

V

June 1936, Poona

Das Ganu Maharaj, i.e. Ganpatrao Dattatre Sahasrabuddhe, Brahmin, Kirtankar, aged about 78, residing generally at Nanded. (Nizam's State) says:

I have known Sri Sai Baba for a long time and I have given some account of him in my books (1) Bhakti Saramrita ch.26,65,66 and 67 (1925) (2) Bhakta Lilamrita Ch.31 (1906) and Ch 32 and 33 and (3) Santakatamrita Ch 57 Ch 31 of No.2 and Ch.57 of No.3 were published in Baba's lifetime.

Some facts i.e. autobiographical reminiscences came from Baba's own mouth. But they were very few. Besides, I had not spent much time with Baba. I rarely saw him. When I was at Shirdi, Baba did not allow me to stay long at the masjid. He made me go away to the Vittal temple where I stayed to write the lives of saints, or to spend my time in repetition of Vishnu Sahasranama etc. I made some inquiries about Baba also before writing these works. Some facts were within my personal knowledge. I was in active (police) service as a Havildar. I had however my literary and histrionic leanings. I took great interest in Tamashas (village plays) and took part in them. I composed poems impromptu, in lavani and other metres. While I was in service and Nana Saheb Chandorkar was D.C. or Collector's chitnis, he took me to Sai Baba. Even from the outset Sai Baba foresaw my future and wanted to save me from my own ways and choice of profes-

sion and pastime. He told Nana Saheb even in my presence. **“This man is fond of Tamashas, and of his service. Let him give it all up”**. He told me the same and NanaSaheb also. But I liked my pastimes and service. Gradually I gave up taking part in Tamashas i.e. village plays. As for service, I could not think of giving it up. Each time I was advised to give up service, I said “I will see.” Baba then said that only by sheer compulsion i.e. by being impailed, I could be made to quit service. So for about 10 years. Baba went on dinning into me directly and indirectly, that I should give up service I shall mention later how in 1903 I was reduced to giving up service after several disasters in which Baba’s grace saved me from punishment, disgrace, trouble of various sorts, and even death.

First I shall narrate how some facts about Baba’s antecedents were revealed at an examination of Baba as a witness. There was a thief charged with theft etc., of jewels in the Dhulia Tahsildar Magistrate’s Court. The accused pleaded that Sai Baba of Shirdi had given him the jewels and cited Baba as a witness. Summons came. Baba refused to receive it and had it thrown into his dhuni (fire). Anyhow the report was sent the summons had been served on Baba. But Baba did not go to Dhulia for the trial. So a warrant was issued by the Dhulia court for producing Sai Baba to give evidence at Dhulia. The warrant came to Ganapatramji, the Chief Constable of Kopergaon. He brought the warrant to Baba and informed him of its contents and requested Baba to go with him to Dhulia. Of course he had not the courage to arrest Baba. Baba was defiant. He cursed and swore and asked the constable to throw the warrant into some foul place. The constable was perplexed. I was there and told him to consult Baba’s devotee Nana Saheb Chandorkar then Dep. Collector at Ahmednagar. N.S.C was consulted and he said that if Sai Baba and the devotees disliked his going to Dhulia, the people should get a Mahazar prepared and get numerous signatures to it and send it up to Dhulia. This was done. The mahazar stated that Sai Baba of Shirdi was an extraordinary person, worshipped as God by vast numbers of devotees, that the enforcement of ordinary court’s process against him was neither proper nor desirable in view of the consequences that might follow etc., and that if his evidence

was necessary, a Commissioner might be sent to Shirdi to take his evidence. The Dhulia Court then sent a Commission. One Nana Joshi, Ist Class Magistrate, Assistant Collector came down to Shirdi to take the evidence of Baba. Three hours before his arrival Baba had sent for chairs and a table and improvised a Court at the Mosque. The Commissioner came and began Sai Baba's examination: and an extraordinary examination it was.

