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26th May, 1936.

Gopal Bhaskar Datar, B.A, L.L.B., Brahmin, Pleader, (Station Road), Thana says:

I am now a Sai Bhakta. In 1917, when I was at Ahmadnagar, I had opportunities to see Sai Baba. But I was deterred by the accounts I had heard of him. He demanded and took much money as *dakshina* and the water in which he bathed was taken and given as *tirtha* for devotees to drink. These repelled me. I contrasted them with the conduct of Narayan Maharaj for whom I had regard. The latter, when I and one other each gave him a rupee, he returned the rupee, adding to it some sugar candy as prasad. Later, after reading Upasani Baba's life and listening to his lectures, I saw him at Bombay and went to Sakori. His, U.Lilamrita which I read in 1931, gave me a good impression of Sri Sai Baba and after my visit to Sakori, I went to Shirdi. There the gleaming eyes of Sai in the portrait, the *dhuni* and the mosque impressed me greatly and I said to myself: 'Here is a Master!'. Next, I read Sai Lila Masik and especially Anna Dabholkar's book, as it appeared in that Masik with the "Anubhavas" i.e, experiences. I was convinced that Sai Baba was my destined guru. I have stuck to him ever since.

Some experiences that I got confirmed me in my faith. A lady in the house who was suffering from internal pains for a long time and had vainly tried some medicines, was listening to me as I read Dabholkar's book aloud. There was the incident of Sai Baba intervening to save a frog that was caught by a snake, in what I read. She had heard it half dozing. She prayed in that half dozing state to Sri Sai Baba thus: "Oh Sai Baba, you have pity and help for humble suffering creatures like a frog, have you no mercy for me- a human being?" She then heard a voice that seemed to emanate from a peg on the wall, - "Will you give me Rs.5 dakshina for the Dasserah?" And she answered that she would, in case she got cured. At once, she woke up from her dozing condition and narrating the above, wanted Rs.5 to be sent up as her contribution for Sai Baba's Dasserah celebration. That was done at once. She improved and her agony

abated by evening. This was in 1931 or 1932.

Some time later in 1932, I used to get Sai Baba in my dreams wherein he would play with me as he would play with little children. In one of the dreams, Sai Baba was requested by Upasani Baba to help me and he agreed. Still later, I was in a great fix. I had lost or mislaid the letter of a wandering client, whose presence was urgently required by the court. I tried to learn his whereabouts by inquiries-in vain. At last, in despair, I prayed to Sai Baba. The next day, I chanced to place my hand on the rack in my office room and I found the missing letter and that enabled me to secure the party's presence in proper time. Two or three years ago, I was given a commission to examine some witness on interrogatories sent by a distant court. The interrogatories and other papers were one day missed by me. I searched in various places for them and was much dejected at my failure. I expected then I would have the mortification to inform the Court of my negligence and ask for fresh copies of the interrogatories, etc. A 'Varkari' (one constantly going on pilgrimage to Pandharpur Vittal) had come to my house then; and having served him with zeal for some days, I told him of my worried state. "It will be found" he said. There was always my daily service to Sai Baba also. The day after the Varkari left, I discover the missing papers amidst the papers of a totally unconnected case.

I was formerly ignoring *Shradha* and other ceremonies, being carried away by the social reform ideas that these were meaningless superstitions. I had no faith in them. But my faith in the revived as I revere Sai Baba and as one Mr.Nana Nachane, (a Prabhu) clerk in the Presidency Magistrate's Court, Kurla, Bombay and devout Sai Bhakta gave me the following account of his experiencing the kind mercy of Sri Sai.

Very recently, Mr.Nachane's wife died, leaving him her little child to take care of. The loving husband wished to be assured of her getting *sadgati* and therefore, resolved to go to Nasik and perform all the required ceremonies on the bank of the Godavari. But, being unaccustomed to these, he hardly knew what steps should be taken and whether he would have sufficient funds to cover all the expenses. With

such fears, he started, taking 80 rupees with him. In the train he suffered other troubles and a fellow passenger gave him great help. That passenger, learning of his fears, told him that he would see to every ceremony being properly performed within the funds in hand. This kind friend accompanied Mr.Nahchane to all places and directed the ceremonies and controlled the expenditure- displaying a knowledge very wonderful for one, who belonged to a *Sudra* (Mahratta caste) and was merely a peon in some Bombay institution (the address and particulars of which he gave) as the friend described himself. After a great deal of self-sacrifice, that friend, without gaining a single pie or advantage, accompanied Nachane for several days and parted company with him promising to meet him again within a fortnight. But he did not. So, Mr.Nachane went to the place described by that friend and found there was no such peon in the institution mentioned by him. Mr.Nachane was convinced that the kind and very wise 'peon' was only a form taken by Sai Baba to help him in his distress. I felt sure that as the all-wise Sai Baba helped this devotee to perform the funeral ceremonies successfully. Such ceremonies must have a real use and must be worth performing. I am now performing them ever since I heard Mr.Nachane's account.