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21ST MAY, 1936.

Mrs. Manager, Holy city, says:

It is very difficult to describe Sai Baba and our experience of him, but one may talk about some things relating to him.

My daughter took ill when she was fifteen months old and I was sore distressed. Just then my brother-in-law came back from Shirdi and was sounding the high praise of Sai baba. I then said that if the child recovered, we should go with our child to Shirdi and pay our respects to Sai Baba. The child recovered and we went up to fulfil our vow.

One's first impression of Sai Baba was derived from his eyes. There was such power and penetration in his glance that none could continue to look at his eyes. One felt that Sai Baba was reading him, or her, through and through. Soon one lowered one's eyes and bowed down. One felt that He was not only in one's heart, but in every atom of one's body. A few words, a gesture would reveal to one that Sai Baba knew all about the past, present and even future and about everything else. There was nothing else to do for one, except to submit trustfully and to surrender oneself to Him. And there He was to look after every minute detail, and guide one safe through every turn and every vicissitude of life,. He was the Antaryami, call Him God or Satpurusha in Sahaja *Sthithi* or what you like. But the overpowering personality was there, and in his presence no doubts, no fears, no questioning had any place and one resigned oneself and found that was only course, the safest and best course. From one's first entry into his presence, one went on getting experience of His power, His all knowing and all pervasive personality. His protecting care that shielded one, wherever one went and at any time whatsoever.

I shall give some instances of his *Antryamitva* that I personally got or learnt of in the early days of my stay at Shirdi. Shirdi in those days was a neglected hamlet without any lighting, sweeping and other conveniences of civilization.

It had had some improvement since. But when I was there, the streets and passages were all dark and unlit at night. One night I was walking about. But suddenly and abruptly I stopped. There was no sound or sight to account for my stopping. For some unknown reason I felt I must stop and I did. A little time passed and a light was brought by some one and there Lo, and behold! At the very place where I was to have placed my foot at the next step, there was a serpent lying quiet. Of course, if I had put my foot, the consequences might have been very serious, if not fatal. The light showed what the danger was that I escaped. But I could not have guessed of its existence so near me by the use of my own powers, in the absence of the light. Why and how had I stopped so abruptly and how did the light come in so opportune a moment to show me the danger? The only answer is the all seeing and ever watchful power and protective grace of Sai Baba. He has saved this body of mine from death on many occasions. But these or some of these will be mentioned later on.

To take another instance. We used to go and sit near Sai Baba at his Mosque. Any one could go up at the usual time, without permission asked of or introduction taken to Sai Baba and bow before him and all there. On one occasion, as I was seated at a short distance from Sai Baba, there came a leper to the Mosque. His disease was far advanced. He was stinking and he had little strength left in him, so that it was with much difficulty and very slowly, he clambered up the three steps of the Mosque, moved on to the Dhuni (fire) and then to Sai Baba and placed his head on Baba's feet. It took so much time for him to take his *Darsana*, and I feeling the scrunch from him intensely, hoped he would clear off. At last when he got down slowly carrying a small parcel wrapped up in a dirty cloth. I felt relief and said within myself, "Thank God. He is off." Sai Baba at once darted a piercing glance at me, and I knew that he read my thought. Before the leper had gone far, Sai Baba called out and sent some one to fetch him back. The man came. It was again the slow process of his clambering up, emitting foul scrunch all the time; and as the man bowed to Baba, Baba picked up that parcel saying "What is this?" And opened it. It contained some "*pedas*", (i.e., milk sweets) and Sai Baba took up a piece and gave it to me alone

of all present and asked me to eat it. What horror! To eat up a thing brought by the stinking leper! But it was Sai Baba's order, and there was no option but to obey. So I ate it up. Sai Baba took another piece and himself swallowed it and then sent the man away with that remainder. Why he was recalled and I alone was the chosen recipient of his *peda*, none then understood. But I knew full well that Sai Baba had read my heart and was teaching me valuable lessons, (e.g., in humility, fraternity, sympathy, endurance and trust in His Supreme wisdom rather than in my own notions of hygiene and sanitation for saving me from disease).