Commr: What is your name?

Baba : They Call me Sai Baba

C: Your father's name?

B: Also Sai Baba.

C: Your Guru's name?

B: Venkusa.

C: Creed or Religion?

B: Kabir.

C: Caste or race?

B: Parvardigar (i.e. God)

C: Age, please?

B: Lakhs of years.

C: Will you solemnly affirm that what you are going to say is the truth.

B: Truth.

C: Do you know the accused so and so?

B: Yes, I know him and I know every one.

C: The man says he is your devotee and that he lived with you. Is that so?

B: Yes, I live with every one. All are mine.

C: Did you give him Jewels as alleged ?

B: Yes I gave him. Who gives what to whom?

C: If you gave him the jewels how did you get them and become possessed of them?

B: Everything is mine.

C: Baba, here is a serious charge of theft. That man says that you delivered the jewels to him.

B: What is all this? What the devil I have to do with all that?

The Commissioner was floored by such answers. He did not know what to take down. Baba was mostly in a mood to say yes to every question. Then it was suggested that the

best course would be to sent for the village diary. The arrival of every stranger and the dates of his stay in the village are duly noted in it. If the accused who was of course a stranger to the village was not there at or about the time of his alleged receipt from Baba, that might be taken down. The diaries were sent for and they showed that no such person like the accused was at Shirdi at the time in question. Of course, it was well known that Baba never left Shirdi or its neighbourhood. Then the commissioner put it to Baba, that no such person was in the village of Shirdi and with Baba at Shirdi at the time in question and that Baba gave him no jewels and Baba said that was so and this was Baba's final statement. The examination was then over. Baba was not asked to sign or put his mark. The commission's evidence was sent to Dhulia. The accused was convicted and sentence to imprisonment.

Baba's age is a thing one cannot fix. Nor can his race and parentage be easily fixed. Forty years back I saw an old lady Salubai Shelke of Shirdi then aged 65 or 70. She told me that when she was married and that was in her 8th or tenth year, Baba came to Shirdi looking as he looked when we saw him (1895) i.e. 40 or 50 years old. Another old lady Sai Bai said "Baba came to Shirdi as a lad." This seems to make Baba's age over 100 at his Mahasamadhi. Who dare ask Baba about his age and antecedents? So nothing definite is known.

Baba however himself spoke about his earlier years occasionally. About his guru, Baba has several times said that 'Venkusa' This is found in Bhaktalilamrita (ch.31) was his guru and that by the grace of 'Venkusa' Baba had attained to his position. Most things about him were mysterious. Some of his miracles etc. were witnessed by me and some mentioned to me by others. Baba's converting water into oil and burning his lamps for a whole night with water alone was reported to me by numerous villagers who had seen it. Premchand Marwadi was one of those who refused to supply him that day with oil. I myself saw Baba sleeping on a plank suspended from the ceiling by a few slender shreds of torn cloth. The wonder was how he got up that plank suspended so high i.e. 7 or 8 feet above of the floor and 1 or 1 1/2 cubits below the roof. Four lamps were on it. People

watched to see how he got up or climbed down but could never discover either or how it supported him.

The passages 121 to 141 in Bhakta Lilamrit about Mr. Pense were mentioned to me by him. Thee three chapters 31,32 and 33 of the book were read as *Poti* (i.e. holy scripture) at the mosque before Baba: and he said **"It is Alright"** when Nana Saheb Chandorkar gave him the book. Baba did not say his five Namaz or even one Namaz, as Moslems do. When Fatia had to be done he generally ordered it to be pronounced by some one present. Sometimes he uttered the Fatia. He occasionally repeated parts of Quoran.

The instruction given to N.G.Chandorkar by Baba was mentioned to me by N.G.C. I expanded it with my own learning and gave it its present shape. But the kernel of it was given by N.G.C. Baba has several times talked Advaitic philosophy in presence. "I am God". "You are God" "All are God". He has said this many times. There is nothing Baba did not know. Baba was not explicit about what he did mostly. Here is an instance.

