



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### Greatness of Udi

*Scorpion sting and Plague cases cured – Jamner  
Miracle – Narayan Rao's sickness – Balabua Sutar –  
Appasaheb Kulkarni – Haribhau Karnik*

In the last chapter we described the greatness of the Guru; now in this we will describe the greatness of Udi. However both are interlinked. The greatness of Udi is due to the spiritual grandeur of Baba.

#### Preliminary

Let us now bow before the great saints. Their merciful glances will destroy mountains of sins and do away with all the blemishes of our character. Their talk gives us good teachings and confers on us invaluable happiness. Their minds do not know any difference, such as "This is ours and that is yours." Such differentiation never arises in their minds. Their debts (obligations) will never be repaid by us in this birth, as well as in many future births.

#### Udi

It is well-known that Baba took dakshina from all and out of the amount thus collected, He spent on charity and purchased fuel. This fuel He put in the dhuni – the sacred fire, which He kept ever burning. The ash from this fire was called Udi, and it was freely distributed to the devotees, at the time of their departure from Shirdi.

What did Baba teach by this Udi? Baba taught by this Udi that all the visible phenomena in the universe are as transient as the ash. Our bodies composed of matter of the five elements, will fall down, after all their enjoyments are over and be reduced to ashes. In order to remind the devotees of the fact that, their bodies will be reduced to ashes, Baba distributed Udi to them. Baba also taught by the Udi that the Brahma is the only Reality and the universe is ephemeral, and that no one in this world, be he a son, father or wife, is really ours. We come here (in this world) alone and we have to go from here alone. It has been found that the Udi cured many physical and mental maladies but Baba wanted

to repeat into the devotee's ears the principles of discrimination between the Unreal and the Real, He taught non-attachment for the unreal by His Udi and Dakshina. The former (Udi) taught us discrimination and the latter (Dakshina) taught us non-attachment. Unless we have these two things it is not possible for us to cross over the sea of the mundane existence. So Baba asked for dakshina, and while the devotees took leave He gave Udi as Prasad, besmeared some of it on their foreheads and placed His boon-conferring hand on them. When Baba was in a cheerful mood He used to sing merrily. One such song was about Udi. The meaning of this song was : "Oh, playful Ram, come, come and bring with you sacks of Udi,"\* Baba used to sing in very clear and tender tones.

So besides the spiritual implication of Udi, it had also its material significance. It conferred health, prosperity, freedom from anxiety and many other worldly gains. So, the Udi has helped us to gain both our ends – material as well as spiritual. We shall now begin with the stories about the Udi.

### **Scorpion-sting**

Narayan Motiram Jani of Nasik was a devotee of Baba. He was serving under another devotee of Baba, by name Ramchandra Vaman Modak. Once he went to Shirdi with his mother and saw Baba. Then Baba Himself told her that her son should start independent business. Some days after this prophecy turned true. Narayan Jani left service and started a boarding house – 'Anand Ashram', which thrived well. Once a friend of this Narayanrao was stung by a scorpion and the pain caused by it was severe and unbearable. Udi is most efficacious in such cases; it is to be applied on the point of pain and so Narayanrao searched for it but found none. Then he stood before Baba's picture and invoked Baba's aid, chanted Baba's name and taking out a pinch of the ashes of the joss-stick burning in front of Baba's picture and thinking it as Baba's Udi, applied it on the seat of pain and the sting. As soon as he moved his fingers, the pain vanished and both the persons were moved and felt delighted.

### **Bubonic plague case**

Once a devotee in Bandra, came to know that his daughter who

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\* "रमते राम आओजी आओजी ! उदिया की गोनियां लाओजी लाओजी"

was staying in another place was down with bubonic plague. He had no Udi with him so he sent word to Nanasaheb Chandorkar to send the same. Nanasaheb got this message enroute Thana Railway Station, when he was travelling with his wife to Kalyan. He had no Udi with him then. He therefore, took up some dust from the road, meditated upon Sai Baba, invoked His aid and applied it to his wife's forehead. The devotee was very glad to learn that his daughter, who was suffering for three days, began to improve from the very moment Nanasaheb invoked Baba's aid near the Thana Railway Station.

