

Baba's Mission

Sai Baba during his sojourn on earth kept himself at various levels and devotees meeting him treated him as occupying various levels at one and the same time, a fact which is well brought out in Justice M.B. Rege's Introduction to Baba's Charters and Sayings. Those levels which might all occur on the same day in any order, included those of the ordinary *poor fakir*, the saint, and the *Paramatma*. And as M.B. Rege points out, after Baba left the body, his devotees' proper way of treating him is as *Paramatma* only, though those accustomed to other *Gurus* may keep on viewing him as a Guardian Angel, as a *Guru* as a good friend, or guide. There is however another level, hidden under these, that of the *Avatar* with a mission.

The term Mission is derived from the Latin root *Mitto* meaning send. So, a missionary is one who is sent with a message or direction by God, and as used in Christian literature, a mission was the most valuable characteristic of the lives of such great Prophets as Moses and Jesus. Jesus's mission was, to absolve mankind from hereditary or original sin, that is, the sin derived by being the

descendants of the first sinners and rebels, Adam and Eve. His death on the cross was considered a sacrifice on behalf of the entire humanity. Other's mission, for example, Moses, was to lead the Jews from captivity in Egypt on towards the Promised Land and also to make laws that the Jews should submit to, and so he proclaimed Laws of the 12 tables. The idea of a missionary is practically that of an agent. In the case of Sai Baba, he declared God has agents everywhere. They have great powers. Baba added, I also have great powers implying thereby, that he also was an agent of God. He also expressly told D.S. Rasane, 'I can do nothing except what God orders'. He did not give a *kupni* to G.G. Narke saying, 'The *Fakir* has not permitted me to give you a *kupni*' that is the robe of the *sanyasi* or *fakir* as G.G. Narke was to be a family man, an earning *grihastha* according to God's plan, and not a beggar. As an agent, he said that he had vast powers, that is, divine powers. The powers and the mission have a close relation. The mission has to be worked through the powers given and the powers are given only for carrying out the mission. Baba had by concentration on God practically every *siddhi* that one can think of, and Srimad Bhagavata²⁰⁰ says 'What power is there that cannot be got by concentration on God with conquest or control of mind and senses and breath?' So, his possession of vast powers both acknowledged and proved, was always utilised for the benefit of mankind, promoting individual benefits that were obvious, seen and well understood, and general benefits which were not so equally obvious or well seen and understood. Now we have to consider the mission of Baba based on the possession of his powers and notice what general benefits were conferred on the country or mankind, though these are not yet obvious to most people.

Proceeding further with the question of the stages in Sai Baba's life we see one marked difference between his life before 1886 and the life thereafter. Before 1886, the main stress of his activities and view appears to be on doing good to those who were near him and connected by *rinanubandha* or prenatal obligations. But *rinanubandha* cannot stop within definite geographical limits. By reason of that principle, people from afar had to benefit, and in working it out, he achieved other things also than doing good to the immediate comers. The

benefits derived by others consist in the development and spread of Sai faith intensively and extensively that is all over the country thus arresting the spread of Atheism and Agnosticism and the unification thereby of *dharma* and religion regardless of existing diversification and divisions of religion, caste and creed. The main benefit is the unification of the Hindu faith within itself and of Islam within itself, and, by purification and refinement of both, the building up of one common central religion or faith that is fitted to be the world faith which has been touched in a previous chapter. Incidentally, India's national problem of unifying conflicting groups is helped to solution. This is referred to as Baba's mission in the daily noon *arati* at Shirdi,

Avatarasi tum Yetam
Dharmatem glanim, Nastikanam
hi tum lavisi Nijabhajani
Bheda na Tatwim Hindu Yavanancha Kahim
Davayasi Jala Punariapi Naradehi
Pahasi Premanem turn, Hindu Yavanamhi
Dhavisati Atmatvanem Vyapaka ha Sayi
Jayadev Jayadev.

this means, 'When *Dharma* is ebbing, you incarnate. Even Athiests have faith in you. In principle there is no difference between Hindus and Muslims. To show this, you again came into the world with a human body. You look upon both Hindus and Muslims with equal affection. "This Sai shows himself as All prevading, as *Atman* or Soul of all".