Once Valambi Master was Ry.Station Master at Kopergoan. He has no faith in Baba. He told me and other devotees "Baba is a mad man. Why do you all lionise him?" I, however, persuaded V.M. to go with me to see Baba at Shirdi. When we saw Baba, he was washing pots and placing them on the floor, mouth down and bottom upside. V.M. asked Baba, "What is all this?" Baba said "Every pot coming to me comes with mouth downwards" i.e., not to receive what could be put into them but in an unreceptive fashion like pots with their mouths downwards. There was at about 1898 or 1899 a notorious decoit named Kana Bhil who was robbing British and Native States, in parts of Ahmednagar and Bid districts. For three years the police were on his track, but could not catch him. I was only a havildar (co) at the time. But I and three others were put on special detective duty and directed to watch and report his movements. K.Bhil was so cunning and desperate and his C.I.D was so perfect that he spotted the three men and killed them one after another. I had done little work and my Inspector reported that I was useless and I had to put forward strenuous efforts. All that time I was passing for a Ramadas and doing kirtans in the

Ram Temple at Loni Varni, the headman (Patil) of, which was a friend and receiving visits from K.Bhil. K.Bhil found out all about me, my name, number (727) station, etc., and came one day to shoot me. I went and bowed to Sri Ram and prayed for life. The dacoit left the place with a warning to me that I was watched. I was really watched by his men and I could not leave the place. Again I got information from the village boys as to the programme and movements of K.Bhil and communicated it to the Police. The police came and put a cordon round the hill in which K.Bhil was hiding but he escaped further detective duty. Then Rale, Mamlatdar, tried the villages of Loni Varni for harbouring a dacoit. I gave evidence in favour of the Patil that he helped me with information and he was acquitted.

Absent from my jurisdiction without leave, I visited a holy place and returned up to Godavari and there I prayed and vowed to Baba holding Godavari water in my hands that if he would save me I would give up service. Then I discovered a gang in H.S. there with some booty and I got an excuse for my visit. The situation was saved miraculously. Still the ambition to become a Fouzdar was dominating me. I appeared for an examination and passed it to qualify myself. Baba told me that I was not going to get the Fouzdari post. I was posted to some place and I had to cross Shirdi on my way-but I did not wish to call on Baba as he would not approve of my continuance in service. So I was simply marching straight (and without turning into the village in the interior of which was the Mosque) on the main road touching Shirdi. Then as fate or Sai Baba would have it he came to the main road near the Lendi just as I came there and so I got down from my horse and fell at his feet. He then asked me to go over to the masjid. At the Masjid, he asked me, "Ganu! who took the vow taking a palmful of Godavari water in hand?" I answered "What harm is there? I am really going to resign". Baba said, "Wait. You will not listen to me while things are thus (i.e., smooth running)".

Then I got into another scrape without any fault of mine. A convict's fine Rs.32 was realised and sent up to my station to be credited to Govt. That was received by my

Assistant in my absence and he quietly pocketed it. Later, the man not being released, a complaint was made and inquiry followed. I was suspended. Punishment seemed imminent. I vowed that I would leave service if I escaped and then left service in 1903.

I had composed in 1898 a poem on Sivaji, which became a matter of enquiry. My defence was that I was an impromptu poet and this was my impromptu. I was not punished. Baba repeatedly told me when telling me to retire, "Go and settle at Nanded".

I: which Nanded?

Baba: Nanded in Nizam States.

I: How am I to get bread?

Baba: I will provide for you.

So I went on retirement to Nanded and there spent my time in performing Kirtans. I got food thereby.