### **The Jamner Miracle**

In the year 1904-05, Nanasaheb Chandorkar was Mamlatdar at Jamner, in the Khandesh district, which is more than 100 miles from Shirdi. His daughter Mainatai, was pregnant and was due to deliver. Her case was very serious and she was suffering from labour-pains for the last two or three days. Nanasaheb tried all remedies but in vain; he then remembered Baba and invoked His aid. There in Shirdi, one Ramgirbua whom Baba called Bapugirbua, was leaving for his native place, in Khandesh. Baba called him and told him to stop at Jamner on his way home and give the Udi and Arati to Nanasaheb. Ramgirbua said that he had only two rupees with him and this amount was barely sufficient for the railway fare upto Jalgaon, and it was not possible for him to go from Jalgaon to Jamner, a distance of about 30 miles. Baba assured him that he need not care, as everything would be provided for. Then Baba asked Shama to write a well-known Arati composed by Madhav Adkar (Arati and translation of this is given at the end of this work), and gave a copy of it with Udi to Ramgirbua, to be delivered to Nanasaheb. Then relying on Baba's words Ramgirbua left Shirdi and reached Jalgaon at about 2:45 a.m. He had only two annas<sup>1</sup> left with him and he was in a plight. To his great relief he heard somebody calling out, "Who is Bapugirbua of Shirdi?" He went to him and told him that he was Bapugirbua. Then the person, professing to be sent by Nanasaheb took him to an excellent tonga with a good pair of horses. They both drove in it. The tonga ran fast and early in the morning they came to a brooklet. The man took the horses for watering them and he asked Ramgirbua to partake of some eatables. On seeing the beard, moustache and the livery of that person, Ramgirbua suspected him to be a Muslim, and was unwilling to take any refreshments from him, but he satisfied Ramgirbua by saying that he was a Hindu, a Kshatriya of

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1. Then 16 annas = Re. 1

Garhwal, and that Nanasaheb had sent these refreshments and there should be no difficulty in its acceptance. Then both of them took the refreshments and started again. They reached Jamner at dawn. Ramgirbua alighted to attend a call of nature and returned within a few minutes, but found that there was no tonga, and no driver. He was dumbfounded. Then he went to the neighbouring Kachehri and on making enquiries learnt that the Mamlatdar was at home. He went to Nanasaheb's house and gave to Nanasaheb, Baba's Udi and Arati. At this time, Mainatai's case was in the most serious condition and all were in deep anxiety about her. Nanasaheb called out his wife and asked her to give the Udi, mixed with water, to their daughter to drink. He thought that Baba's help was most opportune. In a few minutes came the news that, the delivery was safe and that the crisis had passed away. When Ramgirbua thanked Nanasaheb for the peon, tonga and the refreshments etc., the latter was greatly surprised as he had sent none to the station, and was not aware of any person coming from Shirdi.

Mr. B.V. Dev of Thana, retired Mamlatdar, made enquiries about this matter with Bapurao Chandorkar son of Nanasaheb and Ramgirbua of Shirdi, and after satisfying himself wrote an elaborate article – part prose and part poetry – in the Shri Sai Leela magazine (Vol. 13 Nos. 11, 12 and 13). B.V. Narsimhaswami has also taken down the statements of (1) Mainatai (No. V, page 14) and (2) Bapusaheb Chandorkar (No. XX, page 50) and (3) Ramgirbua (No. XXVII, page 83), dated 1st June, 1936, 16th September, 1936 and 1st December, 1936 respectively, and published them in his 'Devotees Experiences, Part III'. The following is quoted from Ramgirbua's statement :

"One day Baba called me to him and gave me a packet of Udi and a copy of Baba's Arati. I had to go to Khandesh at that time. Baba directed me to go to Jamner and told me to deliver the Arati and Udi to Nanasaheb Chandorkar at Jamner. I said to Baba that all I had was Rs. 2 and asked Him, how that could take me by train, from Kopergaon to Jalgaon and next from Jalgaon to Jamner. Baba said, "God will give." That was a Friday and I started at once. I reached Manmad at 7:30 p.m. and Jalgaon at 2:45 a.m. At that time plague regulations were in force and I had much trouble. I was to discover, what I should do to get to Jamner. At about 3 a.m. a peon in boots, turban, and equipped with other details of good dress, came to me and took me to a tonga and drove me on. On the way at Bhaghoor, I took refreshments. We reached

Jamner early in the morning and by the time I attended call of nature, the tonga and its driver had disappeared (page 83)."

### **Narayanrao**

Bhakta Narayanrao (father's name and surname are not given) had the good fortune to see Baba twice during the latter's lifetime. Three years after the passing away of Baba in 1918, he wanted to come to Shirdi but could not. Within a year of Baba's Mahasamadhi he fell sick and suffered much. All possible remedies gave him no relief. So he meditated on Baba day and night. One night he had a vision. Baba came through a cellar comforted him saying, "Don't be anxious, you will be improving from tomorrow and within a week you will be on your legs." Narayanrao got perfectly well within the time indicated in the vision. Now the point for consideration is this : Was Baba living because He had the body, or was He dead because He left it? No, Baba is ever alive for, He transcends both life and death. He who loved Him whole-heartedly, gets response from Him at any time and at any place. He is always by our side and will take any form, appear before the devout bhakta and satisfy him.

