

We may give a short account of the contact of S. B. Nachne with Baba and his experiences as it is typical of Baba's complete protection given to a person of a very ordinary nature who had no high religious aim or achievement. This devotee gave out his experiences while he was yet in harness as a Taluk office Head Clerk in September 1936. He had originally in 1923, related part of his experience in Sai Lila Masik.

His contact with Baba started in 1909. His elder brother was then undergoing an operation very near in his throat in a hospital at Bombay. At Dahanu, Santaram Nachne and his family were full of anxiety about the result of the operation. A *sadhu* approached their house, and from outside asked, 'Will you give me a crumb or two of *roti*?' Then he was invited inside, and a regular course of dished was served. But in doing so, Santaram's sister-in-law deliberately omitted to give him *Bendi baji* lady's finger curry, thinking that it was too poor a stuff to serve a saintly guest. The sadhu himself said, 'I want Bendi baji', and then it was served to him. He then blessed them all, and said that the operation in the Bombay hospital was safely performed and that there was no danger. Later in the day, Santaram's friend, Mr. H.M. Pasne, told him, 'I hope the operation is safe by Sai Baba's grace'. That was the first time that Santaram heard of Baba's name. In the evening after that, Santaram's father returned from Bombay with the news that the operation was really success and that a sadhu, after

the operation had been performed, appeared in the hospital, came near the patient, passed his hands over the operated part, and said, 'All will go on well'. The operation was quite successful, and his brother had recovered completely.

Later in that year his father attended Das Ganu's kirtan wherein Das Ganu gave a full account of Sai Baba, and described him as the Datta Avatara having wonderful powers and wonderful kindness. He also brought the picture of Sai Baba home, and with it Baba's puja began in the house.

In 1912, Santaram first visited Shirdi. Then he had appeared for a departmental examination, a revenue test and went to Shirdi with two friends. At the Kopergaon railway station, the station master heard of their proposed visit to Baba, and began to abuse Baba saying that undue honour was being given to a mere hypnotist, who was guiling people like so many wandering jugglers and thaumaturgists. This made the impressionable Santaram very unhappy. He was beginning to have his doubts about Baba. Anyhow he reached Shirdi. The first sight that he caught of Sai Baba was walking from Lendi to Mosque. On the way Santaram and his friends met Baba. Baba looked straight at Santaram, and said, 'What? Have you come away without taking leave from the Mamlatdar?' The reply was 'yes'. Baba said, 'Don't do so hereafter'. At once, the object of these remarks was evident. Baba revealed his Antarjnana of Santaram being a Mamlatdar's clerk and that he had come without permission and showed a motherly kindness towards his devotee who was wavering. The Antarjnana and the kindness showed the worthlessness of the Station Master's remarks. Evidently it was for that purpose that Baba had addressed those words to him. This was only the beginning of a series of similar experiences during his three days of stay at Shirdi. At the end of three days, Santaram was perfectly assured and confident that Baba was the Datta Avatara, and not a juggler or thaumaturgist. Baba took udhi from Santaram's hand and applied it to his forehead. This was a mark of favour.

One day Santaram had gone very early for the arati in the Masjid, without taking his meal as it was Ekadasi day. Baba was no respecter of mere forms. Baba asked Santaram, 'Have you had your meal?' He said, 'No, because it is Ekadasi to-day'. Baba said, 'Never mind, You go and eat.' His two friends were very orthodox, and, therefore, Baba did not ask them to take their food. Baba said, 'They are mad. You better go and eat.' Then Santaram went to the dining place at his Wada. The man in the Wada began grumble that on an Ekadasi day, and that too

before arati was over, Santaram should ask for food. So Santaram quietly returned to Baba. Again Baba asked, 'Meals over?' Santaram said, 'No, Baba. I will take the meal after the arati.' Baba said, 'Go, arati will wait, and it will begin only after your meal is over'. Santaram went and told the man in the Wada what Baba had said. So, he had to be given the meal. This is very good proof of Baba's affection towards Santaram. Then, meals over, Santaram went back to Mosque for the arati. Maushi had brought bidas, which is rolled up betal and nut, and Baba took some and asks him to chew. On Ekadasi days, people do not chew betal. But as Baba asked him to chew, Santaram had to chew. When the arati was over, Baba asked dakshina and took four rupees from Santaram and sixteen from Vaidya. From his friend Date, Baba did not ask for any dakshina. Date had no thought of giving any dakshina to Baba. In fact Date had very little reverence for Baba and Baba distinctively read each man's heart.

