

CHOTE KHAN

Imam Bhai Chote Khan, aged about 65 years and resident of Vajapur, Aurangabad district, told to His Holiness Pujyasri B. V. Narasimha Swamiji how he got into contact with Baba and how he became attached to him. Fakir Durvesh Shah told Chote Khan of Sai Baba in 1910, and asked him to go and see him and gave him some further direction. Soon, Chote Khan went to see Sai Baba. That was his first visit. Baba was then standing in a lane and a lady was bowing to him. As advised by Durvesh Shah, Chote Khan went and stood behind Baba and recited the first chapter of the Koran behind Baba's back. When he began it with Bhismilla, Baba at once turned round and faced him and said angrily, 'Who are you? Why have you come to ask me about something as if you are my father?' Baba showered abuse on Chote Khan. Baba then went to the Mosque and uttered words, which Chote Khan could not understand. Chote Khan went and sat in front of the Masjid, as he could not get into it without Baba's permission. That permission was given only two days later. Kaka Dixit and others interceded on his behalf. In intercession, Dixit said pointing to Chote Khan, 'Baba, these children are yours. Why are you angry with them? Baba replied, 'You call him a child? He has beaten the master to death.' This referred to a recent escapade of Chote Khan, who was a Nizam's Sepoy in the Mamlatdar's office. Then he had beaten a Christian teacher or Master who had failed to give prompt information in a police investigation, at which this Chote Khan was assisting. The Master bled in the mouth and fell senseless. The Mamlatdar then advised Chote Khan to resign and go away. So, he resigned and ran away from the Nizam's State, but was still afraid that there might be prosecution, and that was one of the reasons why he visited Baba. That day Baba did not allow him. Two or three days later, one Kasim Bhai, son of Bade Baba, Jog and Dixit, all three took this Chote Khan

up to the Mosque. Then Baba allowed him to take *darshan*. Baba said, 'Do not fear. *Allah Malik*, that is, there would be no prosecution.' He stayed on for a little less than two months after which Baba said, 'You go back safe. Your land dispute will be settled amicably.' This was one of the matters on which he wanted to consult Baba, namely, litigation then pending between him and his paternal aunt, who was also his mother-in-law. As Baba said, that litigation ended in his favour and he obtained possession of the lands.

His second visit to Shirdi was in the presence of Mahlsapathy and Maushy. As soon as he went in, Baba told Maushi, 'People do not listen to me. Rascals go away and suffer; by a thorn's injury and the parent dies.' This was a wonderfully accurate representation of what had happened to Chote Khan. At the close of the first visit, he went away without Baba's permission. Two days after he return home, his mother struck a thorn in her foot and died; evidently by reason of an infection it had turned septic and swollen. The fourth day after his mother's death, Chote Khan came to Shirdi, because he had no funds for her funeral ceremonies and no employment, and hoped that Baba would provide the funds. He stayed for 34 days or so. Then Baba said to Maushi in his presence, '*Udhi* must be received and then the man must go.' He thought that Baba was giving him leave because it is Baba's method to address one, while indirectly referring to another. Next morning, Baba extended his hands with *udhi* when Chote Khan approached him, and when giving *udhi*, Baba said, 'At the doorway of the house, there will be an old woman standing. She will give something, using which celebrations may be performed. Guests have come. Feast should be had in their company.' All this was Baba's *Antarjnana*, which Chote Khan could not make out then. But, when he went home to perform the fortieth day ceremony of his mother, a very old lady, the widow of the *Kazi*, was standing at his door and, out of love or friendship for him, paid Rs. 50 into his hands and said, 'Perform your ceremonies.' That was the fortieth day of his mother's death, corresponding to *Masik Shraadha*, and he found his four sisters with their husbands had come in his absence for that ceremony to his house. These were the guests mentioned by Baba. Baba knowing the burdens of Chote Khan had provided funds for the ceremony and helped a *bhakta* relying solely upon him.

In his fourth visit, Baba said to him, 'Gulab has come to your house.' When he went back, he learnt that his wife had recently been delivered of a male child. That must be the Gulab mentioned by Baba, and the boy was named Gulab.