When we had difficulties to get over, we never had to speak. We had merely to go and sit or stand in his presence. He at once knew what the matter was and gave a direction exactly meeting our requirements. We had our servant with us at Shirdi. He had acute pain in his lumbar region. My husband went to Sai Baba and was standing. Some others were also present before Sai Baba. Baba suddenly said "Hallo, my leg in paining. Great is the pain." Some one suggested that something should be done to relieve the pain. "Yes" said Baba If green leaves are heated and applied over it, it will go away". "What leaves, Baba?" was the query by some one. Baba said, "These green leaves near the Lendi" (i.e. steamlet.) One suggested one leaf and another a different leaf. One finally asked if it was Korphad. "Yes" Baba said, That is it. The leaf has to be brought, split into two, slightly heated over the fire and applied. That is all." At once, my husband knew that this was Baba's kind prescription for our servant. We fetched the leaf and applied it as directed; and the servant was relieved of his pain. Not only was he present at all places when his physical body was in one place, say the mosque, but he was also able to do various things with his invisible body.

My eyes have been giving me trouble constantly. On one occasion while I was at Shirdi, they were greatly paining me and water was freely flowing from them. In such a condition I went and sat up before Baba. He looked at me. My eyes ceased to pain and water. But his eyes were dropping tears. The accurate diagnosis of the disease at a glance was wondrous enough. Still more wondrous was his curing deep-seated organic disease abruptly and suddenly without any

visible application of remedy or treatment. Scientists or medical men may disbelieve this, But having actually experienced it in my own case and in that of others who came before Sai Baba, I cannot disbeliever such cases and what is most peculiar the drawing of diseases on to himself by pure will power.

This wonderful powers and especially this wonderful nature of Sri Sai Baba with his *Antaryamitva*, i.e., his being inside every creature and every object animate or inanimate so as to control all voluntary and involuntary movements of creatures and objects, throw light on what He occasionally said of him self “ I am not at Shirdi,” he would say, while he was at Shirdi, As was frequently said, he was not confined within the three cubits length of flesh, bone and blood that people called S Sai Baba. He was in every dog, cat, pig, man and woman. While we cannot shake off the idea that we are this physical sheath or the attachment we feel to things connected with it, he was ever free from such narrow ideas or attachments. He seemed to be in or to be the Oversoul, the Super-consciousness, *Sahaj samādhī* or *Jnanamaya Sharir* by whatever name we choose to refer to that higher state of his.

One noticeable difference between Sri Sai Baba and other saints struck me. I have moved with other notable saints also. I have seen them in high *samādhī* or trance condition entirely forgetting their body and course) effacing the narrow notion of the self confined to the body; and I have seen them later getting conscious for their surroundings, knowing what is in our hearts and replying to us. But with Sri Sai Baba, there was this peculiar feature, He had not to go into trance to achieve anything, or to reach any higher position or knowledge. He was every moment exercising a double consciousness, one actively utilizing the Ego called Sri Sai Baba and dealing with other Egos in temporal or spiritual affairs, and the other entirely superseding all Egos and resting in the position of the Universal Soul or Ego; he was exercising and manifesting all the powers and features incidental to both the states of consciousness. Other saints would forget their body and surroundings and then return to it. But Sri Sai Baba always was in and outside the material world. Others seemed to take pains and by effort to trace the contents of others minds and read their past history. But

with Sri Sai Baba this was not a matter of effort. He was in the all knowing state always. Sai Baba was one whom some people could not understand at all. He would talk, e.g., to a howker about some cloth brought for making *Cupnis*, higgie and haggie like the most inveterate shopper at a bazaar and beat down the price of the cloth, say from As .8 a yard to as.5 a yard and take, say, 40 yds. This mad the hasty onlooker conclude that Sai Baba was parsimonious, and avaricious or at any rate attached to wealth. A little later, he (i.e., Sai Baba) would pay the hawker, and the he would sometimes pay four times the price settled. Again the hasty onlooker would conclude that Baba was crazy, touched in the brain, or needlessly ostentatious in his misplaced charity. In both cases, the hasty judgements would be wide of the mark and the real reasons for Sai Baba's conduct would remain mysterious to all except those whom he meant to enlighten.