There will be plenty of occasion in the following pages to fully establish the truth of the above. Baba did really promote Hindu Muslim unity, and a separate chapter also may be devoted to the consideration of that in detail. But for the present, we may note that it will be wrong to confine Baba's life to a single achievement and refer to that as the Mission of His life. Baba was a God realized soul, prepared by his *Samartha Sadguru* for the attainment of full divinity and the consequent establishment of himself as a *Samartha Sadguru* to continue the *Guru Parampara*. He had numerous *rinanubandhas* or connections with

innumerable people in former lives, and, when taking up a human body, he naturally had to give the benefit of the former connection to those formerly connected. But this cannot be said to be the main object of his life. The main object of any life is simply the unfolding of the life as part of God's plan. Innumerable benefits may follow from there in addition to the above two pointed out. But the unification of India's two faiths with the erection of a central world religion bulks large enough to make one stress it as the main object of divinity taking shape in a human body. The *Upanishads* followed by the Gita mention the main purpose of such an incarnation, or *Avatar*, as it is called in the *Puranas*. The Bhagavad Gita²⁰¹ says,

*Yada yada hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya Tadatmanam Srujami aham.
Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinascaya cha Dushkritam
Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge.*

these means, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, Whenever righteousness and *dharma* fade and unrighteousness is on the ascent, then, I incarnate. I incarnate, age after age for protecting the good and destroying the evil, and for the establishment of *dharma* or righteousness in the world.

Dharma samsthapana or the establishment of righteousness is a very wide term, and the work of a *Samartha Sadguru* may well be said to be that of establishment of righteousness or maintenance of the universe. Baba was trained by a *Guru* with God realisation or self realisation and divine powers, and was equipped with those powers at the *Diksha*, a potentiality that is gradually to be developed or in full development, and he had to use them to find out who were to be benefited by him merely by reason of previous contact, that is, contact in previous lives, and who were to be crushed out as the oppressors of the good. But incidentally one thing would be clear, that is, when the good are being helped they do not attain merely worldly benefit but also spiritual advantages. They grow more into life, light and love and they absorb more and more of Baba's nature by constantly dwelling in their hearts upon him on account of their love or gratitude towards him. They get more and more like unto him, and, if any of them should

have the capacity, they might develop even into the fullest likeness of Baba. The incidental consequence of the development of such virtues and superior nature, is to attract others. Both good and evil are infectious. Persons who lead highly moral lives naturally affect their neighbourhood, and all persons that come in contact with them rise in their grade of morality and spiritually. Some of them may get into the position of *Gurus* for others. Thus, the line of *Guruship* would be continued from Baba through these on several grades, grade after grade, though none of the latter may be *Samartha Sadgurus*. It is exactly like a dynamo attracting some pieces of iron and thereby converting them into magnets. Other pieces of iron or steel come near the first mentioned pieces and get by contact their properties which are really the properties of the original dynamo. Thus we see one powerful magnet drawing to it needles in succession, and the central magnet is responsible for all the remotely attracted needles also. The *Avatar* saint may also be likened to the little leaven in the mass of dough or better still, to the powerful Sun. The *Avataric* rays are extended in all directions like the rays of the Sun. In this very process, He is establishing *dharma* and eradicating *adharma*. In the course of the eradication of *adharma*, meaningless hostilities and wicked hatred often cloaking themselves under cover of religion are removed and thus internecine fights between religion and religion tend to disappear when true religion like Baba's gets to be spread around. Every great soul working like Baba on principles of contact with the one loving, eternal Father of All must naturally diffuse such love and avoidance of hatred to even the remotest persons that come in contact with him. Therefore, Baba's influence tends more and more to the removal of hatred and the spread of mutual love between religions and groups, economic groups and other groups also. Baba's functions may therefore be well described as bringing the Hindu and Muslim units in India together by showing them that they are all working under one common loving Father, and that their differences are immaterial and undeserving of any stress. Baba has done this and is doing it artistically and artfully without drawing critics attention to it, and this will be described at length later on as a process that goes on generation after generation and age after age, very little perceived before fruition.

Baba's main work was that of a *Samartha Sadguru* who had to diffuse religion and help the good and remove the evil that oppressed the good. Even before 1886 he was possessed of vast powers used for this purpose. In 1886, he had a small body of worshippers who might all have been benefited both temporally and spiritually by reason of *poorva rinanubandha* or present contact. But was his life work to end with that petty group? One day in 1886 Baba told Mahlsapathy who was by his side, '*Arre Bhagat*, I am going to *Allah*. You had better guard this body for three days. If I return thereafter, I will look after the body. If I do not you may thereafter have this body interred in that place' pointing to something near the *gode neem*. After saying that, Baba reclined on Mahlsapathy and was soon a corpse. Breathing stopped. The body heat disappeared. The colour of the body also turned livid. Soon the rumour got round that Baba was dead. The village officers as well as the police came. An inquest was held. An inquest report was drawn up wherein it was said that Baba was dead. The Police Officers wanted Mahlsapathy to bury the corpse as it should not remain in the Mosque. But Mahlsapathy quoted to them Baba's own words saying that he might return in three days. The Police Officers and others who obviously did not believe revival possible tried to induce Mahlsapathy to change his mind. But he stuck to his guns and pointed out that Baba was a *Yogi* of wonderful powers and that it was possible for such persons to return to life after three days. The police thought ultimately that it was safer to leave the responsibility of keeping the body for three days with Mahlsapathy and other devotees of Baba. the body remained there for three days, a perfect corpse, no sign of life at all being seen. But after three days suddenly a finger of Baba began to move. Then his eyes opened. Then he sat up with breath and all. After this, for 32 years he led a normal life, and it was only in 1918 his life finally passed out of his body. His body was thereafter interred in its present place, the Buty Wada.