In his later visits to Baba, Baba did not allow him to return when he wanted to. So, Chote Khan was impatient to get started. Baba when refusing permission said, 'People should not go, if they go, there will be storms and balls of fire and immense trouble.' This was spoken by Baba talking in general terms and did not appear to refer to him. So, he went on running or walking at 5 miles an hour and reached Vari, 12 miles away at 5.50 p.m. Then he went by the bank of Vari to Surala. It was then sunset. The Patel warned him, 'Do not go. The weather is cloudy. If you go, you will suffer'. But Chote Khan said, 'It is only four miles more to my village, and I will go.' He went on. After he went three miles, a big storm came and lightning fell upon a huge pipal tree close to him and in front of him. The tree crashed and broke into two and fire broke out in the tree. His eye sight was dazed and he turned his face back. Then he saw Baba standing behind him with two tawny dogs. He bowed to Baba. Baba disappeared. Then he went on. There was a river near his village. He went to cross it not knowing its depth. He felt the water only knee-deep, but when he reached the other shore and looked back, he saw in full flood overflowing its banks. He was amazed how he had crossed it. The depth of the water might have been 20 feet. How he could cross river 20 feet deep with water, he could not imagine. But he reached home safe. So, Baba's warning about the storm and ball of fire and trouble were all true, but Baba followed and saved him.

In 1936 Chote Khan was again badly in need of money to get Gulab married. So, he went to Baba and slept in the Mosque. In his dream, Baba blessed him and said, 'If you go to Poona, you will be benefitted.' So, he started off to Poona. One Mr. Ladkar, suffering from severe piles, came to him. Chote Khan told him that he knew of a saint Sa Baba's prescription that would cure piles. Ladkar said, 'Give it'. Chote Khan then prepared the remedy and that relieved the man greatly. He went at once, and betting on horses at the races in Poona he got Rs. 1,100. Out of that he gave Chote Khan Rs. 700 and with that money Gulab's marriage was performed

Baba on another occasion uttered words referring to the termination of his own fleshly life. Baba said:

*Laila illilah
Kya Bada Darbar hai
Munshiji to Andai hai
Sardarji Chuthai, Allah Malik Hai,
Alla Acha Karega.*

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As he said these, he was pointing to the Buty wada, which was then in construction in 1917-18. It was that Buty wada which is the *Bada durbar* now, and the *Munshijis* and *Sardars* are all coming here.

In 1918, some months before Baba passed away, Baba made some preparations for the approaching termination of life. According to the Islamic practice, Baba made the following preparation. To Baba's son Kasim, Baba gave some Poli with boiled fowls. Then Baba told him, 'Go to Aurangabad and see *Fakir* Shamsuddin Mian. Give him this Rs. 250. Let him do *Moula Kowali* and *Nyas*. *Moula* is the vocal singing of songs about *Paigambar*, *Kowali* is beating the tabla and singing songs about saints, and *Nyas* is preparing food and distributing it to people. Then Kasim was to go to Banne Mian *Fakir* to garland him and to tell him,

Navdin, Nav tarik: Allah Meyane Apna Dhunia Lagaya, Merji Allaki.

This means, 'Ninth day. *Allah* himself takes away the lamp, which *Allah* has placed. Such is *Allah's* mercy'. Saying this, Baba handed over Rs. 250 and one garland of *Javandi* flowers. But as Kasim pleaded that he was a stranger at Aurangabad, Baba asked Chote Khan to accompany him. So, these two went along with a servant of Kasim, namely Ameer, and when they were at Aurangabad station, *Fakir* Shamsuddin, whom Chote Khan knew, had come to the station. He asked, 'Who are the guests that have come from Sai *Fakir*'. Chote Khan and also Kasim then prostrated. Then Shamsuddin himself repeated the words of Baba word by word, just as they were delivered at Shirdi. He took these three to his house at the fort and fed them. Then the Rs. 250 which Baba gave were handed over. Then he did *Nyas*, that is, feeding a large number of people with it. He also performed *Kawali*, which is beating of the *tabla*, and *Moula* – that is vocal music. By night all this was completed. The next part of their duty was to go to Banne Mian's house. Next morning they reached that house. There Mian was standing with one arm raised and one arm held down. The Arabs there at the spot told Chote Khan and his friends not to approach Banne Mian as he would fly at them. They waited for one hour, and then Chote Khan plucked up courage, took Baba's garland in one hand and put it round Mian's neck. Then Banne Mian lowered his upraised arm also. Then Chote Khan repeated the words,

Navdin, Navtarik : Allah Meyane Apna Dhunia Lagaya, Merji Allaki.