During these three days, when H.S. Dixit, Jog and Dabolkar were present, Baba spoke, pointing to Santaram, and said, 'I went to this man's house for a meal, but he would not give me Bendi baji'. At once Santaram remembered the sadhu who came to him three years ago in 1909, and was wonderstruck, for the sadhu who was then in his house looked different from Sai Baba at the Mosque. But from Baba's remarks, Santaram understood that it was really Baba who came in that form to help the family and reassure them of the safety of the operation in the Bombay hospital. Santaram asked Baba what result of his departmental examination would be. Baba said, Allah Malik Hai and placed his palm on Santaram's head. Santaram passed the examination.

On the third day, Baba was in tantrums. He was in a tearing rage at the Mosque. Why was he angry, and with whom, nobody could make out. But Baba was jumping about the floor of the Mosque. His eyes were red. For 15 minutes, no one got into the Mosque. Every one had fled. Santaram and others all doubted whether Baba was mad after all. At last Baba cooled down, and then Santaram and his friends begged him for leave to go away. He gave them leave with udhi. Baba at that time gave another blessing to Santaram. Santaram badly wanted a transfer from mofussal Dahanu to metropolis Bombay. Baba of his own accord said, 'Come to Bombay for service'. This was either prophecy or control, and took six years for its fulfillment. In 1918, Santaram was transferred to Bandra, a suburban district of Bombay.

Santaram who had left the station without the Mamlatdar's permission was noticed by the Mamlatdar B. V. Dev. He merely gave him a

warning and no punishment. After this, Santaram repeated his visits to Shirdi whenever he could. When he was leaving in 1913 to go to Shirdi, his friend H. M. Panse, met him and said that he had been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, but was let out on bail and that he was going to appeal. He wanted Santaram to tell Baba, 'Panse is in trouble and says he is innocent, and wants Baba's help.' When Santaram reached Shirdi, the early morning arati at the chavadi was going on. Baba was then in a very angry mood. Yet when he saw Santaram, and before any words had been spoken, he said, "Tell that fellow that he need not have any anxiety, and that he will be acquitted on appeal." And Panse was acquitted on appeal.

During S. B. Nachne's 1913 visit, Baba said, "We should not trust mad man", to a group in which Santaram was present. Santaram did not think that the remark applied to him. But next year, it was seen by Santaram to be a forewarning aimed to him. He was then posted at Dahanu as Treasury Master. He was at home doing Pooja to Baba's photo and other gods. Then one Radhakrishna Balwant Panse, whose mind was deranged, was standing at the door of the kitchen room, some distance away from the pooja room. He was thought to be harmless. But when the pooja went on, the man suddenly darted into the pooja room and grasped Santaram's neck with both his arms and tried to bite Santaram's throat saying, "I will drink your blood". Santaram was thunderstruck. But a thought entered him, evidently by Baba's Grace. Taking out the uddharani spoon he thrust it into the open mouth of the man and right into his throat. The mad man however bit Santaram's hand and fingers, which were in his mouth. The spoon got stuck up in the throat. Though the fingers were hurt, his life was saved. When, with the other hand Santaram tried to extricate the injured hand, his mother and others rushed and pulled off the mad man. Meanwhile, Santaram lost consciousness. After a time, he recovered. But the nails of the mad man had dug into the flesh of his neck and left injuries thereon. He had been nearly strangled to death, but luckily escaped death. The injuries on the fingers were healed. The same year when he went to Baba, Baba addressed Anna Chinchinikar, and pointing to Santaram, said, "Anna, if I had delayed one instant, this man would have indeed perished. The mad man seized with his hands even his throat. But I extricated him. What is to be done? Of I do not save my own children, who else will?" The words 'I extricated' in Baba's statement showed his extreme kindness and love towards devotees like Santaram who with full child-like confidence took refuge in him. Baba's statement, I extricated him, shows his command of all the siddhis. This extrication was first through Santaram's own idea of putting the uddharani into the mad man's

mouth and next through the timely presence of his mother and others pulling off the mad man. So, here Baba's statement that he had acted through the Indriyas of Santaram and his mother. This is the siddhi called Prapti mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata as one of God's Ashta Mahasiddhis. Baba had any number of siddhis at his disposal. He himself had said, 'God has agents everywhere, they have vast powers. I have very great powers'. He used these powers to save his children.

