

Preface

This treatise on Sai Baba is intended to contain as much information as possible of great interest to the devotees and the public. The volume has been growing and is still growing, so that at a very early stage it was discovered that the book would be too big for a single volume. It has been decided to split the book into three parts, the first part being the preliminary part containing matter which is useful for understanding the latter parts. An account is given of his early life, how he was understood and misunderstood, how he looked insignificant at first and became all important later, and what various and even conflicting views were and are taken of Sai's life. Amongst these, in the first part, a good portion has been allotted to view Sai Baba as *Guru* or *Samartha Sadguru*, especially in dealing with his *Ankita* children. To some, this devotion of a large number of pages to the subject of *Gurus* might appear to be unnecessary and may even be displeasing. On the other hand, it is noted that those who approach Sai Baba in dead earnest to achieve the highest that life holds for them were and are anxious to view in that light and deal with him in that capacity in which he would be of the greatest use to them for achieving the goal of life. And it is as *Guru* to all, that persons of all faiths and places can meet at his feet. His worship was first begun by Mahlsapathy and others as he was a supreme saint, a *Paramaguru*, an advantage to resort to and who is a necessity for one's attainment of *moksha* and other high aims of life. Mahlsapathy, his friends and the hermits meeting Baba in his earliest days at Shirdi realised what a highly advanced soul he was, how full he was of divine nature and therefore possessed of power to impart that nature or realisation to those seeking it in the proper way and to impart to various people various other benefits which circumstances might warrant. In the Mundaka Upanishad¹ we find the root of what has been expanded later in the Bhagavata. That Upanishad says that a self realiser or person of God-realisation can achieve anything and be in any world that he thinks of.

Yam Yam lokam manasa samvibhati,
Viscuddha satwah Kamayate Yamscha Kaman,
Tamtam lokam jayate,

Taamscha kaman,

Tasmat atmajnanam hyarchayet Bhutikamah.

The Upanishad adds, therefore those who are anxious about their own welfare must resort to such an Atmajnana. That was evidently the feeling of Mahlsapathy though perhaps he might never have heard of the Mundaka Upanishad. Baba's saying *Main Allah hum* or I am Laxmi Narain² is *Atmajnana*. The same doctrine is expanded in Srimad Bhagavata³ and other works. The *Jnani* is compared to *Agni*.

Bhungte Sarvatra Bhoktrunam

Dahan Prak Uttara Asubham.

that is, 'The *Jnani* goes on eating what is offered by devotees just as the fire consumes every oblation offered by devotees and completely burns out all the evil *karma* that may have been committed by them formerly or may be committed thereafter'. This is seldom actively and fully held before the mind of persons going to feed saints. For instance, Bayyaji Bai, when starting the feeding of Sai Baba from his very first entry into Shirdi, and pursuing him into the jungle for feeding him, dimly sensed the glory and appropriateness of feeding such a saint though it is clear that her having been Baba's sister, *janma* after *janma*, was the *Rinanubandha* that, accounted for her anxiety and zeal to feed him. Sai Baba's nature was slowly understood, and Volume I shows how very slow the process was. But at one stage, we might say that Baba had left obscurity behind and came out in full blaze like the noon-day sun upon the public. From about 1910 the blaze had begun, and in 1918 the blaze had advanced, and by 1918 the blaze was so powerful as to strike even comparatively blind people. However, there are such blind people even now whose eyes have to be opened to see the glory of the light of that sun, Baba. Baba's work has begun and is anything but finished. What the future holds seems to be far more important than anything already achieved by him. The object of this book is to help people to realise more and more the great work that is being done by Baba and his essential greatness. Therefore, there was a special necessity to hurry up the publication of this 'book. It was ready in some form even last year. But financial and other difficulties

