

LIFE OF SAI BABA

VOLUME II

BY PUJYASRI H.H.NARASIMHA SWAMIJI

PART II

I Mahlsapathy

II Narayan Govind Chandorkar

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Foreword to Part II

BY

Sri B.N. Dattaraj, Home Minister, Govt. of India

H.H.B.V. Narsimha Swamiji, the Founder-President of the All India Sai Samaj, Madras, has requested me to write a foreword to this very interesting publication on Shri Sai Baba's Apostles and Mission. I gladly do so in my personal capacity for a variety of reasons.

In the first place, I myself have been under the guidance of the Saint of Shirdi for the last 18 years. In a way, Swamiji has been responsible for rousing in me a desire to know Shri Sai Baba and to seek His Grace. It was in or about 1937 while both of us had been at the Ramanashrama at Tiruvannamalai that I came to know that Swamiji had visited Shirdi and had been trying hard to collect material for a detailed study of the mysteries of the manifold life of this great saint. It was my conversation with him that enkindled in me a great curiosity to visit Shirdi and to seek His Blessings. I did so early in 1938, and have since then been visiting it off and on.

I have read, amongst others, all the publications of Swamiji on Shri Sai Baba and the experiences of His direct disciples.

To my good fortune, we have ever been in touch with each other. I have learnt not merely to respect but to revere Swamiji for the selfless and enthusiastic manner in which he has been working day and night during the last 20 years over the spread of the Divine Message of Shri Sai Baba. His missionary zeal in this cause has been to me a matter of deep spiritual gratification.

Swamiji has been ever in communion with the Saint and Mystic that Shri Sai Baba was, and, if I were to say so, Swamiji has been growing young in his advancing years, because of his complete dedication to the cause of Shri Sai Baba.

His writings are marked by a great critical and rational spirit that goes to the core of things without disturbing one's faith in and reverence for the things of the spirit. In fact, these feelings are strengthened thereby. That has always to be so if one were to know correctly and adequately the purpose behind the lives and the mission of such Avatars.

In an earlier publication on the life of Shri Sai Baba, Swamiji has, in a very erudite but entertaining manner, placed before us the fundamentals of our faith and spiritual traditions. One knows by his writings not only the salient features of the lives of great saints like Shri Ramana Maharshi and Shri Sai Baba, but also realises, as if by a God-given glimpse, the great purpose or purposes for which these high Souls descended to the earth and fulfilled in their own ways the Divine promise of maintaining righteousness in and uprooting wickedness from society. During the last 20 years, thanks to Swamiji's energetic propaganda and publicity, Shri Sai Baba has attracted devotees from far and near, as also from all sects, communities and religions. They come from all sections of the society and, in particular, from its intelligentsia. In the case of the latter, one has to carry them across the fields of doubt and scepticism before they reach the other shore of spiritual enlightenment, and are safely and for ever established on the bedrock of faith in and devotion to the Divinity that Shri Sai Baba was and is.

The present volume gives us a glimpse into the lives of the immediate and illustrious devotees and followers of Shri Sai Baba. They came from all faiths and while achieving blessedness and maintaining complete devotion to the Saint, ever remained enlightened members of their religions. Almost all of them had the good fortune of having known the Saint, at close quarters while He was living on this earth in flesh and blood.

It is to me, as it will be to other readers, a matter of great spiritual satisfaction to know how these direct disciples of the Saint came under His influence and protection and achieved blessedness.

Shri Sai Baba never believed in what can be called a formal initiation, I know, however, from the experiences of many including that of my humble self, that, in fact, there is such an initiation, though of an imperceptible but highly effective type. The moment you go under His influence you become a changed man and are ever convinced that all your burdens are borne by him, that you feel so light on account of His guidance, and that, at the same time, so purposefully united with Him, and through Him, with the Higher Forces that are working in the universe for the uplift of mankind.

I deem it a privilege to confess that I have learnt many new and stimulating things from a perusal of this great publication. It has in a way strengthened the impressions that I have formed from Gandhiji's writings on spiritual matters.

I, therefore, very gladly recommend this book to all those that seek Divine Light and guidance.

Om Tat Sat.

B.N. Datar.

Bihar Governor's Camp

To

B.V.N. Swami

Dear Friend,

I have your two letters from Madras and also the second volume of the Life of Sai Baba.

