



## CHAPTER VII

*Wonderful Incarnation – Behaviour of Sai Baba – His Yogic practices – His All-pervasiveness and Mercy – Leper Devotee's service – Master Khaparde's plague case – Going to Pandharpur*

### **Wonderful Incarnation**

Sai Baba knew all Yogic practices. He was well-versed in the six processes including Dhauti (stomach-cleaning, by a moistened piece of linen 3' in breadth and 22½' in length), Khandayog, i.e. separating His limbs and joining them again and Samadhi etc. If you thought that He was a Hindu, He looked like a Yavan. 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 Mohammeden. He celebrated the Hindu festival of Ram Navami with all due formalities, and at the same time permitted the 'Sandal' procession of the Mohammedens. He encouraged wrestling bouts in this festival. When the Gokul Ashtami came, He got the 'Gopal-kala' ceremony duly performed, and on Id festivals, He allowed the Mohammedens, to say their prayers (Namaz) in His Masjid. Once, during a Moharrum festival, some Mohammedens proposed to construct a Taziya or Tabut in the Masjid, keep it there for some days and afterwards take it in procession through village. Sai Baba allowed the keeping of the Tabut for four days and on the fifth day got it removed from the Masjid, without the least compunction. If we say that He was a Mohammeden, His ears were pierced (i.e. had holes, according to Hindu custom). If you think that He was a Hindu, He advocated the practice of circumcision (though, according to Mr. Nanasahab Chandorkar, who observed Him closely, He was not Himself circumcised. Vide article in Sai Leela on "Baba Hindu ki Yavan", by B.V. Dev, page 562). If you call Him Hindu, He always lived in the Masjid; if Mohammeden, He had always the Dhuni-sacred fire there, and the following things, which are contrary to Mohammeden religion, i.e., grinding on the handmill, blowing of the conch and bells, oblation in the fire, Bhajan, giving of food and worship of Baba's Feet by means of Arghya (water), were allowed there. If you think that He was a Mohammeden, the best of Brahmins and Agnihotris, leaving aside their orthodox ways, fell prostrate at His Feet. Those who went to make enquiries about His caste, were dumb-founded and were captured by

His darshan. So, none could definitely decide, whether Sai Baba was a Hindu or a Mohammeden\*. This is no wonder for he who completely surrenders himself to the Lord, by getting rid of his egoism and body-consciousness, thus becomes one with Him, and has nothing to do with any questions of caste or nationality. Baba saw no difference between any two castes and even between beings. He took meat and fish with Fakirs but did not grumble, when dogs touched the dishes with their mouths.

Such a unique and wonderful incarnation was Sai Baba. On account of the merits in my past birth, I had the good fortune to sit at His Feet and enjoy His blessed company. The joy and delight I derived therefrom, was incomparable. In fact, Sai Baba was pure Anand and consciousness. I cannot sufficiently describe Him, His greatness and uniqueness. He who took delight at His Feet, was established in His own self. Many Sanyaasis, Sadhaks and all sorts of men aspiring for salvation came to Sai Baba. He always walked, talked and laughed with them and always uttered "Allah Malik" (God is the sole owner). He never liked discussion or disputation. He was always calm and controlled, though irritable at times, always preached Vedanta and nobody knew till the last, Who was Baba? Princes and poor people were treated alike by Him. He knew the inmost secrets of all and when He gave expression to them, all were surprised. He was the repository of all knowledge, still He feigned ignorance. He also disliked honour. Such were the characteristics of Sai Baba. Though He had a human body, His deeds testified to His Godhood. All people considered Him as the God in Shirdi.

### **Behaviour of Sai Baba**

Ignorant that I am, I cannot describe Baba's miracles. He got almost all the temples in Shirdi repaired. Through Taty Patil, the temples of Shani, Ganapati, Shankar-Parvati, Village Diety and Maruti were put in order. His charity was also remarkable. The money He used to collect as Dakshina, was freely distributed, Rs. 20 to some, Rs. 15 or 50 to others, every day. The recipients thought that this was 'pure' charity money; and Baba wished that it should be usefully employed.

People benefitted immensely by having Baba's darshan. Some became hale and hearty, wicked people were turned into good ones.