This danger had happened in 1914, even though he had given a hint in 1913, when he said, 'We should not trust mad men', a hint that could not be understood then by Santaram of Dahanu. So Baba was clearly watching from Shirdi, his devotees at Dahanu, hundreds of miles away, because they were his trusting children, the children of Dwarakamayee or Masudi Ayi, hour to hour, day to day and year after year. This power of having his eye of vigilant supervision on all those who love Him, has been declared by him. So Santaram was more than ever convinced that Baba was a divine personage with divine powers and divine kindness which he exercised on behalf of everyone who placed his entire faith in him even though such persons may number many thousands living in thousands of places.

In 1915, another instance occurred to Baba's grace and protection. Santaram with H.M Panse and others were travelling in a bullock cart at night in a dense jungle. This was at the Ranshet pass, notorious for its being infested with tigers. It was a dark night. Suddenly the bulls of the cart took fright and were moving backwards. Luckily, they were not dragging the cart sideways, as it was a hill pass, with a steep slope on one side of a narrow road. had the bulls dragged the cart that side, it would have been all over with them. Then Panse pointed with his hand to something and Santaram saw the gleaming eyes of a tiger couching on the road. Panse wished to save the cart from being pushed into the ravine, and so wanted to get down and place big stones or sticks as a brake to the wheels. So, he asked Santaram to hold the reins of the bulls. As he held them he roared, 'Hail Sai Baba! Run Sai Baba to our help'. The others also begin to shout and the tiger got frightened at the volume of sound and ran away by the side of their cart. So, it was faith in Baba and the courage that Baba gave Santaram that saved the situation.

In 1915, after this incident, Santaram started for Shirdi. At the railway station, one V S Samant gave Santaram a coconut and two annas to buy sugar candy to be presented to Baba. When Santaram went to the Shirdi Masjid, he gave Baba the coconut, but forgot all about the two annas or the sugar candy. He asked Baba leave to go back. Baba said,

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"yes, you may go via Chitale, But why keep back a poor Brahmin's two annas?.' Santaram had frequent experiences like this of Sai Baba's eye of supervision and antarnirnakar of everything that happened to his bhaktas everywhere. When Santaram gave the two annas, Baba said, 'Whatever you undertake to do, do it thoroughly. Else do not undertake to do it'. This is a very valuable instruction applicable to everyone and to all departments of life.

Some of Baba's utterances were clearly prophetic, like the warning about the mad man. Another instance of prophecy was when Santaram with Shankar Rao Vaidya had gone to Shirdi, and Baba had asked them for Rs. 16 as Dakshina first. When they said, "We have no money." Baba asked them for Rs. 32. Again they said, "No money". Baba again asked them for Rs. 64. Then Nachne said. "We are poor people. We can't afford to pay such large sums.." Then Baba asked, "Then collect and give." This proved to be a prophecy. Sometime later (1916) Baba fell ill. A big sapta was performed for his restoration to health and subscriptions were raised for mass feeding. Then Sankar Rao and Nachne collected subscriptions at the request of Dabolkar, they found the total sum collected and sent up to be Rs.64/-.

In 1915, Santaram had a set of calamities in his family. His wife gave birth to children who died in infancy. Then his wife went alone with Shama to pray to Baba for long-lived children. Then as usual, she took a coconut with her. She gave the coconut to Baba and Baba threw that coconut back into her *padar*. Baba's eyes were brimming with tears as he gave away the coconut. He made Santaram sit at his feet and massage his legs. During that time, Baba passed his hands over Santaram's back in a token of his blessing and Santaram felt happy , and expressed his thanks for being saved from the murderous mad man. Baba said, Allah Malik Hai meaning, "That is all the order of Allah" Then Santaram embraced Baba and Baba embraced him, showing the intimate love Santaram bore to Baba and Baba bore to him.

