwardly He had the state of Brahman, outwardly he acted like a devil. Inwardly He loved Adwaita (union or monism), outwardly He got entangled with 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 calm, composed, tolerant and well-balanced. He always abided and was engrossed in the Self and was well-disposed towards His Bhaktas. He always sat on one Asan and never travelled. His 'band' was a small stick, which He always carried in His hand. He was calm, being thought-free. He never cared for wealth and fame and lived on begging. Such a life He led. He always uttered 'Allah Malik' (God the real owner). Entire and unbroken was His love for the Bhaktas. He was the mine or store-house for self-knowledge and full of Divine Bliss. Such was the Divine Form of Sai Baba, boundless, endless and undifferentiated. One principle which envelopes the whole universe, (from a stone pillar to Brahma) incarnated in Sai Baba. The really meritorious and fortunate people got this treasure-trove in their hands, while those people who not knowing the real worth of Sai Baba took or take Him to be a man, a mere human being, were and are indeed miserable.

His Stay in Shirdi and Probable Birth-date

None knew or knows the parents and exact birth-date of Sai Baba; but it can be approximately determined by His stay in Shirdi. Baba first came to

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Shirdi, when he was a young lad of sixteen and stayed there for three years. Then all of a sudden He disappeared for some time. After some time, He reappeared in the Nizam state near Aurangabad, and again came to Shirdi with the marriage-party of Chand Patil, when He was twenty years old. Since then, He stayed in Shirdi continuously for a period of sixty years, after which Baba took His Maha-Samadhi in the year 1918. From this we can say that the year of Baba's birth is approximately 1838 A.D.

Baba's Mission and Advice

Saint Ramadas (1608-1681) flourished in the 17th century, and fulfilled to a great extent his mission of protecting cows and Brahmins against the Yavanas (Mahomedans), but within two centuries after him, the split between the two communities -- Hindus and Mahomedans widened again, and Sai Baba came to bridge the gulf. His constant advice to all was to this effect. "Rama (the God of the Hindus) and Rahim (the God of the Mahomedans) were one and the same; there was not the slightest difference between them; then why should their devotees and quarrel among themselves? You ignorant folk, children, join hands and bring both the communities together, act sanely and thus you will gain your object of national unity. It is not good to dispute and argue. So don't argue, don't emulate others. Always consider your interest and welfare. The Lord will protect you. Yoga, sacrifice, penance, and knowledge are the means to attain God. If you do not succeed in this by any means, vain is your birth. If any one does any evil unto you, to do not retaliate. If you can do anything, do some good unto other." This in short was Sai Baba's advice to all; and this will stand in good stead both in material and spiritual matters.

Sai Baba as Sadguru

There are Gurus and Gurus. There are many so-called Gurus, who go about from house to house with cymbals and veena in their hands, and make a show of their spirituality. They blow mantras into the ears of their disciples and extract money from them. They profess to teach piety and religion to their disciples, but are themselves impious and irreligious. Sai Baba never thought of making the least show of His worth (piety). Body-consciousness, He had none,

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but He had great love for the disciples. There are two kinds of Gurus (1) 'Niyat' (appointed or fixed) and (2) 'Aniyat' unappointed or general). The latter by their advice develop the good qualities in us, purify our hearts and set us on the path of salvation; but contact with the former, dispels our quality (sense of difference); and establishes us in Unity by making us realize "Thou art that". There are various Gurus imparting to us various kinds of worldly knowledge, but he, who fixes us in our Nature (Self) and carries us beyond the ocean of worldly existence, is the Sadguru. Sai Baba was such a Sadguru. His greatness is indescribable. If anybody went to take His darshana, he, without being asked, would give every detail of his past, present and future life. He saw Divinity in all beings. Friends and foes were alike to Him. Disinterested and equal-balanced, He obliged the evil-doers. He was the same in prosperity and adversity. No doubt, ever touched Him. Though He possessed the human body, He was not in the least attached to His body or house. Though He looked embodied, He was really disembodied, i.e., free in this every life.

Blessed are the people of Shirdi, who worshipped Sai as their God. While eating, drinking, working in their backyards and fields and doing various household works, they always remembered Sai and sang His glory. They knew no other God except Sai. What to speak of the love, the sweetness of the love, of the women of Shirdi! They were quite ignorant, but their pure love inspired them to compose poems or songs in their simple rural language. Letters or learning they had none, still one can discern real poetry in their simple songs. It is not intelligence, but love, that inspires real poetry as such. Real poetry is the manifestation of true love; and this can be seen and appreciated by intelligent listeners. Collection of these folk songs is desirable and Baba willing, some fortunate devotee may undertake the task of collecting and publishing these folk-songs, either in the Sai Leela magazine or separately in a book-form.

