

V

1st June, 1936.

Minathai Ganesh Kulvalekar, daughter of Nanasaheb Ganesh Chandorkar, age 49, near Kasba Ganpati Temple, Poona, says:

I am the elder of N.G.C's daughters. I have two younger brothers. Bapu, the younger is aged 40. When I was 12 or 13 years of age (i.e. 1899-1900), I went to see Sai Baba long with others of our family and went often late, not after 1918.

Chidambar Rao Gadgil Chitnis introduced my father to Sai Baba when he was mamlatdar at Ghodnadi. An early incident was this. We were staying at the *chavadi*. Leaving my father behind, the rest of us were starting to leave Shirdi. Sai Baba came up and asked us for *biksha* and said '**Do not go**'. Our journey was stopped. We gave Baba, the wayside food we were taking for the sake of the children. Baba's eyes sparkled like jewels.

I remember one or two instances of Sai Baba's signifi-

cantly stopping or delaying my father's journey. My father was starting at the proper time to catch a train at Chitali, as he had to meet the Collector. Baba permitted one Haridas to go for that train, but stopped my father. Haridas in a hurry left without a meal. My father took his meal leisurely and half an hour later than Haridas, My father was permitted to go. He went and found that he was in time for the train as the train was arriving late that day as timings had been changed that day. My father told me about this later. This was about in 1900.

Myself and family were starting from Shirdi to attend a marriage at Nasik, Baba first did not give us leave but said "Do not go". We had not got ready cooked food for the children to eat on the way and thought that at Manmad, we might try to feed them. But the train was derailed at the station before we reached Manmad and we stopped there for three hours. Baba's stoppage evidently indicated this stoppage on the way and his final permission indicated all would be well.

My husband died of plague at Poona in 1904, when I was but 17 and there was no help for me. My mother arrived in time to see him alive. I had just then conceived. In 1905, when I was in advanced pregnancy with serious difficulty at Jamner, was the Gosavi incident and Baba's *udhi*. But, I knew nothing of it then, in my pain. In 1908, we were at Pandharpur. My brother Bapu Rao, as a little child of 4, went daily in the morning, placed a flower on Sai Baba's head and worshipped him. That was the beginning of the regular worship of Baba, as others were not permitted till then to do what Bapu did. Before that there was no regular system of daily worship of Baba.

When I was 18 or 19, in about 1906, some one was taking *darshan* of Sai, with spectacles on and they dropped. Someone present said that the glasses should be offered to Baba as a gift. But Baba said, **"I do not want glasses. My glasses and worth Rupees 40."** My father interpreted to us "glasses as self-realization and worth Rs.40 as occurred 40 years ago". Baba looked about fifty and was gray when I went first in 1900 to Shirdi. He continued more or less the same up to 1918. His death was during the influenza epidemic (1918-19) that raged throughout India.

The following facts I learnt from my father:

1. Sai Baba had known him for 3 or 4 generations.
2. Sai Baba was constantly using the word “*Narayan*” in his talks thus -Narayan Teli, Narayan Dhobi &c. N.G.Chandorkar inferred that Sai Baba must have been a Brahmin *Sanyasi*, as Brahmin *Sanyasis* must constantly be saying ‘*Narayan*’.

3. Gita was repeated by Sai Baba. Sai Baba knew Sanskrit.

My father was orthodox and never drank the *tirtha* of Sai Baba. H.S.Dixit and others took it. About 1899 or 1900, my mother’s sister’s husband Balasaheb Binnewale (who died 5 or 6 years back) went to see Sai Baba without any faith in Sai Baba, out of a desire to oblige my father. Balasaheb was a worshipper of Datta. When he went and saw Sai Baba, he saw him as a figure with three heads (i.e.) as Datta himself. He, at once, believed that Sai was Datta himself and continued a devotee of Sai till his death.