I went on a pilgrimage to Puri and on the way, one Tembe Swami (Vasudevanand Saraswathi) whom I had known already met me and asked me if I was going to Shirdi. I said "Yes, not immediately but a few months later". Then he gave me a coconut saying, "Present this as mine to Sai Baba". I took it and kept it in my bag. During my further travels, my companions, took it out and then ate it up. When I went to Shirdi, as soon as I approached Sai Baba he said "Here is the thief. Where is the coconut given by my brother?" A friend gave me plots of cultivable land for a very nominal price. They yield me enough to live upon. These are now maintaining me. Bere's tonga escaping highway robbery which is described in B.S. Is personally known to me. I went in that tonga with Bere.

I receive no money for my Kirtans. I never did. The hat was not and is not sent round either before or after my Kirtan for contributions. My bhaktas write and invite me to their abodes in various parts of the country. I go and stay with them and perform Kirtans and write books etc. I am a single individual without any family and my needs are few. I was not one of those who got moneys from Baba. Several of those that he was regularly paying everyday were subjected to Income-Tax. After Lokamanya Tilak visited Baba (1915-1917) the Income-Tax department directed its attention to the

Shirdi Samsthan. Some officer came to Shirdi and watched the income. They wanted first to tax Sai Baba, but (perhaps seeing that he had little left with him to proceed upon) they taxed his regular donees; viz. Tatyapa Patel, Bade Baba, Bagia and Bayyaji Patel. For me as also for Mahalsapathy, Baba took care to see that we were not pestered with money and its cares. He has given me spiritual benefit far superior to monetary gifts. He has created and confirmed my faith in various ways. He has taught me valuable lessons and given me precious experience.

Once for Mahashivaratri, I was at Shirdi and I wanted to have "Gangasnan" (i.e. a dip in the river Godavari) at Singaba (three miles off Shirdi) that day. Megha daily brought that water for sprinkling or pouring (Abhisheka) over Baba as Ganga must naturally fall on Mahadeva's head. But Baba did not allow me to go. He said "Ganga is here at my feet. Do not go" I felt depressed. Theoretically, I knew that he was God Narayana and that Ganga flowed from Narayana's feet. But that was a poor weak faith insufficient to give my heart the pleasure which a tangible Ganges bath would give me. Baba knew my mentality and asked me to approach his feet and hold my palm near the feet. The water began to flow from both his feet. It was not a few drops like perspiration. It was rather a slow and thin current. In a short time, say a few minutes, I had collected a palmful of that water. Here was Ganga and I was delighted. I bathed i.e. sprinkled the water over my head. I did not drink this water. Usually I do not drink the Tirtha offered at Baba's Arati. On one occasion Jog complained to Baba about it. Baba then said that I should abide by my own convictions and sampradaya and that Jog should not trouble me.

But Baba did not always respect orthodoxy at least in some matters. My orthodoxy keeps me off from eating onions in any form. Baba on the other hand, liked onions and would seldom have a meal without onions. He told me to prepare Pitla i.e. sauce of onions, give to him and eat part of it. I prepared it and brought it to him. He asked me if I ate it at my lodgings. I said yes. But really what I did there was to touch the onion dish with a finger tip and touch my chin with it and draw a line from my chin to the nether lip as a token of my tasting it and I would wash my hand and face thereafter.

Baba knew (what is it he did not know?) how I practised this trick and he showed others how I did the trick. **“He pretends he eats but only touches it with his fingers and applies the finger over the chin”** was what he said and showed. Then he told me that I should really eat onion. He had a high opinion of onion as an item of the daily fare-though orthodoxy rejects it, chiefly on the grounds of its immediate and ultimate odour and its aphrodisiac properties, “But if one digests it i.e. overcomes it injurious i.e. lust producing tendencies it does no harm but good” was what Baba said. So at Shirdi, as long as Baba was alive I would take onion except on Ekadashi days.

Q: Did Baba rub coins smooth with mantra?