Baba once saved Santaram from drowning in 1916. At night, he had to return his house across a creek. There was no ferry boat there. So, he took a canoe with a boy to paddle. just as he was in the middle of the Creek, Santaram, a rather bulky man, moved aside just a bit within the canoe; but that made a big difference and the canoe capsized. He was deep in the waters. At once he thought Baba. The boy was a good swimmer, and he pointed to a rope which was above the water connecting a buoy with a ship at a distance, and asked Santaram to

hold on to that rope. At once Santaram caught it and held on to it. Then the boy hallooed to the ship and thus got men rescue Santaram.

The reason for tears in Baba's eye when giving the coconut to Santaram's wife was not understood at that time. But in 1919, after Baba passed away, a son was born as promised by Baba at the time when the coconut was gifted. This child was called Kalu Ram. Kalu Ram lived just for eight years, and his mother lived for only 2 years after his birth. So, both the deaths were obviously seen by Baba at the time of his gift.

Baba's powers, included *Traikalika Bhuddhih*, Srimad Bhagavata refers to this *traikalika Jnana*. Baba's *Jnana* may even be termed *Rithambhara prajna*. This distinction between past, present and future exists only to us, who are all very limited in our power of seeing and knowing. To us the present includes very little of the future but to *Satpurushas* like Baba it includes the whole of the future. This boy Kalu Ram was a wonderful genius. At the age of 3, he was always in the habit of repeating Ram Hari Ram. It was then that his mother expired. This was said to be the effect of *Mula Nakshatram* in which the boy was born. This boy stunned the imagination of all their acquaintances. Hegde, a neighbour, said, "The boy's knowledge of Krishna Lilas seems to be so good that the boy himself should have certainly been one of the playmates of Krishna in the *Dwapara Yuga*".

The boy himself occasionally said, "Krishna used to tease me, I caught hold of Hari's legs and pinched them. I looked up and then Hari upset the curd pot over my face. Then the lady of the house turned up." Hegde used to read Hari Vijaya and on some days the boy would mention the story that would be read in Hari Vijaya later on in the day.

One day, the boy was seated motionless in a corner. His eyeballs were upturned. He had a cloth over his head as a cowl, and when Santaram asked him why he was covering his head, he laughed and said, "That is our usual course of *sadhana*". Everything was suggestive of a high proficiency of *Yoga* about him. From a journal, he cut out the pranava Om and stuck it on the wall next to him. As regards the picture in His Master's Voice, Kalu Ram asked his father, "What is this?" The father said, "It is the advertisement of a gramophone". Kalu said, "No, it is a special message of Krishna." The father asked, "What is that message?" Kalu replied with a counter question. He asked, "What is the dog in the picture hearing?" Santaram said, "It is the music from the gramophone record." Kalu said, "No, the dog is hearing his master's voice. Look at the dog – he is intensely concentrated and

intensely listening. We must be equally firm and concentrated and sit. See how I sit. You also should sit like that and listen. Then you will hear Baba's voice." Santaram asked, "How do you know Baba's voice? You were born after he passed away." The boy replied, "I know it, but I will not tell you."

Kalu then took to written japa of Ram, Hari Ram, in addition to oral japa. he did a huge mass of Ram, Hari Ram japa. In 1926, Gadgi Baba came to see the boy, because of his precocity. Kalu then had dropsy and low fever. He was only given Baba's udhi. The disease continued for a while. On *Kartik Suddha Ekadasi*, a day so piously celebrated by thousands of pilgrims at Pandharpur and other Vishnu sthalas, Kalu Ram approached his end. He called Santaram to his bedside and asked for Jnaneswari the family heirloom. it was produced at once. he opened it himself and picked up chapter XIII. *Kshetra Kshetragna vibhaga*. At that time Santaram was feeling heavy with the sadness of the approaching end – the bitterness of parting with Kalu Ram. But Kalu Ram cheered him up and said, "What is there to cry for? Read this. Read aloud for me. I am going today". Santaram's heart was sinking under a load of grief and he could not read. The boy kept the book in front of him and breathed his last. In this way it was a fitting departure on a *Karthik Ekadasi* day for such a life. But yet how sad was such an early death! No wonder that Baba wept in 1918, when he gave the coconut, and clearly perceived that such an early death was to crown such a life.