It is only recently that hagiology is being studied rationally and scientifically. Otherwise it was a matter of 'take it or leave it'. Those who had faith believed everything blindly. Those who were sceptic scoffed both at the faith and the object of faith.

Today, I think it would be unscientific to reject anything simply because it has not yet been explained or it is not obvious. Books such as 'Man the Unknown' by Dr. Alexis Carrel have opened the eyes even of the most critical people to the unknown powers that lie behind man's apparent consciousness.

From that point of view the publication of authentic lives and incidents that have taken place in connection with saints is a first step towards trying to understand the sources of saintly power and saintly achievement. The two volumes, therefore, on Shri Sai Baba should be welcomed by all those who are interested in "man the unknown".

Yours sincerely R.R. Diwakar

Preface to Part II

Sai Baba is indeed an ocean unfathomable and illimitable. One can pick up any direction and go as far as one likes and yet not exhaust Sai. As for the depth, human beings cannot get to the bottom of Sai either as to the number of his acts or to the extent to which they can be interpreted as benefiting humanity. Even the surface of the field or sea of Baba is absolutely uncharted. The human combination with the divine is unlimited and defies definition and description. No one is yet able to say what exactly are the origins of Baba, the early environment, and the early and later forces moulding the entity called Baba and resulting in the ultimate product now known to us as Sai Baba. An attempt has been made previously to describe his earlier origins and early influences, but such attempts must always remain very imperfect and superficial. Something has been said or written but when one goes through all the matter till now written, one still feels dissatisfaction because from any point of view, the matter given is certainly not sufficient and certainly not satisfactory. An attempt has however to be made to understand what we can pick out from what is available.

Baba's entire life, to say nothing of the beginnings, is shrouded in mystery. Nobody knew his father or grandfather or family or even to what community by birth he belonged. Some were so much staggered at this difficulty that they propounded a theory that Baba was "Ayonija" (not born of woman), that is as much as to say he was produced like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. But in modern days, people are not always prepared to accept "*Ayonijatva*" for any person they have seen. Baba himself has furnished particulars enough to explode the *Ayonija* theory, and hence an actual attempt has been made to explain what the heredity of Baba was and what the earliest environment and forces acting upon him were. In spite of the scarcity of material, an explanation has been given of how Baba grew up to be what he became in the strangest possible manner. Born of Brahmin parents of a very poor and pious sort, and having been handed over to a fakir for his sustenance and care at the very early age of one year or so, Baba seems to have been fitted by Providence to overcome all differences, especially differences of race, religion, creed, etc. The

fakir who took charge of him and kept him for five years seems to have been a very pious, real and loving fakir, and the impress of that fakir left on Baba is to further purify, and deify the pre-existing elements which may be supposed to be inherent in him, as a result of age-long growth (*Bahunam Janmanaam ante, Jnaanavan maam Prapadyate*). Differences between God and God, caste and caste, race and race could not possibly exist in that fakir's ideas and upbringing. But the essence of the fakir's training seems to have been the immersing entirely of the little Baba into the loving care of the fakir. To Baba, "that fakir" meant always the living God that looks after every one of us with equal mercy. That evidently represents or sums up the earliest span of life that Baba had. Providential arrangement for Baba has always been to promote the divine aim of his life, namely, the realisation that God is Love and Love is God, the unification of the different trends of Indian thought and life in matters of religion, etc. The fakir, who died when Baba was aged about five, directed his wife to take Baba to a great and pious Brahmin saint who was also a Prince, namely, Gopal Rao Deshmukh, Prince of Selu, who was at the same time a Prince of piety, a master of devotion, and "infused contemplation", one who had thoroughly identified himself with God in the form of Tirupati Venkatesa. This Gopal Rao, known as "Venkusa", because he was identified with Tirupati Venkatesa whom he worshipped, became the all-in-all of Sai Baba, the food giver, the soul giver, the Guru, the protector, the friend, and everything to Baba. Baba loved him with *ananya prema*, as the only thing he cared for and that love was fully responded to. '*Tvameva Sarvam Mamadeva deva*'. Such a person who was very broad and universal in his views, while deeply feeling the essence of God or religion within himself, naturally promoted Baba's peculiar way of looking at God as the one great beneficial, powerful loving father supporting all people equally with equal kindness. This was his Guru.