Baba occasionally smashed my programmes for visiting holy places like Pandharpur. I was keen on Bhadrapad and Aswin months-especially Aswin Ekadashi at Pandharpur. In 1916, I met Nanasaheb Chandorkar at Manmad and told him I was going to Pandharpur as Bhadrapad was about to begin. He took me however with him to Shirdi and Baba made me do ‘Saptaha’ and Kirtan there for a week. When I originally began Kirtans it was at the bidding of Nanasaheb Chandorkar and in Baba’s Samsthan at Shirdi. In fact I had started it in the usual fashionable dress (i.e. head gear) etc., of Kirtankars and shone in borrowed plumes-borrowed from Chandorkar. But Baba at once objected my adopting that dress and made me do off it. I am doing Kirtans since then in Orthodox “Dotar” (i.e. nether cloth) I was thus detained for over one month at Shirdi. Bhadrapad was gone and Aswin was to begin. I felt chagrined at being detained from going to Pandharpur and was there for Ashwin. N.G.Chandorkar wanted to detain me even then. I said within myself. "How is he (i.e. Baba) a Guru who blocks my way to God (of Pandharpur)? Baba of course read my mind and told me to go away at once to Pandharpur and told N.G.C. not to stop me. So I gladly went to Pandharpur and was there for Ashwin.

Baba did not grant me some of my spiritual prayers. I wanted to get Sakshatkar (i.e. vision) of the God that I worship-just as Namdev and others got. So I went to Baba several times with the request that he should give me Sakshatkar. He was saying each time “wait, wait”. Finally

(probably in 1916 the above period) I asked him “Baba you have been long putting off my request. When will you give me Sakshatkar?” Then he said **“You see me. That is Sakshatkar. I am God”** I replied that I expected that he would say so; but that I was not satisfied with that. I consoled myself with the explanation that my destiny did not provide for my getting Sakshatkar and that Saints could not overcome destiny. After Baba passed away, I have been seeing several Saints. But hardly any of them satisfied me. There was one that specially impressed me. Near my place- Nanded in 1919 there was a *Virakta Brahmachari* staying on a rock having no possessions and caring for nothing. I saw him first, when I was performing my wife’s ceremony and was powerfully attracted. As I went there, to take his Darshan he turned away from me and prevented my taking Darshan. This happened thrice. I was deeply disappointed, nay mortified. Anyhow, let me have the merit of feeding him. I thought, and went home, I sent up a man to that Brahmachari with food. I was agreeably surprised to learn that he accepted it. Then I was emboldened to go to him once again and asked him why he would not permit me to bow to him and to take Darshan. He said no reply.

“You call yourself a Kirtankar. Have you left off Ahankar i.e. Egotism?”

I: No. How can I? Each man has Ahankar.

He: Did you not feel ahankar, when sending me food, feeling that it was you taht were sending food etc.?

I: Ahankar being of three sorts *Satwik*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* some sort of Ahankar would underlie all action; only the worst forms are to be shunned.

He was not of that opinion. He wanted me to drown my Ego completely. He was always reading my mind. He gave me some samples of is power.

He: Are you not engaged in writing the lives of Saints?

I: yes.

Then he quoted a few lines of verse taht I had just composed six days previously and not published in any way. I has taken aback by the *Antaryamitva* of his. Again he asked

me “Did you not get Ganga water from the feet of Sai Baba?

I: Yes.

He: What did you do with it?

I: I sprinkled it over my head.

He: And you did not drink it, because you thought you were a brahmin and would be polluted by drinking it. Look at your Ego-tism.

Seeing his nature and powers, I daily spent three or four hours alone with him at night. Some of those who were going to me and having a good opinion of me and a poor opinion of that Brahmachari wondered at my conduct and one of them (let us merely give him some random name) Beake began to heckle me about it. I told him that the Brahmachari had psychic power and could even know the contents of other minds. Beake doubted my veracity and I had to take him once to the Brahmachari and tell the latter of Beake's unbelief. Then followed a very interesting conversation.

Br : (to me) what? You want to make an exhibition of me, as though I were a monkey!

I: No. But this person is full of unbelief.

Br: (to Beake) Shall I tell you some fact then about yourself.