What did the passing away from earthly life and the return to it in 1886 mean? Baba evidently returned to the world because more of the *prarabda* of the Sai body that is the original intention of his coming into this body, his mission,

remained unfulfilled, and therefore he had to get back into the same body to work out the remaining portion of the present life. This is a noticeable or remarkable feature of his life, that is, leaving the body and returning to it, which we do not find²⁰² ordinarily in other cases. Now what was the main thing that he did after his return? By observing the nature and results of his activities after return, we can easily see why he returned to the body in 1886. If he had left the body finally in 1886, no person in India, certainly not in the South and in the other States, and not even in Bombay or Maharashtra, nor even in the other parts of Ahmednagar District, would have heard about him or felt his influence, and all the grand work of his that is being described in this book would never have taken place. The essential part of Baba's life is that which comes after 1886, perhaps that which is yet taking shape though this is grounded upon the earlier part, especially upon the training he had and the work he went through in the earlier stages. The *Guru's* training and the further concentration of his entire soul upon the *Guru* in solitude all ripened this plant called Sai Baba so that it might produce an exuberance of flower and fruit. That flower and fruit we have partly and roughly described in this book already and more of it is to follow. We shall now point out, after careful study and observation the first prominent flower or fruit that the Sai tree *Kalpataru* produced, ignoring for the present the earlier petty pioneers like Gopal Rao Gundu, Revenue Inspector. That first flower or fruit is Narayan Govind Chandorkar. He may be termed appropriately the first apostle or Saint Peter of Baba. We shall see how Baba sent for him. Sri N.G. Chandorkar was Personal Assistant to the Collector of Ahmednagar, and was camping at Kopergaon for *jamabandi* that is Land Revenue Settlement work. All *karnams* of the taluk had to attend at the *Jamabandi*, and the Shirdi *karnam* also had to attend. No one left Shirdi without permission of Baba, as the experience of everyone was that by leaving with Baba's permission he was safe, and leaving without permission he ran into many dangers. So the Shirdi *karnam*, Appa Kulkarni, went to Baba and asked him leave to go to Kopergaon for *jamabandi* work, as the Personal Assistant to the Collector Narayan Govind Chandorkar was there.

Baba gave him leave, and added, 'Tell your Nana to come here'. Nana is the contracted form of Narayan which can be used only by equals moving on intimate terms. Appa Kulkarni was astounded at the message. He considered that he was too insignificant a person, and that Baba also though a Weird Being of the village was too insignificant to invite the Deputy Collector, a high Gazetted Officer of the Government. But Baba insisted and told him that he might inform the Deputy Collector that it was Baba who invited him. With great diffidence the *karnam* at the close of the day approached the Deputy Collector and told him that Sai Baba, a *fakir* of Shirdi, invited him to come to Shirdi. Chandorkar was astounded. He thought that it could not possibly be, and told the *karnam* that he was a stranger to the *fakir* and the *fakir* was a stranger to him, and that he, the *karnam*, must have some purpose of his own to invite him to his village. In spite of the *karnam's* protests, Chandorkar would not believe him and sent him away. When the *Karnam* reported his failure to Baba, Baba repeated the invitation, and again the *karnam* with considerable diffidence approached the Deputy Collector the second day and repeated the invitation. The second invitation had the same fate and for the same reasons as the first. That again was reported to Baba, and like the Prophetess Sibyl of Rome, Baba tried a third time and with success. Baba pressed the hesitating *karnam* to repeat the invitation for the third time. This time the invitation had effect. Nana Chandorkar thought that there must be something in it, and so he told the *karnam* that he would visit Shirdi but not immediately. Chandorkar did keep his promise. Sometime after going to Ahmednagar, he did go and pay a visit to Shirdi. After making a present of sugarcandy and almond with some reverence to Baba, Chandorkar asked Baba whether it was true that he sent for him, and when that was admitted, why had he sent for him. Baba said, 'There are thousands of persons in this world, and do I send for them all? Should there not be some special reason why you alone should be sent for?' Chandorkar said that he was unable to see any special reason. Then Baba made the solemn statement, 'You and I have been connected with each other in four former births. I now invite you to come and again have your contact. When leisure serves, you may come'.

Chandorkar was surprised by this statement, and in any case was not fully impressed. He left the place with the impression that he need not return to Shirdi. But he did come, details of which are found elsewhere and began his grand work of carrying on propaganda for Baba. With that, Baba's mission and life, and personality enter on a new stage.