Providence again directing Baba's life cut short his novitiate under this princely Guru when he was just getting to be a man or major according to Indian ideas, that is, arriving at the age of 16. Baba had to part with him under peculiar circumstances. The parting was indeed painful, but it was a necessary part of

divine ordinance for Baba and for the country. Before parting, Baba was vested with all the powers as well as the piety of the Guru, and Baba thereafter passed into obscurity, became a fakir among fakirs, and had the apparently severe trial of having nothing to feed upon with no one to care for him. But really that was never the case. There was always God to look after him, and God always provided for all his needs, temporal and spiritual, both for body and soul. Vairagya and contentment, trust and calm, were the food for the soul; Baba got on and felt nothing was wanting. This training was a continuation of the two previous novitiates in order to ripen Baba for the great and grand work he had. We have faintly described this in previous publications. What now required to be done further about Baba to enable persons to understand Baba more fully is to set out his task of dealing with the world. For a fakir who was resting on God's care and getting on whether he got or did not get food or places for rest, no work or duty, according to ordinary spectators, existed or belonged to him. Yet the ways of providence are strange. It is this unconcerned fakir that must become the all-in-all of the entire world, certainly of the entire millions that came into contact and are coming into contact with him. How that happened or could happen is itself a very interesting chapter of Baba's biography.

Baba who did not care for anything had to be brought into contact with the devout and religious. There must be some devout and religious person first to pick him out, discover his inner worth and start his worship. Hence the development of Baba's work must start of with an account of how his worship started and later on how it spread, and still later what the mysterious ramifications and implications of this worship were. The person worshipped must be really God-like. Many a person is worshipped on account of certain social or other position or level but is unable to exert any divine influence upon the worshipper. In Baba's case, Providence ordained that the worship should be real and effective. The worshipper, if he intends to attract to himself the entire force and personality of the object worshipped, must be pure, sincere and earnest, must reach great heights of faith and surrender, and must lose himself, his individuality in the object of worship, till ultimately he becomes that. *Brahmavit*

Brahmaiva Bhavati (that is, the worshipper becomes the object of worship) is the aphorism that applies to the case. Such a worshipper was needed to draw Baba out of his cocoon.

Baba had by his previous training fully developed himself in self-realisation and God-realisation. His Guru had blotted out (see BCS 72A) his ideas that he was the body and made him realise that he was nothing but the soul, Paramatma or Parameswar. In Baba, this Parameswar essence of his began to beam out with increasing effulgence. The more he was worshipped, the more the divine in him beamed out, asserted itself and proved itself to be really divine. And the proof is still going on. So the next process or stage of Baba's biography must be the sketching of how the poor beginnings of worship by some one's lucky discovery of his merit let others to copy that example, and how, by observing the increased benefits flowing from such worship millions adopted that worship and began to yield themselves completely to the divine influence of the object worshipped so as to become not merely successful and happy in the world but also to become themselves expressions of love, the power of the inner Being of the entire Universe. Baba's nature or influence is simply indescribable, its extent and nature cannot easily be sketched out and the number of persons carrying on his worship now is beyond calculation. But in the beginning they were few and some of them could be called apostles. Therefore the stage has now been reached in Baba's biography for piecing out a few and terming them apostles of Baba and describing their work and also for describing the mission which Baba has and which Baba is increasingly manifesting. It is difficult to stop the sketching out of lives at any particular set of facts. But that difficulty has to be faced. So only just enough of the innumerable facets of Baba's life are pieced out here to present a rough outline or broad idea of Baba's apostles carrying out his mission, carrying on the work that Baba was intent upon. That being the object of this present volume, readers are requested to overlook the numerous defects in the presentation or other defects and to make the best of what is presented and putting their hearts into it, derive as much benefit as they can or as they care to.