Beake: Yes.

Br: Had you not immoral relations with Z?

Beake: No

Br: was it not Z that was maintaining you and supporting you for a long time?

Beake: No.

Then the Brahmachari clinched the whole matter of his truthfulness and his power by immediate proof.

Br: Shall I tell you what is in your pocket?

Beake: Yes.

Br: You have a letter from the Raja of Kolhapur about the affairs of ‘Satya Samaj’, which you are supporting. Take the latter out and give it to Maharaj (i.e. me D.G) (That was done).

Then the Brahmachari gave full details of the contents of the letter. My friend was flabbergasted. He had placed the letter in my hand. Every word spoken of it by the Saint was

true, and it proved that consequently what was said about z also must be true. As my friend felt humiliated and would make some progress if I left him alone with the Saint, I left him there and went away. My friend did improve in giving up his bad associations and his other bad habits. The Saint's name and fame spread so quickly that he Tahsildar insisted on my producing him one evening for delivering a Pravachan. The Tahsildar the Autocrat of Cham of the Taluk, of course, believed that the Saint could not decline to go the meeting nor decline to speak. But before the day fixed for the meeting, it was discovered that the Saint left that place. He left it for good and was never again seen or heard off.

The books I wrote about Sai Baba are:-

1. Santakathamrita - first. This was written bit by bit when I was in service i.e. before 1903 both the portions about Baba and about others. But it was printed in 1903. Baba blessed the effort. None of my books was read to Baba. Nor was Baba asked beforehand to give the information for writing the books. What he spoke of his own accord was picked up. Baba had talked of his "Selu" antecedents and I made inquiries at Selu about Baba's antecedents. Baba said about each book when placed in his hand. "That is alright". I do not know whether Baba knew how to write, read or even to sign his name.

II. Next came Bhakti Lilamrita. This was published in Baba's life time- 1906.

III. Lastly came the Bhakti Saramrita. The two chapters viz; 52-53 therein relating to Baba were placed in his hands and he said "alright". But other chapters were composed later from time to time mostly after 1918; in 1925 this book was printed as a whole.

The account given in it (in chapter 28) about Baba's antecedents at Selu is based partly on Baba's statements and partly on what the villagers of Selu told me. The only thing Baba said of Selu and the Selu period was that he came from Selu. So I started while I was in service and went to Selu to make enquiries. I cannot specify any villager as having told me anything in particular. My inquiry was 35 years back. The villagers said that there was an old Saint that a young

Fakir boy was being trained by him, that some got vexed with the Saint and threw stones at him and killed him and that the boy escaped and that all this took place 100 years previously. Sai Baba told me, in the presence of Chandorkar, that the brick he used as a pillow at Shirdi and which is still retained as a relic of Baba at Shirdi was given by his Guru to him, that his Guru was "Venkusa". The version about Baba's telling Chandorkar is my own, as I wished to avoid dragging my own name into my own work and figuring in it too prominently. Chandorkar did not know if he maintained a diary or note of his experiences. As for Ratanji incident, it was a small affair. He invited me to tea and then the Nanded Moulvi came also. Nice dishes of almonds, pistachio etc. were supplied. The cost of all would not be very great, say anything more than 3 or 4 rupees. Then Ratanji went to Shirdi. Baba told him that Baba had already received this amount and asked him for the balance. When Ratanji came back to Nanded, he narrated these facts and wondered what Baba meant by saying that he had received the sum. I asked him to see the amount entered in his accounts on the evening of the tea given to the Moulvi. The exact amount entered in that account (viz 3-12-0) was what Baba said had been given. This is the truth. The rest is all elaborated out of this. The Tomb referred to is that of Sai Baba's guru and was not visible when we saw it first. It was merely land and underneath it was the tomb. Sathe Saheb built a flight of steps over it leaving a niche for worshipping that guru.