prevented any publication and even now those difficulties permit only the publication of part after part, and that is one special reason why volume I alone is being issued now. In trying to cut up one closely inter-related mass of information about Sai Baba instituting his life, *lilas*, and teachings, one feels a great difficulty. However much thought is given to the subject of separation of parts, we find it difficult to say which chapter should get into what part. So in a rough way, Part I has to be closed with roughly one-third of the size" of the matter ready for printing, including in it the early history and accounts of Baba and the materials necessary for getting an idea of Baba as a *Samartha Sadguru*, who will help one to attain the highest in life, while at the same time enabling one to get the other incidental benefits of contact with such a saint. Chapters about *Ankita* children are the natural corollary of the chapter about 'Baba's Love or *Prema*' and 'Baba's *Samsara* in this world, and Baba's *Brahma Nishta*. Baba said to Nona G. Chandorkar 'You want to escape from *samsara*. I cannot escape from it myself. As long as there is the body, *samsara* is there. One cannot be released from *samsara* by running away to a jungle or by other similar process'. There is in this statement an important question of attitude to life. Several great saints who made great strides in *Atma Jnana* and God-realisation simply contended themselves with remaining absorbed in *Para Brahman* or in their *Iswara*, Personal God, and did not wish to continue any of their lives' activities. Some condemn this attitude. Others applaud it. But we should do neither. In the world, there are various sorts of fruits and views and in Divine Providence any soul may select its own fruit that is the particular attitude to life that suits it best, especially in view of its *poorva karma* and training. In Sai's life, the above quoted views as to *samsara* stress the fact that he was never for deserting society in order to be completely drowned in Impersonal or Personal God. On the other hand, he insisted upon being in the thick of life attending to his duties, drawing to him the very large number of persons, who contacted him in previous lives or in the present, all the while with his concentration God, unimpaired by such contact and in stressing the importance of performance of *rinanubandha* obligations with similar detachment upon his devotees also; he set

an example of what he taught. This matter will be dealt with at greater length in the Third Part which contain his teachings. The second volume or part mainly consist of Baba's dealings with various prominent persons showing how they were drawn to him and influenced by him, what progress they made and how they were helped to make it by reason of their contact .with him. This naturally includes teachings, for teachings form an important part of the way in which Baba developed people who came to him, and yet it is not by what we call 'teachings' that Baba moulded several prominent devotees. Therefore whatever is left over after dealing with Baba's prominent devotees in Part II must come into Part III, which as the residuary and final part must include general matter not covered by the previous parts.

The object of this work has been repeatedly declared to be practical. In cutting off a third of the book and sending it immediately before the public, the author is eminently practical. He wants that as many as possible who are hungering and thirsting to contact Sai Baba should have their satisfaction at once, that as many as are anxious to become Baba's *ankita* children should be immediately enabled to become such, and that those who wish to understand this mysterious universe and the puzzling problems of spiritual development with the aid of what Baba said and did, should be given an immediate chance of picking up as much as possible and proceed with it. Above all, the author feels sure that there is a considerable section of serious minded persons who wish to adopt Sai baba for their *Gurudeva* and want to be trained by him and taught by him every way in which Baba would consider it fit to teach and .in them. Baba's methods have not been exhaustively studied, but they include what is known as the *Dakshinamurthi* method.

Chitram Vatatarormule

Vridhah Scishyah Guruh Yuva

Guruostu Mounam Vyakhyanam

Scishyastu chinna samsayah.

this means, What a wonder! At the foot of the banyan tree, aged, grey bearded disciples are seated at the feet of a *Guru*, who is young. The *Guru* keeps silent