Leprosy was cured in some cases, many got their desires fulfilled, without any medicine being put in the eyes, some blind men got back their sight and some lame ones got their limbs. Nobody could see the end of His extraordinary greatness. His fame spread far and wide, and pilgrims from all sides flocked to Shirdi. Baba had his 'Asan' near the Dhuni and always rested there. He sat there in meditation, sometimes without a bath.

He used to tie a small white turban on His head and wear a clean Dhotar round His waist, and a shirt on His body. This was His attire in the beginning. He first practised medicine in the village, He examined patients and gave medicines. He was always successful and He became famous as a Hakim (doctor). A curious case may be narrated here. One devotee had his eyes quite red and swollen. No doctor was available in Shirdi. The other devotees took him to Baba. In such cases other doctors would use ointments, Anjans, cow's milk and camphorated drugs etc. Baba's remedy was quite unique. He pounded some 'Beeba' (some *Carpus Ana Cardium*, i.e. marking nuts) and made two balls of them and thrust them on in each eye of the patient and wrapped a cloth – bandage round them. Next day the bandage was removed and water was poured over them. The inflammation subsided and the pupils became white and clear. Though, the eyes are very delicate, the Beeba caused no hurt but removed the disease of the eyes. Many such cases were cured, this is only one instance in this regard.

### **Baba's Yogic Practices**

Baba knew all the processes and practices of Yoga. Two of them will be described here :

(1) **DHAUTI KRIYA or CLEANSING 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 bath. On one occasion, He was seen throwing up His intestines, clean them inside outside and place them on a Jamb tree for drying. There are people in Shirdi, who have actually seen this and who have testified to this fact. Ordinary Dhauti is done by a moistened piece of linen, 3 inches broad 22½ ft. long. This piece is gulped down the throat and allowed to remain in the stomach for about half an hour for being reacted there and then taken out. But Baba's Dhauti was quite unique and extraordinary. (2)

**KHANDA YOGA :** In this practice Baba extracted the limbs from His body and left them separately at different places in the Masjid. Once a gentleman went to the Masjid and saw the limbs of Baba lying in separate places. He was terrified, he first thought of running to the village officers and informing them of Baba being hacked to pieces and murdered. He thought that perhaps he would be held responsible, as he was the first informant and knew something of the affair. So he kept silent. But, next day, when he went to the Masjid, he was very much surprised to see Baba, hale and hearty as before. He thought that what he had seen the previous day, was only a dream.

Baba practised Yoga since His infancy and nobody knew or guessed the proficiency He had attained in it. He charged no fees for His cures, became renowned and famous by virtue of His merits, gave health to many a poor and suffering person. This famous Doctor of doctors cared not for His interests, but always worked for the good and welfare of others, Himself suffering unbearable and terrible pain many a time in the process. One such instance I will relate now, which will show the all-pervasive and the most merciful character of Sai Baba.

### **Baba's All-pervasiveness and Mercy**

In the year 1910, Baba was sitting near the Dhuni on Diwali and warming Himself. He was putting fire-wood into the Dhuni, which was burning brightly. A little later instead of pushing logs of wood, Baba pushed His arm into the Dhuni, His arm was scorched and burnt. This was noticed by the errand boy Madhav and also by Madhavrao Deshpande (Shama). They, at once, ran to Baba and Madhavrao clasped Baba, by His waist from behind and dragged Him forcibly backward and asked, "Deva, why You done this?" Then Baba came to His senses and replied, "The wife of a blacksmith at some distant place was working the bellows of a furnace, her husband called her, forgetting that her child was on her lap, she got up hastily and the child slipped into the furnace. I immediately thrust My hand into the furnace and saved the child. I do not mind My arm being burnt but, I am glad that the life of the child is saved."

### **Leper Devotee's Service**

On hearing the news of Baba's hand being burnt from (Shama)

