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23RD SEPT. 1936, DADY AGIAR ST., BOMBAY

Sri Narayan Asram, Sanyasi and disciple of Vedasrama Swami (Taraka Mutt, Durgaghat, Kashi), residing at Vaman Muth, Gangapur wai, (Satara District), aged 58, says:

I knew Sai Baba, i.e. heard the name and the greatness of Sai Baba in 1910 from Das Ganu Maharaj's Kirtana. I asked him "Is Sai Baba living?" He said "Yes, at Shirdi". In five days of that, I went to Shirdi and saw Sai Baba. In six months thereafter, I paid Baba nine visits. I often went to him in later years also. I was then in service, in the Customs Department and continued in it till 1926 when I retired on pension after 31 years service. 1927-1930 I spent in Narmada Pradakshina". In 1933, I took Sanyas changing my former name 'Toser' to the present one. I came first under a Guru's influence in 1895 whom I saw in a dream. When I

went to Shirdi in 1910 and had my contact with Sai Baba, I found that he was the same as the Guru who gave me first inspiration (without any words) in my dream in 1895. Then I passed after 1918 into the charge of Vasudevanand Saraswati of Garudeshwar on the banks of Narmada near Nanded (in Gujarati) Though Vasudevanand Saraswati left the flesh in 1915 he had connection with Baba. I believe that Baba has left me in; his charge. So, Vedaśrama Swami of Kashi, Taraka Muth, Durgaghat, gave me *deeksha* in 1931.

I mostly stay at Wai. As for my internal progress and Sai Baba's influence on me, it is hardly a thing to be described.

Sai Baba had different ways of dealing with different people. He was the centre and to each man he darted a separate radius. Most cared for external things only and hardly any came to him for the highest spiritual benefit of *Atma Nishta*. Hari Sitaram Dixit, Chandorkar and Dabholkar were probably those who came close enough to him to receive high teaching. Yet it is a question, if any of them got into *Atma Nishta* or anywhere near that. Baba had made Dixit read Eknath's two works, as he was but a beginner in the religious field and had to develop his bhakti (devotion) chiefly. Of course, immediate proximity was not needed for chiefly. Of course, immediate proximity was not needed for development under Baba. When I was at Shirdi, I would mostly go and sit away by myself in the (Sathe) Wada and not be at the Mosque. Even at the Wada, one is under Baba's direct influence.

As for Baba's own state, that is a thing one can get a glimpse of from some facts. Baba had a way of touching (with his palm) the head of the devotee who went to him. There was no *adhi-kari* evidently to receive everything Baba could give and thus there was none to succeed to his position. But his touch did convey certain impulses, forces, ideas, etc. Sometimes he pressed his hand heavily on the head as though he was crushing out some of the lower impulses of the devotee. Sometimes he tapped, sometimes he made a pass with his palm over the head etc. Each had its own effect-making remarkable difference in the sensations or feelings of the devotee. Baba's touch was one means. Apart from that, he would invisibly operate on the nature of the devotee and ef-

fect a great change in him. He graciously conveyed to me without any words, the feeling that differences (between various souls etc.) i.e. all differences were unreal, that the one real thing is that which underlines all. This was after my first visit- in 1913 or 1914 perhaps. But Baba never spoke out this truth so far as I know. Obviously there was not competent adhikari who had to be spoken to in that way.

I have not given out my experience though Mr.Dixit and Mr.Dabholkar asked me for it. I have never heard Baba utter *Mahavakyas* or say things of Sankaracharya's *Atmabodha* or Viveka *Chudamani* or anything on those lines.

When I went first in 1910 no crowds had come. Baba was mostly silent then. Very soon Bombay crowds began to pour upon Shirdi. The baba was being pressed into new habits and ways. Devotees to suit their own tastes forced numerous forms and observances on Baba and made him a mere man shining with the aid of the shows they arranged for him. His real greatness shone by itself without forms and rigid observances and pomp, and was shut out by these. These reduced Baba to earthly grandeur.

Baba spoke to me only a few words- but they were direct and plain words. He did not talk to me in parables. He began to amply parable in teaching the numerous people that flocked to him. There is a great deal of parallelism between Sri Sai of Shirdi and Akkalkote Maharaj and that can be found by reading he life of Akkalkote Maharaj. The latter also hardly ever spoke of *Advaitic* realization. He was a greater *Karmata*, (i.e., follower of rigid *Karmamarga*, the path of works) and insister on forms than Sai Baba. Baba was trying to push people just a few steps above their level.

Das Ganu told me that Baba referred to one Daji Maharaj, a saintly *grihastha* Brahmin, who lived at the village Dangar Takidi near Nanded (in Nizam's State) as "my brother." That Maharaj passed away in 1934. He was practising Gayatri *Purnascharan*. He said one day in 1914 at Dangar Takidi "Yesterday, Sai Baba came here in the form of *Maruti* and there was a great rumbling noise at his arrival."

My father and I are Maruti worshippers. I installed a new Maruti image and got a temple built land consecrated in 1918 at Ville Parle, Hanuman Street, I had to name the God,

and I called it Sai Hanuman, remembering that Sai was Hanuman. I gifted that temple by deed to my brother. The very day this temple was consecrated at Ville Parle, Baba gave, it seems, Rs.25 to a Brahmin named Vaze and made him perform Satya Narayan Puja at Shirdi. People connect these two events. When I was first visiting Shirdi, I was heterodox and could hardly be taken for a brāhmin. Regard for Samskaras grew on me. I never cared for *siddhis*. I seldom attended Baba's Chavadi procession even when I was at Shirdi.

I was desirous of getting Sanyas even before I got married. I actually got it only in 1931. But the way was being paved. My mother and wife are living; but I have no issue. Two children were born and they passed away after a few days of existence on this earth, one in 1900, the other in 1915. Brahmacharya is essential to *Sanyasa*. The fact that a wife is living in the house is no impediment to my Brahmacharya. If I look upon my mother like any other human being without special attachment, that is no hindrance to Sanyasa. The *Samskara* of going through sanyasa gave me a great impetus. Sai Baba never spoke to me (or so far as I remember, to anyone else) about the desirability, necessity or disadvantages of a life of Sanyasa. About changes of caste, *Ashrama*, Guru, methods of Sadhana, caste observances, etc., he had one and the same advice or prescription "Each must stick to his lot and get on."

Read over and found correct.)

The Guru after all is a medium, a means to realize your own self. He gives you a push and then you have to exert yourself and go higher and hold to your height. Sai Baba thus was a medium though one responsible for a considerable and momentous advance in my spiritual history. Before I went to Shirdi, one Vinayak Bhat Shadale (supported by the Kolhapur State) whom I met in 1900 and who had made me read bits of Yoga-Vashishta with zest was also a "medium" for me.

With one help at one time and a second at another, one has to go on steadily and realize the self.