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Banne Mian gazed into the sky and tears rolled down his eyes. He felt a slight sadness evidently at the approaching loss of Sai from the living world. four months after that, Baba passed away. *Navdin Navtarik* meant ninth day of the ninth month. Baba's passing away was on the 9th day of the 9th month. Baba knew Arabic and Urdu and had taught the *Koran* to Abdul.

The experience of a few other people with Baba, are still interesting, though they have no particular moral bearing, and are recited by Chote Khan to show Baba's *Antarjnana* and helpfulness. He mentions the following about a *Risaldar*, a regiment horse soldier by the name Nuruddin. He came to Baba one day and wanted leave to go back. Baba did not give him leave. Baba said, 'Go to-morrow'. But Nuruddin and rest of the regiment were marching on and so he could not stay. Then Baba gave him *udhi* and spoke in Urdu words which meant, 'Dig a pit and eat the *udhi*'. The man took the *udhi* and rode away. At Kopergaon he saw a corpse being carried, and then in due course he reached his destination. from that time, he had always a vision of the corpse before his eyes. On the days, when he had such a vision, he got food and was happy. On other days, try as he might, he could not get food. This mortified him and he gave up service in disgust. Thinking that Baba was responsible for this, he came back to Baba and stayed at Shirdi for six months. Then this curse left him. Taking leave of Baba, he then went away. he became a happy grocery shopkeeper at Deolali. Another case of Baba's influence mentioned by Chote Khan is that of one Abdul Khader.

Abdul Khader came to Baba in about 1915, and he was at the Takia. Baba passed that side. Khader then begged Baba, 'Give me *Fakir*, I want to become a saint.' Baba then stood in front of him and with folded palm, flung the palm at him as though he was flinging something at him. But nothing visible was thrown. after that Khader's manner and talk were changed. He began to give moral advice and behave like Baba, sometimes picking up a stone and threatening to throw it. Sometimes, he got unmanageable. For a month and a half this went on. he was a mad Fakir. Thereafter, Khader's relations began to get disgusted with Khader's condition. And one day Baba stood before Khader at the mandap of the Mosque and drew his folded palm from Khader's side to himself, as though he was pulling back something, and said, '*Lav Bale Ither*'. Then Khader got back his original state of mind, and stayed on for 15 days more. Getting Baba's permission he went to Kirkee and started a *bidi* business, and was flourishing.

People were doing Moula everyday during day time before Baba at the Mosque; and *Kowali* with *tabla* and sarangi. Baba ordered a tabal to be constructed at the *mandap* and paid for it. Baba prepared *kichadi* with mutton. The *tabla* was stopped after the *mandap* was prepared. Baba was either pronouncing *fatia* himself or getting it pronounced by some others. Muslims always came for *Idga* to the Mosque. Baba occasionally pronounced *Namaz* at the Mosque near the fire without, however, bending the knee or prostrating. He pronounced the *Namaz* when the fire was prepared in the pit at the *mandap* and thrown at Muslim bodies.

Chote Khan then mentions the names of two muslims who got spiritual uplift from Baba. Ine was Sheik Abdulla of Vajpur, that is Chota Khanta village. Baba spoke to him about *vairagya*. Baba said, "If you die today, the third day's ceremony follows and people thereafter forget you. What is the use of house, and land to us? Sheik Abdullah had only a wife and a child, and getting *vairagya*, left his house and property to them, and wandered in the streets. He spent his nights at tombs muttering something. He lived upon what people gave him and if he got nothing, he starved. This he did for 10 or 12 years and died. During those 12 years, he developed wonderful powers. For instance on one occasion he asked Chote Khan not to go on his journey, for a particular place, which he mentioned, there would be a serpent. But it was daylight and Chote Khan did not care. Exactly at the place mentioned by Sheik Abdulla, Chote Khan found the serpent.