Sri Santaram's experience will make a special appeal to the reader, especially for two reasons. The first is that in point of spiritual preparation and spiritual effort, he was not at all above the ordinary run of men that we meet with everyday life. Secondly, his experiences cover many years after Baba's *Mahasamadhi* and during this period, the protection and help he and his people enjoyed were the same as before. That is, Sai Baba showed to him frequently even after his *Mahasamadhi* I 1918, that he was still there, always watching him and his people, always ready to help, and help in every direction not only for him and his family but for others also on whose behalf he earnestly put forward any prayer or effort. Step after step, he reader ought to note how his unquestioning faith and simple heart were responsible for Baba's gripping him completely as 'Mine'. Tat is how Baba treated this man as his Ankita or his own child. This Santaram had married three times, one after another, and had a large family of children. Therefore, the occasions on which trouble and danger arose in the family were numerous. instead of his being worried on that account, Baba's help enabled him to maintain placidity and confidence, which sweetened his

life. His powerful faith in Baba enabled him to live a happy life and virtuous life on earth with the assurance that *Sadgati* would be given to him and to all his people. We shall take up a few accidents and dangers to which his children and family were exposed.

We will take first an incident that occurred in the year 1935 as regards fire. A two year child of Santaram, Ananda by name, was very active and very mischievous; he ran up against the stove on which milk was boiling. He dashed against the whole stove and vessel, and would have expected that his clothes would have caught fire from the stove and the skin scalded by the boiling milk. But neither happened. The milk vessel fell on one side. the stove flew on the other side. In between Ananda full of Anandam, that is, without any injury, sorrow or trouble. This is Baba's vigilant eye of supervision.

We will take another instance of fire. This was in 1926. Sai Haranath, his little child of nine months old, was along with the other children, playing upstairs. The mother, the only guardian or caretaker, who ought to have been present was down on the street. It was deepavali time. One of the older children lighted a squib or cracker and flung it. It fell upon Haranath. None of the children noticed it or considered it serious. Ordinarily the child, who wore two clothes, one under the waist and the other above waist close to the skin would have been burnt to death. But what happened?. In the street, suddenly a fakir appeared, who shouted to the lady. 'Go up. See what is there. Without knowing what it was, she ran up, just as soon as the incident occurred, and found both, neither cloth and the frock of Sai were burning. With her hands she boldly seized the burning the cloths and extinguished the flame. She found that the child's clothes on the upper portion and nether portion were mostly burnt out. yet what happened to the child? Wonder of wonders! Not a bit of scar or burn was on the child; she had come very early to the child's rescue. Now how could she come from the street just in time to extinguish the flame? Who could the fakir be? When she got down with a view to thank the fakir, the fakir had gone. This again is the watchful eye of supervision, 'on those that love Me and those that belong to them'.

There was another incident connected with the same child Sai, when he was two years old. He, like rest of the children, was active, healthy and vigorous. He was playing upstairs. At one end of the terrace, there was a broken wall – a portion of the wall, which ought to have been there, was recently knocked down for purposes of repair. Not noticing its absence, this Sai rushed up and fell down over the debris below. The father was very anxious, and he ran up to see whether the boy

was alive or how far he was injured. But Sai was standing and laughing. He said, 'Baba held me up in his arms as I fell'. Can a two year old child imagine and tell a lie? Again, we have Baba's eye of supervision, just as he saved Santi Kirvandikar, a three year old child as she fell into a well at Shirdi before 1918.