### **Appasaheb Kulkarni**

In 1917, Appasaheb Kulkarni was transferred to Thana and began to worship Baba's picture presented to him by Balasaheb Bhate. In real earnest, he did the worship. He offered, flowers, sandal-paste, and Naivaidya daily to Baba in the picture, and longed intently to see Him. In this connection it may be remarked that, seeing Baba's picture earnestly is equivalent to seeing Him in person. The following story illustrates this statement.

### **Balabua Sutar**

A saint of Mumbai named Balabua Sutar, who on account of his piety, devotion and style was called 'Modern Tukaram', came to Shirdi for the first time in 1917. When he bowed before Baba, the latter said, "I have known this man for four years". Balabua wondered and thought how could that be, as that was his first trip to Shirdi. But thinking about it seriously, he recollected that he had prostrated himself four years ago before Baba's portrait at Mumbai, and was convinced about the significance of Baba's words. He said to himself, "How omniscient and all-pervading are the saints and how kind are they to their devotees! I

merely bowed to His photo, but this fact was noticed by Baba, and in due time He made me realize that, seeing His photo is equivalent to seeing Him in person!"

Now we return to Appasaheb's story. While he was in Thana, he had to go on tour to Bhivandi and was expected to return after a week. In his absence, the following wonderful thing took place on the third day. At noon a Fakir turned up, at Appasaheb's house. His features resembled exactly those of Baba's photo. Mrs. Kulkarni and the children all asked him, whether he was Sai Baba of Shirdi. He said, "No", but that he was an obedient servant of His and came there at His order to enquire after the well being of the family. Then he asked for dakshina. The lady gave him a rupee. He gave her a small packet of Udi and asked her to keep this in the shrine. Then he left the house and went away. Now, hear the wonderful Leela of Sai!

Appasaheb could not proceed with his tour, as his horse fell sick at Bhivandi. He returned home that afternoon, and learnt from his wife about Fakir's visit. He got very restless as he did not have the darshan of the Fakir, moreover he did not like that only one rupee was paid to him as Dakshina. He said that had he been present, he would have paid not less than ten rupees. Then, he immediately started in quest of the Fakir, and searched for him in the Masjid and other places, without taking any food. His search was in vain. He then returned home and took his food. The readers may remember here Baba's dictum in chapter 32 that, God's quest should not be made on an empty belly. Then, after meals he went out for a walk with a friend, Mr. Chitre. After going some distance, they saw a man approaching them rapidly. Appasaheb thought that, he must be the Fakir that came to his house at noon, as his features tallied with those of Baba in the photo. The Fakir immediately put forth his hand and asked for Dakshina. Appasaheb gave him a rupee. He demanded again and again, and so Appasaheb gave him two more. Still he was not satisfied. Then he borrowed Rs. three from Mr. Chitre and gave them to him. He wanted still more. Appasaheb asked him to accompany him to his home. Then they all returned home and Appasaheb gave him three rupees, in all nine. He looked unsatisfied and demanded again. Then, Appasaheb told him that he had a currency note of Rs. ten. The Fakir asked for the same, took it and returned the nine rupees and went away. Appasaheb had earlier said that he would pay ten rupees and that sum was taken from him and nine rupees, consecrated by Baba's touch, were returned to him. The figure 9 is significant. It denotes

the nine types of devotion (vide chapter 21). It may also be noted here that, Baba gave nine coins to one Laxmibai Shinde, at His last moment.

Appasaheb examined the Udi-packet and found that it contained some flower-leaves and Akshata. Then some time afterwards, he got a hair from Baba, when he saw Him at Shirdi. He put the Udi-packet and the hair in a Tabiz and wore it always on his arm. Appasaheb realized the power of the Udi. Though he was very efficient, he got Rs. 40/- as pay in the beginning; but after he secured Baba's photo and His Udi, he got many times more, and also got much power and influence, and along with these temporal benefits, his spiritual progress was also rapid. So those who are fortunate enough to get Baba's Udi should, after bath, apply it on the forehead and take some of it, mixed with water as holy Tirth.

### **Haribhau Karnik**

In 1917, Haribhau Karnik of Dahanu (Thana district) came to Shirdi, on the Guru-pournima day (in the month of Ashadha) and worshipped Baba with all formalities. He offered clothes and dakshina and after taking Baba's leave got down the steps of the Masjid. Then he thought that, he should offer one more rupee to Baba and was just turning to climb up again, when Shama signalled him by gesture that, as he had got Baba's leave he should go and not return. So he started for home. On his way, when he went into the temple of Kala Ram at Nasik for darshan, the saint Narsing Maharaj, who used to sit inside the temple, came to Haribhau, caught him by his wrist and said, "Give me my one rupee". Karnik was surprised; he paid the rupee most willingly and thought that, Sai Baba recovered the rupee, which he intended in his mind to give, through saint Narsing Maharaj.

This story illustrates the fact that, all saints are one, and illustrates, how they work in unison.

**Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all**