Abbas Sait, a bidi seller told Abdulla, "Why are you behaving like a mad man, deserting wife and child?" Abdullah replied, "You yourself will come to know." Then Abdulla flung his closed fist in the air as though he he threw something at Abbas Sait, uttering the words, "You also become like me." From that time, Abbas Sait gave up his *bidi* business, home and relations and was wandering about.

In Bhopal of Warhad lived one Anwar Khan and he came to Baba, and said, 'I do not want samsara'. He lived at Shirdi in the chavadi for 12 days. Baba gave him a *mantra*,

Bismilla Kuliya hiyo Valkafirono nabudo mabudana.

that is, in Chapter 1 of Koran, Baba told him to repeat this 101 times at midnight. Thereafter, he was to recite Davut. Then Baba gave him *peda* as prasad. Haji Kasim of Bombay provided him with a free passage to Arabia. He was then returned. It is one of the five duties of

Muslims to go and visit Mecca, and Baba helped this man to perform that duty.

Muhammad Ka, a Rohilla of Nevasu, was with Baba. Once he lifted the curtain to see who was talking with Mahlsapathy. Strange to say, he could not see Baba, though Baba was there. Then he grew queer and crazy. His younger brother came to Shirdi to take him. Then Baba gave *udhi* to him and sent him back, and then he became all right.

About 1936, Chote Khan and Madhav Fasle were at the Mosque one night. Chote Khan heard Baba's voice 'Ye Madhav, Get up, I want to pass urine.' But Madhav in his sleep did not get up. Early in the morning, both of them found in the hollow at the place where Baba used to sit, scented water. The hollow was filled with water. Baba had passed urine, and it had become scented water!

One Anwar Khan, an Ahmednagar Kazi, wanted to rebuild a *Masjid* at Telikakoot and came to Baba for Funds. After waiting for three days, he was told by Baba, 'The *Masjid* will not accept any money from you or from others. The *Masjid* herself would provide the funds.' Dig three feet under the *Nimbar*, and there is a treasure there. With that rebuild the *Masjid*. Then Kazi went, dug and found the treasure there. with that rebuilt the *Masjid*. Then he came back to Shirdi and told all the people including Chote Khan of the above facts.

One Maddu Shah, a Fakir at Meron in Jalgaon in Kandesh, came to Shirdi around 1913. He asked Baba, 'Give me Rs. 700.' He cried and cried. then Baba told Bapu Saheb Jog, 'Give him Rs. 700. Jog brought Rs. 700 silver coins and placed them before Baba. Baba told tow boys, Lakshman and Gulab, 'Take this money and give it to the *Fakir*.' These two boys took the money, but they handed over only Rs. 500 to the *Fakir*. And the Fakir wept and cried, 'I have been given only Rs. 500.' For two or three days he went on grumbling. Baba kept quiet. After that, Baba give him *udhi*, and this man went out. Baba said nothing to him, but when this man was walking on, near Nimgam, two miles away from Shirdi, a tonga came up. One Irus Shah, a Parsi *Tahsildar* in the Nizam's state got down from the *tonga* and told the *Fakir*, 'You take this food and take this Rs. 200. Are you now content?' Then Irus Shah came to Shirdi to Tatya Patil's new house, and told the people that in a dream Baba told him 'You come by tonga to Shirdi. On the way you will see a *Fakir* near Nimgam carrying tiger skin. Then alight and give him food and Rs. 200, for which he is pining.' In accordance with that dream, Irus Shah said, 'I found the fakir and gave him Rs. 200 and food.'

LIFE OF SAI BABA

From Lazur in Nizam's State a Muslim came to Baba and said that he urgently needed Rs. 400 or Rs. 500. Baba told him 'Go and sit under the *Vatam* for motions. There a vessel full of coins will be found by you.' The next morning, he passed motions, and went to wash himself and stumbled upon a very heavy vessel, evidently full of treasure. He could not lift it. So, he came back to Baba at the *chavadi*. But when he returned back to the place, he could not find the treasure. Baba said, Ganukadu of Ruihad, who was coming in a cart, found it and took it away in his cart. So, nothing can be done. That Ganukadu became rich and Lazur went back in grief and poverty. So, here are Muslims experiences showing what Baba did to serve or help Muslims.