

## **XXI**

**2nd December, 1936**

BhikuBai, wife of Bayyaji Patil Kothe, caste Mahrathi, aged about 42, residence Shirdi says:

My parental home is Ahmadnagar. I knew Radhakrishnabai as a friend at Nagar. She had a photo of Baba and she told me about him there. She was worshipping him with Arathi etc. She told me, she wanted to go to him. Her paternal grandfather was a lawyer there. Baba Saheb Ganesh was his name. She resided with him. I was wedded to one at Sangamner and he died and from there in my 14th year I came here, as Radhakrishna Ayi, my friend was here

serving Sai Baba (1908).

Gangagiri Baba of Vanjargaon was performing a huge Nama Sapha under the Tamrind trees (near the wada). There was a huge gathering every day and among many pilgrim groups that came, one was from Sangamner and when that returned to Sangamner, it brought from my friend R.Ayi a photo of Baba, a lot of Burfi *Prasad* and an invitation to me to go over to Shirdi and settle there. I accepted the invitation and came here without jewels and property. I then went and saw Baba. He told me to live with R.Ayi and be busy serving. About the end of 1916 i.e., 1 or 2 months after R.Ayi died, I had gone to Nagar to draw my pension as the widow of a man that died in the war at rupees 6 per month (which I still draw). On my way back, at Kopergaon, near the banks of the Godavari, I was reminded of the fate of R.Ayi, who was burnt there. My mind was all in a turmoil. I had brought over my garland to Shirdi for Baba. When I went to place it on Baba, he said **“I don’t want this garland of mental uneasiness”**. He did not receive it. H.S.Dixit requested him to take it as I had brought it from Ahmednagar for him with such great trouble. I then went near Baba lifting up the garland with both hands. Then I neared Baba, the garland somehow snapped into 3 parts; one was left in each hand and one fell on the floor. How it got severed like that I could not discover. Baba was simply saying “I don’t want it.”

I had brought with me along with the garland a water melon and some milk sweets and I placed the *pedas* and the cut fruit before Baba. Baba took them up and distributed them. Then I took a slice and cut off the outer skin and presented part to Baba and asked him to eat it. Dixit also requested him to eat it. Baba then said **“This woman was weeping and shedding tears at Godavari and she has brought it with such a troubled heart and so I will not accept it.”** The fact was that at the river bank I was weeping and blaming Baba mentally for not having saved Radhakrishna Ayi, i.e., for allowing her to die such a wretched death. Baba knew everything that was in my heart and hence his refusal to accept my present.

Baba at his noonday meal daily gave me a vessel full of food which I took home. On the day of Baba’s expiry, I was

greatly agitated at his leaving me desolate and I was weeping at about 10 p.m., in my house saying “Baba I cannot see you again.” I came out and outside my front door I saw a serpent and felt that it was Baba and said “I cannot recognize you in this serpent body I know only your Sai Baba form.” The serpent disappeared.