Then once there was danger to the children from swallowing a poisonous thing. The children were rummaging up Santaram's drawers, and found what they thought was a box of peppermint. An older child, Kalu Ram, put one fancied lozenge in his mouth and handed over another to a younger child. But the taste of it was bitter and the small quantity he had tasted or swallowed made him uneasy. So, he went up to his mother, and the mother thought, looking into his outstretched tongue, which still had a bit of the lozenge on it, that it was a piece of *chunam*. Then she took it out. The children were then asked to show where the box of lozenge was, and they pointed to a box called Pharaoh's snakes as the box of lozenge. This is a deadly poison. It is a compound of magnesium, phosphorous etc., which when lit up, produces a long coil of ashes, which twists in the form of snakes. That is why it is styled, Pharaoh's snake. A doctor was then called in, and he gave then an enema. But that failed to act. then Santaram took up Baba's udhi and tirta and gave them to the child. The child had a good vomit and as a result was saved. the younger child had evidently not eaten or, at any rate, not eaten much, but even to that child udhi and tirta were given, and that child also had a good vomit and was saved.

On another occasion in 1932 Kalu gave a ring to a younger child. Instinctively the child put the ring in to mouth. the ring got stuck in the throat. doctors came and gave enema without any result. Then Santaram gave the child some udhi with tirta and then put his own finger deep into the mouth of the child. He felt where the ring was and pulled it out and thus saved the child.

In 1934 another child aged only three had pneumonia, measles and an abscess on the chest. The child was very weak and was getting weaker and weaker. The doctor was afraid to operate on account of the child's weakness. But Santaram applied antiphlogistine over the abscess and the abscess opened and became a wide open wound. Even the doctor was afraid to operate. so, Santaram prayed to Baba and put a bit of udhi into the wound. The deputy collector Sri. V.M. Jadhav, learning of this asked him whether he was sure of its being cured and, if so, within what time. He answers "n 24 hours" That night Baba appeared in Santaram's dream and said, "Why did you say 24 hours? Why not

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immediately?’ Anyhow in 24 hours the wound was healed. Jadhav was convinced that Baba’s udhi was a great blessing and took some udhi for his own son who had pneumonia. that saved his son’s pneumonia in 24 hours. One see why in *Sai Sahasranamam*, it is said of Baba,

*Gopeem Sathra Yadha Krishnah
Thadha Nachne Kulavanayah*

Sai protected Santaram Nachne’s family as Krishna protected the *gopis*

Santaram Nachne was not content with praying for his own children. he prayed for others too. In 1923, as he sat upstairs in his home at Andheri, he found a car being driven fast in his narrow lane. As the car approached, there was a little girl, who could not move away. At once scenting the danger, Santaram cried out, ‘Baba save her’. Strangely enough, the car, which had just gone over the child, stopped. Then, when the brake was examined, it was found that it was not working, but somehow a stone had got into the gear and machine stopped. The child was immediately taken to hospital. the medical attendant was not hopeful of the child’s survival. Then Santaram said, ‘Baba, who had stopped the car miraculously would also save the child’. After 10 or 20 days, the child recovered from its injuries and was saved.

In 1926 on two other occasions Nachne helped his official friends with prayers and advice. A friend of his, a cashier, was dismissed for misappropriation and he was helpless. Nachne advised him to place his trust in Baba, go to Shirdi and pray to Baba for his help. That cashier thought that Sai Baba was a Mohammedan and, therefore, he should not go. Nachne then told him that only hope of his deriving any help was from Baba’s grace. then that man got courage, went to Shirdi, prayed to Baba, and returned with a photo of Baba and began to worship it. He was allowed 8 days time to pay up the Rs. 3,000 which he had misappropriated. There the matter closed. There was neither dismissal nor prosecution.

Another person who came to him for his help in similar circumstances was Mr. V.C. Chitnis. He was dismissed from service. Nachne told him to cast his burden on Baba and to make an appeal to the Shirdi *Mandir*, this is, after Baba’s passing away. that man went to Baba’s *Samadhi Mandir* and prayed for help, and later he was reinstated in service.