It is not merely his power that endeared him to his devotees. His loving care combined with those powers made Shirdi, a veritable paradise to the devotees who went there. Directly we went there, we felt safe, that nothing could hard us. When I went and sat in his presence. I always forget my pain nay the body itself with all mundane concerns and anxieties. Hours would pass and I would be in blissful unconsciousness of their passing. That was a unique experience shared. I believe, by, all his real devotees. He was all in all and the All of us. We never could think of his having limitations. Now that he has passed away, I feel what a terrible loss it is, as I can no longer pass hours together in blissful unconsciousness of time and affairs at his feet. We feel we have lost our soul; our bodies alone are let to us now. Yet it would not be true to say that he has altogether vanished. He is still living now and we have ample proof of his powers and protecting care in many matters of and on; thought the assurance we derive from these about his continuance can never compare with the bliss we felt in his presence when he was in the physical body. I shall proceed to give some instances of his active care for us and of the help he has rendered to us after dropping his physical sheath.

I was suffering for over a month during summer of 1915(?) with a splitting neuralgic headache; we were at *Panchgani*, a sanatorium and we tried a number of remedies. It

was all to no purpose. I felt I must die, With that feeling, I resolved to go to Shirdi, so that I may have the privilege of dying at Baba's feet.; and inspite of some objections raised by my husband at first, we moved on to Kopergaon and came to the river Godavari which we had to cross. It struck me at once that I should bathe in the holy river as anyhow I was going to die soon. A cold bath might increase my pain and accelerate death. Well, so much the better, I had my bath, Well? Judge of our surprise! He bath over, I came out and the headache instead of getting aggravated, left me at once and for ever. That long standing scourge left me for good by that bath, even though a cold bath when the headache was on was previously totally impracticable and a terror to me. This cure was surely due to Sri Sai.

In 1927, when I was six months with child, we (i.e., our whole family started for Shirdi; shortly thereafter my child died in the womb, and no delivery followed for days. My features were getting blue. I was clearly having blood poisoned. There was no medical help or midwife at Shirdi; we, however, got some medicines from Ahmednagar. They were of no avail. My husband went to Sakori and prayed to Sri upasani Baba to help me. The latter merely said "You have the best doctor and best nurse there, (meaning of course, Sri Sai Baba). Why do you come to me." The Child remained for days dead in my womb and I was unconscious. What happened thereafter and how I delivered, I do not remember. But my husband told me (Mrs. Manager confirms this) that in my unconscious state, I was speaking and giving directions as to what steps were to be taken besides applying Udhi and *Tirth* of Sri Sai Baba. These directions were followed and every thing inside was expelled (especially later on through glandular swellings). Yet, for one more month I continued unconscious and at last recovered full consciousness and health. This was a clear case of Sri Sai Baba's help (to save my life) nine years after he entered into *Maha samādhi*.

Sri Sai Baba's qualities shine out of his own conduct and his virtues are worthy of mention. His kindness would be amply borne out by the incidents already mentioned. Many

other incidents known to and experienced by all who came to him can be mentioned which show that it extended far beyond Shirdi thousands of miles away even to Europe, when his devotees were facing danger in the Great War in 1914-19. But he was also just and Impartial, while he was kind. If the occasion called for it, he said, one should sacrifice one's own child. His serene impartiality knew no difference between the king and a beggar. All were equal in his eyes. He was never obsequious to the rich and high placed, nor supercilious and contemptuous to the lowly. Revenue Commissioners and Collectors have called to see him and lower officials in numbers, e.g., D. Os, D.C.s, Mamlatdars, etc. But wealth and position were no special grounds of preference or differential treatment with them. His accessibility to all and at all hours practically was a remarkable feature of his. "My Durbar is always open." He used to say "at all hours." He had nothing to fear from scrutiny, and nothing shameful to conceal. All his actions were open and above board.