and talks not a word. The doubts however, of the disciples are all dispelled. One naturally asks, 'How is that possible?' In our present day civilisation, we have only understood conveyance of thought by speech. But with persons of the coming race or the fully developed human being that is represented by Baba, one of the most elementary power is to convey the thought impulse to action without utterance of a single word. 'Radiating thought' is an expression used about several great souls. A person seated before such a *Mahatma* feels that his whole being is permeated, controlled, communed with and moulded by the *Mahatama* without the use of a single word and without direction that any book should be studied or any practice should be followed. Fuller details of this will be found in the chapter on Upasani Baba in Part II. Apart from radiating mere ordinary thought, radiating wisdom or bliss and filling the disciple's soul with illumination never before experienced appear to be very grand, perhaps the grandest feat. Narayan Ashram formerly called Mr. Toser⁴ sat by Baba. Narayan Ashram says "He graciously conveyed to me without any words the feeling that differences between various souls were unreal, that the One real thing is that which underlies all."⁵ That means that he completely forgot himself, that, Toser's soul lost the idea that he was a single Toser with joys and sorrows, and limitations, of one body but instead, he perceived absolute bliss within him. As there was nothing else, within that bliss was Toser and he was identified with Sai Baba. And all sense of separateness was gone. This is the momentary conversion of an ordinary *Jiva* into *Satchitananda* or something on the verge of it. Baba's powers were similarly extended to G.S. Khaparde and Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiv Tarkhad. This activity of Baba would be very highly esteemed by many a reader who might consider it the privilege of his life, the total achievement of one's life to get into *Satchitananda* at least for a moment at the feet of Baba. Baba's training, teachings and achievements were of widely different sorts and were suited to the conditions of each who approached him and are suited to the conditions of those who approach him now. Baba is still a *Guru*, a Divine Personality, not a mere abstraction and can be seized by those who are in dead earnest. Unfortunately for mankind, very few are so earnest. Most stop with

raising preliminary questions as to the impossibility of such an experience or its undesirability and the various objections from the standpoint of the learning that they have already acquired. The ifs, the buts, the hows, the whys and the other numerous ways in which they face the problem prevent most readers from having the chance of approaching Baba in the right receptive spirit with full earnestness and getting the highest out of him. If the highest is not possible at the present moment, Baba suitably develops them either in this life or in the life beyond, for Baba has repeatedly undertaken to guide his devotees, life after life, promising to be born with them for that purpose. If this is not a sufficient attraction, it is difficult to find anything more attractive. There are people to whom these are not attractions, but the chance of getting Rs.500 a month, or a fine estate, or success in a particular contest, would be esteemed of far greater interest and importance than any of the things mentioned above. People's ways are peculiar and Baba does not expect every one to come to him fully perfect. Any one with all his defects may try to approach Baba and Baba will mould him, change his view point and his capacity to understand, appreciate and desire. The correct attitude is very important. That in turn depends upon one's view of one's life, one's neighbours and God. If one thinks of oneself to be a mere body, all earthly attractions overwhelm. But Baba by the grace of his *Guru Mourshad* was, as he said "taken away from the body which was but his house." That is, the *Guru* showed him that he was the spirit and not the mere body, that his interests were not to be confounded with the thousand and one things of the organism or one's artificial or sentimental personality closely associated with the organism. Baba has in turn developed several of those approaching him, at least partially to shake off the *Dehatmabuddhi* and obsession that the body is one's self. If a person once realises that he is not this organism and this body, but is something very much wider, which may be the result of Baba's training him to pitch himself into all other's hearts and identify himself with those souls, then the present necessity and the desires and aversions formerly prevailing with oneself, all drop off. The scales fall from one's eyes. All values are different. The world looms as something totally different from what it did. One sets about it and acts in a

different way. The results therefore of Sai contact will be of such wide variety and importance that it is not possible to set them out here. The earlier a person seizes upon a book about Baba and makes a careful and voracious study of everything about Baba, and a sincere attempt to absorb all that he can out of it, the better. We are sure that even after a perusal of Part I alone, several would achieve the position of becoming Baba's *Ankita* children, and there are already a good number of them. Several would definitely fix themselves up as Sai's *sishyas* anxious with his help to get up step after step in the ladder of spiritual progress. The details of these steps it is neither possible nor desirable to state here and now. One step seen at a time is enough. Baba gives the needed push and sees to the proper progress of everyone according to the circumstances and it does not matter whether one's progress is achieved completely now or later. If complete progress is not achieved in one life,

Bahunan Janmanam Ante,

Jnanavan Maam Prapadyate

that is, The *jnani* reaches God after many births. There is sure to be appreciable advance in one's position and one's nature as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita⁶. Thus one feels that he has after all come to the right place, namely, the feet of Sai Baba.