These are all temporal matters, but Baba gave Nachne help in spiritual matters also. Let us take S. B. Nachne first. Nachne asked Baba to

give *Anugraha* saying, "What *japa* shall I do?" He hoped that Baba would give him some *Mantra*. But Baba's reply was, "Go to Devpur, a village 20 miles away from Kopergaon and begin worshipping the stones there which your ancestors worshipped". What a wonderful knowledge Baba had unlike other thought-readers knowledge, which would only read the thoughts of those present. Nachne knew nothing about the stones at Devpur and his ancestors worshipping there. But he quoted Baba's words to his father, and learnt from his father that it was the family custom. Whenever any *Anugraha* or *upadesa* was wanted, a member of Nachne's family would go to Devpur and beg from their family Guru – the descendants of Baba Bagavat – the usual *upadesa*. A copy of *Jnaneswari* written with the hand was presented to some fifth ancestor of this Nachne by the Baba Bagavat of those days and that *Jnaneswari* is still kept as an heirloom in the family and that copy would be taken to the Guru at the time of *upadesa*. At that time they would worship the images, the stones at Devpur. Baba knew all this on account of his *Rithambara prajna* unlike our modern thought-readers who have to find out some connecting link to catch at the ideas, which they express. So, Baba respected the conservatism of the family, and accordingly Santaram Nachne's *Anugraha* was postponed till the usual traditional mode could be adopted. As for the various members of his family, Baba gave his blessings for spiritual progress in a marked degree. Santaram's mother died in 1926, a very happy death from the spiritual standpoint. She kept a photo of Baba up to the last moment in front of her. As the end is nearing, she asked Santaram to sit by her side and read the *Vishnu Sahasranama* aloud. Santaram did so and when she passed away, the last word she uttered were Ram, Ram. According to the Bhagavat Gita, this denotes *sadgati*, the attainment of a high spiritual state, *Yamyam vapi Smaran Bhavam*.

For his second wife, who passed away in 1929, he was anxious to do something to secure her *sadgati*. So, her bones had to be taken to Godavari in Nasik and there disposed of with proper ceremonies. His father being ill, remained at home along with his three year old grandchild. Santaram Nachne set off alone from Victoria Terminus with Rs. 80 in his pocket, without anyone to help him and without knowing what to do. At the V.T. station he found a fellow passenger who took enormous trouble to enquire about everything and to give him direction about everything. That passenger noted that Nachne had no bed and so told him that the night would be chill. He even sent for a blanket and a bed-sheet and gave them to Nachne. When asked how he could get them so quickly, he said that he was a peon in the Bombay Arts School nearby, and that his name was Ganpat Shankar,

and he was also going to Nasik. That Ganpat Shankar took charge of him and his money and asked him to sleep. Ganpat Shankar locked up his money in a big trunk, which he carried, and woke him up before they reached Nasik Road station. He went on making payments for the bus, priests, etcetra. He attended to Nachne and to all his ceremonies. He accompanied to Ramkund, where the pinda had to be taken and helped him with directions as to how to keep his wife's bones in his hand in a particular hollow where the current of the Godavari water would gradually wash it off. He accompanied him also to the chief temples at Nasik and left him saying, "We will meet again." When Santaram Nachne returned to Andheri and went to the School of Arts and enquired, he discovered that there was no such person as Ganpat Shankar working as a peon in the Bombay Arts School. So, the whole thing was again proof of Baba's anxious care for those who love him.

Baba once appeared in Santaram's mother's dreams and helped her to a decision about marriages. Santaram and his father got Sai bhakti through Das Ganu, but Santaram's own statement of experiences has induced many people to go to Baba. Santaram Nachne has rendered valuable service to Baba in every respect. Above all, the reader would be glad to note that it is open to him to get into the same position of protected child of Baba – an *Ankita* and enjoy all the benefits that Santaram enjoyed.

Santaram Nachne's love for Baba was so great that he could not endure to see that Baba had trouble of any sort. Once when he was massaging Baba's feet, a powerful, well-built lady, Mausi by name, wanted to relieve Baba of some pains which he had in the abdomen. So, she took hot bricks and applied them over Baba's belly and took them off after pressing. Fearing that the pressure of her own powerful hands might cause pain to Baba, Nachne felt sorely distressed and cried out, "Hallo, hallo, Save Baba. Do not be so cruel. Let go, let go." Baba got angry and asked Nachne to "Clear off" because he was interfering with the service rendered by Maushi, with equal love like Nachne's.

LIFE OF SAI BABA