When I first went with Nana G. Chandorkar to see Sai Baba, that was out of a desire to ingratiate myself with N.G.C., and with no particular desire to see Sai Baba or esteem for him. I had no spiritual or other temporal desire or object in seeing Baba. One year later, I chanced to see Vaman Sashi Islampurkar, an old Brahmin of Islampur near Osmanabad (N.S) a graduate (of the Madras University) and a married man. I had to attend upon him at Saigonda in obedience of my superior's orders. Finding him to be highly devout and spiritually advanced and believing that a Guru was necessary to obtain Moksha, I asked him to give me Upadesh as and he agreed. He gave me Siva Mantra Upadesh as desired by me, for then I was an out and out Shivbhakta. He told me to go on with my Mantra. I then asked him as I was visiting Sai,

whether that was harmful. He said that no harm could arise if one was firm in his faith, whatever Saints he visited. I asked him what sort of person Sai Baba was and he replied that he had himself visited Shirdi and stayed with Baba for three days, that Baba was a great Saint and Ramabhaktas, whom none had yet properly understood and that people would get to know and appreciate him later on. With this estimation in my view I had more regard for Baba and I went to him with more faith.

Two years after my Mantropadesh, I received a letter from my Guru that I should proceed to Bhusaval to meet him. There he told me that he was proceeding to Kasi where he would have his final Samadhi six months later, i.e. on the following Jyeshtha Vadya Ekadashi. His object in sending for me was that I should perform his funeral rites. The Guru shed tears as he said this. I came home and found that the Guru had sent me 500 rupees notes by insured post intended for the celebration of the funerals etc., and a letter containing his last Will and Testament. On the Ekadashi day in question, I got a wire from Kasi mentioning the Guru's death on that day. From that date, I am performing that Guru's anniversary on that Tithi. I told Sai Baba of it and he approved.

Baba and Orthodox Moslems.

Baba some times came into some conflict with the local Mussulmans, as very often his acts and ideas did not agree with their Orthodoxy. Bade Baba and other once asked Sai Baba to go outside the town for saying the Kutba prayers. Baba said, "Yes, Let us go", at first; but when they finally came to take him, he declined to go. Another time they came up and offered prayers inside the Mosque. But Baba did not join them in that group prayer. At Moharram, some local Moslems came up to Baba and said they wanted to bring into the Mosque a Tajia. Then they constructed a Tajia and brought it and installed it on the fifth of Moharram at the Mosque. Baba allowed it to remain there for a couple of days and then dragged it out and placed it on his fire saying "I do not want a corpse in the Mosque". The Moslems who were working up their Tajia dared not do anything against this powerful Baba. An orthodox Moslem brought a 'Sera', i.e. an ornamental arrangement of flowers, to decorate the niche in

the Mosque and wanted Baba's permission. Baba said "Take it and put it on Hanuman". The Moslem replied that he was a Moham-medan and could not decorate a Hindu idol. Baba fulminated some foul abuse (in which Hanuman was depicted as superior Allah) and the Sera was taken away.

Baba's respect for Hanuman or Maruthi:- There was a small image of this God in a corner of the upper platform of the Chavadi. Baba was in the lower platform and when showers began to drive into it, some one told Baba that he should go up into the upper platform. Baba refused to do so saying "How can we be seated on the same level as God?" Fakir Baba alias Bade Baba brought up a recent convert from Hinduism to Islam to the Mosque. Baba slapped that convert and taunted him with the remark "**You have changed you father**". Even towards Hindu Gods as to Allah, he would use uncomplimentary expressions in some moods. People occasionally asked him for permission to go to Pandharpur and he would reply "Go" but would add some abuse. On the other hand, when Arati was sung of Jnanadev or Tukaram, he would sit up and fold his palms in reverence.

