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5TH NOVEMBER, 1936, SHIRDI

Abdhulliah Jan, originally of Tarbella, Hazara District, near Peshawar, Mauhammadan, Pathan, living for years at Korhale near Sakori, aged 40, says.

I had left Tarbella when I was quite a boy. I had none

to support me. I wished to go abroad and see Mecca, etc. So I travelled down south upto Manmad. From there some one who took interest in me said that I could easily go to Bombay and, then to Mecca, etc. But I was informed (in 1913 when I was at Haripur on the way to Manmad) that Sai baba was a grate person at Shirdi who was liberally showering moneys on fakirs and would send me to Mecca, if I wanted. So I went to Shirdi. As I entered the gate of Masjid, Baba was in the main building. I looked at Him and He at me. Our eyes met. At once I felt that Sai was indeed my Guru. I stayed on at Shirdi. He fed me and other fakirs abundantly and I resolved to stay on and lead an easy life at Shirdi with him. This was in 1913. I was not taking a serious view of life then, because I was so young. My stay with Baba brought about some changes in my mentality. When I came to Shirdi, I regarded Hindus as enemies of mine. After remaining about three years with Baba, this feeling of animist passed away and I was viewing Hindus as my brethren. Now, for instance, I see with regret that at Bombay, Hindus wish to destroy Moslems and their Mosques, and Moslems wish to destroy Hindus and their temples. If both succeed in wiping out each other they will only make room for persons of other faiths to establish themselves in the place of these two.

Baba passed away when I was aged 22 and so did not benefit me on the religious side in any appreciable way. I was feeling disappointed and I set out on my travels. In 1926, I was going back north. There in the Swat Valley (Malekhand Agency), I found the tomb of a great Saint, Akun Baba who was Sayyad or direct descendant of Mohammed. It is reported of him that when Lord Roberts was advancing westwards with a view to quell the Moslem tribes there, he felt that he could not move one foot further. It is said that Akun Baba, by his magical power, locked up Lord Roberts in a hill for 3 months and 11 days and Lord Roberts communicated to Queen Victoria (the British Government) this predicament of his. Akun Baba's powers were widely talked of in those days and I lay down one night near his tomb praying that he might be pleased to take me under his wings and help me as Sai Baba had not given me help. During the night, I had a dream wherein I saw not Akun Baba But Sai Baba. Sai Baba was seated on a chair near my head, as I lay there. Baba did not

peak. When I woke, I recollected his dream or vision and found that I was still under Sai Baba's care. I had not addressed him-but only addressed Akun Baba, when I went to sleep there. Yet he, Sai Baba, was kind enough to come to me of his own accord, (to help me) in Swat Valley, 1,500 miles off Shirdi. My idea that SaiBaba had deceived me by giving me no help during the five years I was with him at Shirdi was evidently not right. I got more faith in Baba from the time of that dream or vision in the Swat Valley. I returned back to this side and I have full faith in him now. (I am married since 1924 and live with my family at Koshale, four miles from here). Baba appears before me once in two or four years. I moralise on the past sometimes and see the vanity of my poor existence. Baba was surrounded by crowds in his lifetime and it was hard to find room in the Mosque on account of these crowds. What a number of dogs, etc., were swarming round him! Now there are very few men and hardly any dogs to be seen at the Mosque which is as a rule deserted. If Baba's splendour was so short lived and if it faded away so quickly, what of me, a poor gnat?

I have heard of or seen no "Rohillas" staying with Baba. But I have known and heard of some intolerant Pathans who came to him. The late Baba Saheb, i.e., R.A.Tarkhad, told me of an incident in his life. He was sleeping on night at the Chavadi by the side of Baba. One MirJaman of Kandahar was then with Baba as a recent visitor. Suddenly, one night, at about 3 A.M. Mir Jaman got up and told Baba that the Hindus were spoiling him, and Mohammedan faith, and asked Baba if he would permit him, i.e., Mir Jaman, to take the sword and strike away at the throats of all the Hindus there and effect Baba's release. R.A. Tarkhad listened with fear and wondered if the wretch meant really to murder him in cold blood. Sai Baba, however, placated Mir Jaman by saying that he (Baba) was *pagal*, i.e., mad and the Hindus worshipping him there were mad, that he was responsible for their worshipping him (contrary to the custom and tents of the Islami faith) and not they for his mad state, and that it was his throat that should be cut by Mir Jaman, if he wanted to cut any throats and not theirs. Thereafter, Mir Jaman kept quiet.

There was another intolerant Moslem named Abdullah

Khan of Nagpur, who stayed sometime (three or four months) with Baba. He was a journalist and familiar with Buty, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. He was a Hindustani *pathan* and not a Rohilla. He died at Ahmednagar. During his stay at Shirdi, he was occasionally complaining that Baba had deceived him. Once this man beat Nana Chopdar and was charged before the Kopergaon Magistrate. He was convicted and fined. He had no money to pay the fine of Rs.15 and no security to offer and so was in jail for a while. Then Buty sent him Rs.15. It seems that he declined it saying, that “he that deceived me should pay the Rs.15 and no others.” Then Baba sent Rs.15 out on his own pocket and got him released. I learnt that this man once told Baba, “I see that you are violating the principles of Islam by what goes on here and that your throat should be cut”. At that, it seems, Baba laughed and then the man begged pardon of Baba, at which again Baba laughed.

When Baba was alive, I heard him say to someone who feared that Baba would pass away and with him all his work and influence Hunadande haninn which is Mahratti for “From within the tomb I will beat with sticks.” i.e., that death of his body will not terminate his influence or activity.