A word or two will not be amiss here about the object of this work and the manner of approach. Previous works on Sai Baba have sometimes been taken up by readers or reviewers and approached in a spirit that might be considered natural but cannot be considered by the author as being the most proper or appropriate approach. A book on Sai Baba written by one who has drunk deep from the fountain of Sai's grace, wisdom and life must naturally have an abundant recognition of the place Sai fills up in one's life. Sai completely envelops the devoted sadhaka and leaves no part of him unaffected or uncovered. Therefore one might be under the impression that the life of Sai should deal with every possible point of view for a serious minded sadhaka. The fact however remains that many of our readers are not sadhakas at all nor sadhakas of the most earnest type. Some wish to get a cursory knowledge of a great saint whose name is heard here, there, and everywhere in this country especially. A sort of genteel curiosity, a desire to be acquainted with grand things, just to be acquainted, without any particular idea of being influenced thereby, is the outlook of many a reader. There is nothing to be said against that sort of approach, but a person who is in dead earnest about life, who has tasted the power of Sai to deal with the profoundest and deepest of life's problems cannot rest satisfied with that approach. A serious reader treats Sai as the Guru primarily and next as the all-in-all of himself and of every one who is prepared to surrender to him. Dealing with a Guru naturally necessitates the examination of the general principles governing gurus and Sai Baba, and the attempt at defining what the gurus and sishyas are and what their mutual relations should be. This naturally entails an examination of accepted authorities on this subject and free quotation from their dicta. Such quotations have not been particularly pleasing to certain readers, and one review pointed out that the interest in the book (meaning the story interest) was lost by what was considered to be an unnecessary intrusion of extraneous or foreign matter. But one, who resorts to a thorough study of a saint for the most complete assimilation of his (saint's) influence for the best effects in one's own life, would welcome such so-called digressions and episodes. A serious minded author has to keep in view all sets of

readers, especially the more serious readers who wish to get the greatest benefit out of the book.

A saint's life is the milk of ocean from which a few interesting bits of saintly biography, a collection of apothegms, counsels, reflections and other miscellaneous items might be extracted. But the main interest is still the milk of ocean which will yield an infinite and inexhaustible supply of divine nectar. One important truth that has been gaining strength in the author's mind, as he studied more and more of Baba and came more and more fully into contact with him, is the fact that entire portions of serious scriptures already studied by him or are still being studied by him are covered up by the saint's life, his leelas, his sayings, etc. The essentials of the Bhagavad Gita for instance, which has always been regarded as a valuable religious mine, were and are found to be nothing but the embodiment of what is contained in Sri Sai's life. Sri Krishna and Jesus Christ are better understood after studying Sai Baba's life than without such study. Interpretations of what is found in the Bible and in the Gita occur to one as one deals with Sai Baba and as one goes on surrendering to Sai Baba's influence and seeing what happens. It is no exaggeration to say that without the fleshy embodiment of religion in the life and activities of Sai and kindred saints, religion would be a dead mass of writings or thoughts and would leave humanity cold and helplessly struggling in the mire of darkness and ignorance. Sri Krishna is not usually understood by a person who merely reads the Gita, Mahabharata, or the Bhagavata. What Sri Krishna was and what he said puzzled this author and puzzled so many other persons, and, after seeing what Sai Baba said and did, all these puzzles disappeared, and clear light dawned upon everyone. When Sai said, 'I am Sri Krishna, I am Lakshminarayan, I am Vittal, I am Allah, I am God', etc., a moslem reader of Sai Baba's Gospel declared Baba a madman, but to the author and kindred spirits, dicta like these found in our ancient scriptures began to produce a clearer impression on the hearts. '*Aham Brahmasmi*' sounds most queer at first. But Sai's life shows what '*Aham Brahmasmi*' or '*Maim Allah hum*' means and how one can have that feeling and yet live amongst fellow creatures. The description given of a perfectly realised Brahma Jnani or Iswara Bhakta