Before closing this preface, acknowledgements have to be made for all the help which have taken shape in the form of this book. The need for a complete biography in English has been felt by the public and by this author for over a dozen years, but something or other prevented the work from being undertaken and carried through. While in that condition, October 1953 brought on a serious breakage of the thigh bone and sixty days' confinement in the hospital, and subsequently a very serious attack of dysentery served to complete what appeared to be a total wreck of the physical and mental constitution. No energy was left to the author to move about, to think out, to look into the authorities or to write out a biography. There was no health or freshness and energy. In such a state of affairs, which continued yearly up to the middle of 1954, it was a wonder to the author himself that he discovered the object of his life being spared d the

object also of sufficient of energy, mental and physical, being left to him. It was clear that the remaining energy and remaining life were intended to be devoted to Baba just as the previous decades of this author's life were. So the matter of this big book within his memory was fairly and easily recallable. With some little effort, he began work and strange to say, though he had no power to sit and write, Baba provided his *Ankita* child with a stenographer who, out of modesty, wishes to conceal his light under a nom-de-plume R.R. Without the help of a stenographer, it would be impossible to turn out any work either for the book or for the *Sai Sudha* or for the numerous pamphlets that were being constantly requisitioned by others from this author. But by Baba's provision, this stenographer worked at all the .above matter and spent a large number of days in the year, that is, all the spare time that he could command, by the side of the author doing this work merely out of love for Baba. His work, if it had been charged for according to the prevailing scales, would have involved the author in the expenditure of over a thousand rupees which, of course, were not available. But Baba, like Sri Krishna, always provides *Mat parayanas* those who are devoted to him entirely, by looking after the affairs of those who assist. Says Bhagavata⁷

Samuddharanti Ye Vipram

Seedantam mat Parayanam

Tan uddharishyeham Achirat

Apatbhyo Nawn Rivarnavat.

that is, Sri Krishna says, 'Those who rescue my entirely devoted *bhakta* from his troubles, them I shall rescue and help from all troubles and calamities, just as a boat rescues one in the ocean. Baba somehow gives the feeling to the author's helpers that they are being looked after by him.

The author's health being, since October 1953, extremely unreliable, the work would have been impossible but for the due provision of medical help. Here again Baba's help to his *Ankita* child is remarkable. Baba designated a doctor in a very good position and with excellent knowledge and made him repeatedly attend, without receiving any recompense at all, upon the author and that doctor

is still attending upon him. Here also the above mentioned stanza applies. When the work was helped on in this way, the size of the volume grew and grew, and the task of reviewing even the original typed pages was too much for the physically weak author. Sri Dewan Bahadur R.V. Krishna Ayyar, for whom the author has always entertained high regard and love, went through over 500 sheets of typed matter making the necessary corrections. This was in the midst of his official work. So sincere thanks are due to him as also to Miss Indira, professor of English, Government College, Coimbatore, who was kind enough to go through 200 pages of the manuscript. Thanks are also due to the retired Law College Professor of Indore, Sri V.N. Visvanatham, and several others for having taken down notes necessary for dictation of the book. As already stated it looks impossible to publish a big book of 900 or more pages with a depleted cash balance in the All India Sai Samaj. It is Baba's grace alone that made the work see the light of day and also aided in getting the means for publication. The royal present of Rs.5,000 by His Highness The Maharaja of Mysore enabled the Samaj to purchase a Press and types. In the last twelve months, 360 odd pages constituting the first volume have been printed and got ready for publication. Stage after stage, idea after idea, and reference after reference, the remarkable help that ^{fj}/as suddenly forthcoming was the clearest evidence to the Author that Baba is giving unstinted support for this publication, fact it is not mere modesty but love of truth that makes the author say that the real producer of this book is Baba himself.

There may be numerous others who have helped this author in the course of getting up this book, but it is impossible to name them all here, and the author's apology may be accepted for the omission.

B.V. NARASIMHA SWAMI 1955