Baba's Humility

Lord or Bhagwan is said to have six qualities, viz. (1) Fame, (2) Wealth, (3) Non-attachment, (4) Knowledge, (5) Grandeur, and (6) Generosity. Baba had all these in Him. He incarnated in flesh for the sake of the Bhaktas. Wonderful was

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His grace and kindness! He drew the devotees to Him, or how else one could have known Him! For the sake of His Bhaktas Baba spoke such words, as the Goddess of Speech dare not utter. Here is a specimen. Baba spoke very humbly as follows:- "Slave of slaves I am your debtor, I am satisfied at your darshan. It is a great favor that I saw your feet. I am an insect in your excreta. I consider Myself blessed thereby". What humility is this? If anybody would think that by publishing this, any disrespect is shown to Sai, we beg His pardon and to atone for this we sing and chant Baba's name.

Though Baba seemed outwardly to enjoy sense-objects, he had not the least flavor in them, nor even the consciousness of enjoying them. Though He ate, he had no taste and though He saw, He never felt any interest in what He saw. Regarding passion, He was as perfect a celibate as Hanuman. He was not attached to anything. He was pure consciousness, the resting place of desire, anger, and other feelings. In short, He was disinterested, free and perfect. A striking instance may be cited in illustration of this statement.

Nanavalli

There was in Shirdi, a very quaint and queer fellow, by name Nanavalli. He looked to Baba's work and affairs. He once approached Baba who was seated on His Gadi (seat) and asked Him to get up, as he wanted to occupy the same. Baba at once got up and left the seat, which he occupied. After sitting there awhile Nanavalli got up, and asked Baba to take His seat. Then Baba sat on the seat and Nanavalli fell at His feet, and then went away. Baba did not show the slightest displeasure in being dictated to and ousted.

This Nanavalli loved Baba so much that he breathed his last, on the thirteenth day of Baba's taking Maha-Samadhi.

The Easiest Path

Hearing the stories of the Saints and Being in their Company:

Though Sai Baba acted outwardly like an ordinary man, His actions showed extraordinary intelligence and skill. Whatever He did, was done for the

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good of His devotees. He never prescribed any asan, regulation of breathing or any rites to His Bhaktas, nor did He blow any mantra into their ears. He told them to leave off all cleverness and always remember "Sai" "Sai". "If you did that" He said, "all your shackles would be removed and you would be free". Sitting between five fires, sacrifices, chanting, eight-fold Yoga are possible for the Brahmins only. They are of no use to the other classes. The function of the mind is to think, it cannot remain for a minute without thinking. If you give it a Sense-object, it will think about it. If you give it to a Guru, it will think about Guru. You have heard most attentively the greatness, grandeur of Sai. This is the natural remembrance, worship and Kirtan of Sai. Hearing the stories of the Saints is not so difficult, as the other Sadhanas mentioned above. They (stories) remove all fear of this Samsar (worldly existence), and take you on to the spiritual path. So listen to these stories, meditate on them, and assimilate them. If this is done, not only the Brahmins, but women and lower classes will get pure and holy. You may do or attend to your worldly duties, but give your mind to Sai and His stories, and then, He is sure to bless you. This is the easiest path, but why do not all take to it? The reason is that without God's grace, we do not get the desire to listen to the stories of Saints. With God's grace everything is smooth and easy. Hearing the stories of the Saints is, in a way, keeping their company. The importance of the company of Saints is very great. It removes our body-consciousness and egoism, destroys completely the chain of our birth and death, cuts asunder all the knots of the heart, and takes us to God, Who is pure Consciousness. It certainly increases our non-attachment to sense-objects, and makes us quite indifferent to pleasures and pains, and leads us on the spiritual path. If you have no other Sadhana, such as uttering God's name, worship or devotion etc., but if you take refuge in them (Saints) whole-heartedly, they will carry you off safely across the ocean of worldly existence. It is for this reason that the Saint manifest themselves in this world. even sacred rivers such as the Ganges, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri etc., which wash away the sins of the world, desire that the Saints should come to them, for a bath and purify them. Such is the grandeur of the Saints. It is on account of the store of merit in past births that we have attained the feet of Sai Baba.

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We conclude this chapter with meditation on Sai's Form. He, the beautiful and handsome Sai, standing on the edge of the Masjid and distributing Udi to each and every Bhakta, with a view to his welfare. He who thinks the world as naught and Who is ever engrossed in Supreme Bliss -- before Him -- we humbly prostrate ourselves.

Bow to Shri Sai -- Peace be to all

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