found in the Bhagavad Gita and other sources is found to apply word for word, letter for letter, to the case of Sri Sai and get a meaning only when we see how Sai Baba (or for that matter any other great soul like Him) acted. '*Sarva bhuta Hite ratah*' (interested in the welfare of every creature) is given as the description of a perfect realiser or perfect devotee. One must actually see or feel what Sai did and said to get an idea of '*Sarva bhuta Hite ratah*' or *Sarvabhutatma bhutatma*. God's omnipotence and omniscience and equal mercy towards all and immanence in all creatures (*Aham Atma*) are well known to the intellect of religious students, but for realising them at heart, one must devote one's deepest attention to what Sai said and did. A person like Sri H. S. Dixit, who noted almost every minute of his life after he approached Sai Baba, that Sai knew everything and looked after everything connected with himself, whether he was at Bombay or Shirdi or elsewhere, and controlled events for securing the greatest happiness of himself or other devotees and their families, would at once form the conclusion that Sai was divine, and could say with perfect sincerity as H. S. Dixit did when Sai Baba asked a question as to what took place in the wada, 'Baba, you knew it all.' There was nothing unknown to Baba whether as to the contents of any book or as to the contents of the minds of persons near or remote or as to the events that happened in any place at any time. The distant past, the present, and the remote future or the near place and the remote were all one. This we find is the description given of a divine personality in the Gita—(7) 26.

Vedham samatitaani vartamanani cha arjuna,

Bhavishyaani cha bhutaani maam tu veda nakaschana.

This means, (Krishna said) 'I know the past, the present, and the future. But no one knows Me'. The same has been said by Sai and the same has been proved by him in innumerable instances. This is as to knowledge. Similarly as to power, equality of vision, kindness, etc., Sri Upasani Maharaj correctly summed up the way in which people derived the notion that Baba was God in these words of 'Sai Mahimna Stotra' composed by him in 1912—

*Aneka aascruta aatarkya leela vilaasaih Samaavishkrita iscana
bhaasvatprabhaavam Ahambhaavaheenam prasanna atmatmabhaavam Namaami
iswaram sadgurum sainatham.*

This means, 'I bow to Sadguru Sainath who is God, who manifested or betrayed his divinity by many inscrutable, unheard of, miraculous leelas, who yet has no egotism (ahambhava) and who is benignly gracious'. This Upasani's process of arriving at and appreciating Sai's divinity is adopted almost unconsciously by hundreds of persons in their every day life, after Baba left the flesh. All of them with one voice acclaim Sai as Divine, and that is the same as saying that He is Sri Krishna or Sri Rama or any other name or form that one has been applying or adopting to denote divinity, *c.f. Sairupadhara Raaghavotamam Bhakta kama kalpatamtn*. There are numerous, or one might say innumerable, instances of Baba's conduct and mode of life running on exactly similar lines to those of Sri Krishna or Sri Rama in respect of their divinity. It is thus that the conviction gained greater strength and depth in the mind of this author that, apart from name and form, Divinity is the same, whether manifested in Sai Baba or in Sri Krishna or for that matter in Jesus Christ etc. 'Thou art human and divine' is a statement that can be applied to all these. The divine portion within the human frame has so powerfully radiated its light as to throw out or drown out the human side and impress on us that we are dealing with the divine when dealing with Sai Baba as with the other great names mentioned above. The divine and the human blend together and are both necessary to make up the entity that gives human beings their impression of God. Without the human element, no approach is possible, and without the divine element, the approach is worthless, for we do not wish to approach mere finite entities like human beings but rather wish to approach the divine, though the divine may be enshrouded for the time being in a human casing.

Therefore, the author has felt that if any work is written about such a divine person and if the author is able to express or shadow forth what is really divine in him, then the work should be considered to be highly imperfect or useless if the reader is not impressed in the same way as the author has been

with the divinity of the subject and the reader is not enabled to derive at least as much benefit from a study of Baba and contact with him as the author has had. A properly written life of Sai (like all saintly biography c.f. *Sant toch Dev*, i.e. Saint is himself God) would therefore be a scripture in itself. One should rise from that study with the feeling that he has been through scripture and mentally keep in touch with God and derive all benefit necessarily flowing from such contact. The benefits are temporal, intellectual, moral, spiritual, etc. There is no limit to the benefit one can derive from such contact. Therefore one would expect that a proper book on such a subject as Sai should attract the earnest soul to read it over and over again, may be scores of times, without exciting any feeling of tiredness or disgust. One ought, on the other hand, to experience increasing delight and increasing joy at noting that new readings open up new lights and vistas before the mind's eye and that benefits are derived over and over again. Even in respect of poetic classics, e.g. Hamlet or Sakuntala, such experiences are derived by enthusiastic souls. A study of holy lives properly written must have at least a similar effect. It is the ambitious aim of this writer to put forward as perfect a study as is possible of this great and wonderful Being that is the subject of this volume.