Baba's treatment of Advaitism is not easy to make out. He never expressly dealt with it. He would say "I am God", "God is in all" etc. He was really Advaita personified. He was sitting up still whatever went on. Thirty two dancing girls would come and play before him daily; he would never care to look at them. He never cared for anything. He was detached and in his Ananda state once a devotee asked him "What is God (Brahma like?" Baba did not reply to him but sent some one to Bagchand Marwadi for 100 rupees. That man did not give it but sent his Namaskar to Baba. He sent the man to another person with the same negative result. Baba then sent for Nana Saheb Chandorkar and asked him for 100 rupees. Nana Saheb Chandorkar sent a chit to the said Bagchand Marwadi and the latter sent 100 rupees at once. Baba merely remarked "All is like this in the world". The questioner asked me later on privately why Baba gave no answer. I explained that the demands for dakshina and the response thereto were the reply to the questioner. When other asked for money, it was not forthcoming. But when Nana Saheb Chandorkar wanted it, it came at once. Similarly the man who merely wants to know Brahman does not get it.

It is he who is qualified to know it that gets it. The lesson is “Deserve before you desire (Brahman)”.

As for miracles, I have hardly seen any of Baba. I saw him about 1898 sleeping on a plank suspended about 7 or 8 feet above the ground. The wonder was how he got into or out of it, without a ladder. How he could swing himself up or down, none saw.....They supporting threads were weak and lamps were loosely placed on it. They would fall down if one swings into it. When I went to see him as he lay in it. He got angry and drove me off. Baba was occasionally doing something strange between 1p.m and 2 p.m at the mosque with a cloth screen in front of him and when he was alone. He would take out of a pouch 10 or 15 old coins. They were of various values and descriptions i.e. 0-0-3, 0-0-6, 0-1-0, 1-2-0, 1-4-0, 0-8-0, 1-0-0. He would rub his finger tips constantly yet gently against their surface (whether with or without mantra, I cannot say). Their surfaces had all become worn out and smooth. He would say, as he rubbed his finger against the coins, “This is Nana’s, this is Bapu’s, this is Kaka’s, etc.” If any one approached, he would gather the coins, put them back in the pouch and hide them.

Baba spoke thousands of “goshties”. I will narrate a few. Once he said “I was at Punthamba. There was a struggle there between two parties. I wondered why they fought. I found near them a potful of coins. That was the bone of contention between them. Then I quietly moved up and carried it away. They found that their wealth was gone and began to mourn and lament. I was saying to myself. “Who am I? What is this wealth? Whose is it? What confusion and struggle for this? The pot is mine and I am the pot’s.”

Baba once spoke thus: “My mother was greatly rejoicing that she had got a son (i.e., me). I was for my part wondering at her conduct. When did she beget me? Was I begotten at all? Have I not been already in existence? Why is she rejoicing over this?”

Once at Shirdi, somebody had prepared “Sira (i.e., sweetened semolina pudding). Baba asked me if I had been given ‘Sira’. I then said that I was not on good terms with B.....a and that I had not been given ‘Sira’. Baba then gave me

instructions. **“Who gives what to whom? What is this ‘Sira’? Who eats it? Do not say of anyone that he is inimical. Who is whose enemy? Do not entertain any ill feelings towards anyone. All are one and the same.”** That idea is brought out at the end of Ch.II of my commentary on Amritanubhava.

A religious person of Satara once offered to teach me Vedanta but I said that I could rely on Sai Baba’s help in taht mater. Then that person jeered at Baba and said taht as a Moslem he knew nothing and could teach nothing of Vedanta. I did not waver in my faith and so I went to Sai Baba and told him that I wished to write a commentary on well known Vedantic work. Amritanubhava. Baba placed his hand on my head, blessed me and gave a permission to write. I found that the numerous goshties I had heard from Baba furnished me with fresh analogies and similies to embellish my commentary with and avoid a repetition of the stock similies. I have composed numerous Kirtans and Stotras and written other works. A list of them is given in Ch.63 of Bhakti Saramrita P.333 including Manache Sloka-Jalada Dhus.

Baba occasionally sang Musalmani songs that I could not understand.