Another distinguishing feature of his life was Freedom from care and anxiety. He had no interests to save or protect, no institution to seek support for or maintain; no acquisitions to safeguard; no private property to feel anxious about. Every thing got was quickly disposed of. He lived on the begged and freely offered food. He daily collected Dakshina of that a further detail may be given later on. But he spent it freely and liberally. During the last nine years or so of his life, he was daily giving Rs. 110 away to Taty and Bade Baba. Each day's earning were depleted in no time. And when he died, he left in his pocket just the amount needed to cover his funeral expenses. His self control and equanimity may be mentioned in this connection. He was far too lofty to care for trivial things. His palate, like his other senses, was so strictly under his control that none ever found him show any trace of desire for any thing, so far as I know.

His generosity may next be mentioned. Besides Rs.110 daily paid to some, he would scatter money and gifts. Some would say it was Rs. 300 daily fancying that untruth or exaggeration is needed to set out Baba's glory. But his greatness needed no such untruth or exaggeration to set it off. A few actual facts would suffice to establish his greatness beyond question. Coming to the question of his generosity, we

may state what we have seen Bhajan parties (Hindus) and Fakirs would come and would be liberally supplied.

His methods of imparting spiritual benefit and his religious ideas were hardly brought to other's notice. He would speak of God as any other religious and pious man might i.e., rarely, and with feeling. His religious practice was hardly noticeable. He would sit in the mornings near his Dhuni i.e., God.

Purity, Strength, Regularity and self denial one noticed about him always. He would always beg his food. Even during his illness, he never lay bedridden, but would get up and go round to beg his food. He would beg for food, only in the accustomed quarters and to a limited extent. And out of his begged food, he ate only a little and the rest he would give away.

There may be some who complain that even the ordinary talk of Sai Baba was meaningless jargon. So it was not doubt to them and was intended to be that. "*Jaya Mani Jaisa Bhav, Taya Taisa Anubhav.*" But those who were intended to be benefited by that talk would find their full and vast significance. He did not want comforts to be provided for him. When the Mosque was sought to be repaired. It was first a rumbling old dirty dilapidated building badly needing repairs, he objected and put it off. It was by the devotees insistence and by their conducting the repairs at night when he was sleeping in the Chavadi, that the reconstruction was pushed through.

Besides Upasani Maharaj, we met many noteworthy persons at Shirdi, Radhakrishna Ayi, a Brahmin widow, was looking after the requirements of Sri Sai Baba's Arati, etc. She ordered people to get things and was held in great respect; when we wen there in 1915 or so, Sri Sai Baba told us to go to Ayi, and we went to her for accommodation. But Ayi gave it one the strict condition that I should do all the manual labour she might ask of me, I agreed and did the work as required. Ayi related the history of my past life and had wonderful powers of thought reading and clairvoyance. When some unusual order came from Baba that such and

such a dish was wanted, she would keep it ready and supply it at once. When some message came for me, she read off my mind the reply I wanted to give and gave the reply herself. She was deeply devoted to Sri Sai Baba, and rendered great service to his Sansthan. Yet it must be admitted that Sai had a very sharp tongue and many found her uncompanionable. But Sri Sai Baba put us there to develop our power of endurance, perhaps.

Sri Sai Baba's methods of giving spiritual help to visitors were not usual once. There was no Upadesh Mantra given. He never talked of Yoga, *Pranayam* and *Kundalini*. But when anything went wrong to one pursuing some *Marga.*, he would come to Sri Sai Baba and would be helped. There was a man who had practised *Asan* and *Pranayam* and the poor man's system broke down. He was passing blood in his motions. So he came to Sri Sai Baba and stayed. After a while his health was restored during his stay at Shirdi.