Madhavrao Deshpande, Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar accompanied by the famous doctor Parmanand of Mumbai with his medical outfit, consisting of ointments, lint and bandages etc. rushed to Shirdi and requested Baba to allow Dr. Parmanand to examine the arm and dress the wound, caused by the burn. This was refused. Ever since the burnt arm was dressed by Bhagoji Shinde, a leper devotee. His treatment consisted in massaging the burnt part with Ghee<sup>1</sup> and then, placing a leaf over it and bandaging it tightly. Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar solicited Baba many a time to unfasten the bandages, get the wound examined, dressed and treated by Dr. Parmanand, with the object that it may heal fast. Dr. Parmanand himself made similar requests but Baba postponed it by saying that Allah was His Doctor and did not allow His arm to be examined. Dr. Parmanand's medicines were not exposed to the air of Shirdi and they remained intact, but he had the good fortune of getting a darshan of Baba. Bhagoji was allowed to treat the hand daily. After some days, the arm healed and all were happy. Still we do not know whether any trace of pain was left or not. Every morning, Bhagoji went through his programme of untying the bandages, massaging the arm with ghee and tightly bandaging it again. This went on till Sai Baba's Samadhi (death). Sai Baba a perfect Siddha as He was did not really want this treatment, but out of love for His devotee, He allowed the 'Upasana' – service of Bhagoji to go on uninterrupted all along. When Baba started for Lendi, Bhagoji held an umbrella over Him and accompanied Him. Every morning when Baba sat near the post close to the Dhuni, Bhagoji was present and started his service. Bhagoji was a sinner in his past birth. He was suffering from leprosy, his fingers had shrunk, his body was full of pus and smelling badly. Though outwardly he seemed so unfortunate, he was really very lucky and happy, for he was the premier servant of Baba, and got the benefit of His company.

### **Master Khaparde's Plague Case**

I shall now relate another instance of Baba's wonderful Leela. Mrs. Khaparde, the wife of Mr. Dadasaheb Khaparde of Amaravati, was staying at Shirdi with her young son for some days. One day the son got high fever, which further developed into bubonic plague. The mother was frightened and felt most uneasy. She thought of leaving the place

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1. Ghee – It is prepared by melting the butter and boiling it for sometime and then filtering it.

for Amaravati and went near Baba in the evening, when He was coming near the Wada (now Samadhi Mandir) in His evening rounds, for asking His permission. She informed Him in a trembling tone, that her dear young son was down with plague. Baba spoke kindly and softly to her, saying that the sky is beset with clouds; but they will melt and pass off and everything will be smooth and clear. So saying He lifted up His Kafni up to the waist and showed to all present, four fully developed bubos, as big as eggs and added, "See, how I have to suffer for My devotees, their difficulties are Mine." Seeing this unique and extraordinary deed (Leela), the people were convinced as to how the saints suffer pains for their devotees. The hearts of the saints is softer than wax, it is soft in and out as butter. They love their devotees without any idea of gain, and regard them as their true relatives.

### Going to Pandharpur

I shall now close this chapter, after relating a story illustrating how Sai Baba loved His devotees and anticipated their wishes and movements. Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was a great devotee of Baba, was Mamlatdar<sup>1</sup> at Nandurbar in Khandesh. He got an order of transfer to Pandharpur. His devotion to Sai Baba bore fruit, as he got an order to go and stay at Pandharpur which is regarded as the 'Bhuvaikuntha' – Heaven on the earth. Nanasaheb had to take immediate charge, so he left for the place without even writing or informing anybody at Shirdi. He wanted to give a surprise visit at Shirdi – his Pandharpur, see and salute his Vithoba (Baba) and then proceed further. Nobody knew of Nanasaheb's departure for Shirdi but Sai Baba knew all about this, as His eyes were everywhere (omniscient). As soon as Nanasaheb approached Nimgaon, a few miles from Shirdi, there was a stir in the masjid at Shirdi. Baba was sitting and talking with Mhalsapati, Appa Shinde and Kashiram, when He at once said, "Let us all four do some Bhajan, the doors of Pandhari are open, let us sing merrily!" Then they began to sing in chorus, the bhava of the song being "I have to go to Pandharpur and I have to stay on there, for it is the house of my Lord."

Baba sang and the devotees followed Him. After a shortwhile Nanasaheb came there with his family, prostrated before Baba and requested Him to accompany them to Pandharpur and stay with them

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1. Mamlatdar – Revenue Officer

there. This solicitation was not necessary, as the devotees told Nanasaheb that Baba was already in the mood of going to Pandharpur and staying there. Hearing this Nanasaheb was moved and fell at Baba's Feet. Then after getting Baba's permission, Udi (sacred ash) and blessings, Nanasaheb left for Pandharpur.

There is no end to Baba's stories; but let me now stop here, reserving for the next chapter other topics, such as importance of human life, Baba's living on alms, Baijabai's service and other stories.

**Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all**