

## ABDUL

Of the Muslims who came to Baba, the one about whom the greatest amount of information is available and who is revered by large numbers of Sai devotees, is Abdul. Abdul is the one Muslim who permanently attached himself to Baba for nearly thirty years during Baba's life in the flesh and for thirty six years after *Mahasamadhi*, sticking on to Baba, and living upon the doles he got from the public. Abdul was born in about 1871 and died in April 1954. He was a native of Nanded on the banks of Tapti. When he was very young, and under the care of Fakir Amiruddin of Nanded, Sai Baba appeared in the dream of that *Fakir*, and gave him two mangoes telling him to give the fruits to Abdul and send Abdul to Shirdi. Accordingly the Fakir told him of that dream, gave the fruits and directed him to go to Sai Baba of Shirdi. So, he came in his 20<sup>th</sup> year, about 1890, to Baba. At that time even Nana Saheb Chandorkar had not come to Baba. Baba welcomed him at Shirdi with these words: *Mera Kabla Ala*, that is, 'My crow has come.' Baba directed him to devote himself entirely to his service. So, his work was to feed the five perpetually burning oil lamps, such as those at the *Lendi*, the *Masjid* and the *chavadi* and to keep them lighted.

As for the food, at first Baba did not give him any food. Baba himself was going out begging, and Abdul for himself. He lived at the stable near the *Masjid*. He was always by Baba's side rendering service. He read the Koran sitting near Baba at the Mosque. Baba occasionally opened the Koran and made him read or rather recite passages at which he opened the book. He occasionally quotes passages from the Koran. Abdul went on writing down what Baba was saying, and Abdul

Shows a note book in Marathi and Modi script which contain Baba's utterances. That is Abdul's Koran. Everything which fell from Baba's lips is sacred and is enshrined in that book.

Abdul stuck on to Baba right up to the end, doing all menial and even scavenging services. After Baba passed away, he was the one Muslim in the establishment, and his work was to decorate the tomb of Baba, arrange the clothes and the flowers on it, and to receive first *prasad* for his sustenance. As for his record note book he had got full faith that what Baba said was sufficient to guide him and every one. When anybody wanted to know about the future or about any problem and came to him, he consulted this book and the answer came out of the page opened. This proved to be effective. This is the gift of prophecy, which he got by Baba's grace.

He gives two instances of such prophetic consultation. In the Sai *Mandir*, a well was dug. The water proved brackish. Baba was in *Mahasamadhi* at that time. So, Abdul consulted Baba's book of sayings. The reply he got was, "If deeper the well is dug the water will become sweeter". Accordingly the well was dug deeper by 2 feet, and the water was not brackish.

Another instance was this: Barrister Gadgil wanted to know if his son would come back from England and where he would stay then. After consultation, Abdul said, "He will return". And so, he did return with his English wife and children. So, he says he has used this manuscript book as his Koran. He goes on reading reverently, gets absorbed in it and rolls beads in his hands at the same time.

*Nanda deepam* or the perpetual lamp at the Lendi is now in 1936 covered by a pillar. But when he was maintaining it, it was only a pit. There was nothing above to protect it, and on its four sides 20 pieces of cloth were tied and the hole was covered with zinc sheet. Baba used to sit behind that lamp and ordered him to fill up two pots with water and place them near him. Baba would pour out water in various directions from those pots. Why that was done, Abdul could not say, nor whether any mantra accompanied the action. Except Abdul no one else would be present when Baba scattered the water. Abdul said, "Except myself no other Mohammadan was reading the Koran or any other Holy book sitting by Baba's side. Baba would occasionally utter sacred words. And all of them were noted in that book. By Baba's order or permission, Abdul took them all down. It can now be read either Narasimha Swamiji or any other devotee. This script is neither Devanagari nor Modi.

Abdul used this book not merely for daily reading but also for prophecy. Abdul died in April 1954 and till then, he was in the establishment of the Sai Sansthan. Abdul had great faith in Baba, and would give *udhi* with Baba's grace to many and help them achieving their objects such as cure of diseases. As he was for 66 years, either the bodyguard of Baba or the attendant on his tomb, he is esteemed as the *Hanuman* of Baba; constantly attending on the *Guru*, never expecting any payment or reward, but simply out of faith sticking on to his master. His was noble example of complete and perfect devotion and active service with fullest faith, that is *Nishta* in the *Guru*. He had both *Nishta* and *Saburi* and Baba on occasions, told him, 'Arre, what are you going to have? You are going to live in storeyed houses and terraced houses. You will have a glorious time.' Abdul lived for some time in Buty's *wada* upstairs and he commanded the respect of a very wide circle of Hindus and Muslims.

Baba used to give Abdul excellent advice fitting him for a *yogi's* life. Baba told him, 'Eat very little. do not go in for a variety of eatables. One sort of dish will suffice. Do not sleep much.' Abdul followed this advice. He kept awake all night, and in a kneeling posture kept repeating his Koran, that is, Baba's words. He was meditating on them. Baba said, 'Have *Dhyan* on what is read and think Who am I.' This might have been beyond the capacity of Abdul.

One night, he says, he was tired and tired to sleep, and held his palms in front of him to rest his drowsy head. Baba then said, 'Are you trying to see the moon?' That night when he fell asleep, he fell upon Baba and his *gaddi*. Baba gently stroked his feed, and then he awoke. The next day when he took water in his palms and looked at it, there was a big moon in that water. It was 2 p.m. This was what Baba had spoken of.

A zinc sheet was placed on the top of the *pandal* which protected the *Lendi* lamp. Twenty pieces of curtain cloth were tied all round the lamp to form something like a tent round it, and Abdul looked after the lamp, which was in the centre. That light has been shifted from its place now and is put inside a raised pillar of brick and mortar, containing a chamber for the lamp. Baba would get up from near the lamp and walk a few yards in each direction gazing intently into the distance evidently supervising with a parental eye the devotees in each of those directions.

## LIFE OF SAI BABA

Abdul's services were washing clothes in the streamlet at the village boundary, sweeping the Mosque, the *chavadi* and the surrounding places, lighting the lamps in these buildings, feeding them with oil and sweeping the village streets and removing the nightsoil from the way of Baba. That was why Baba called him, *Halalkoor* and '*My Mirambi*'. He fetched water and also engaged himself in sundry services.

Baba protected Abdul by providing him with food and ensured his safety and progress. About 1927, that is, 11 years after Ramakrishna Ayi's death, in the *Sala*, which she had occupied. Abdul was once reciting the Koran. Suddenly three walls of that dilapidated mud building collapsed, and Abdul was buried waist deep in the debris. But Baba saved him from harm. Abdul's first *Guru* had sent him no doubt to Baba, but later that *Guru* came to Shirdi and wanted him to go back. But Abdul pleaded that nothing could be done without Baba's permission. Baba not having given the permission, the former *Guru* went away from Shirdi.

Baba sometimes used to give blessings concealing them under abuse and violence. Baba beat Abdul and Jog many times. Baba said to Abdul *Tereku, Dhariaku, Par uttar Dhea, tera Matti Sona Banadiya Kyabadi Madi Bandhya*. this means, 'I have enabled you to cross the oceans. Your earth, that is mud body, has been turned into gold. What a high storeyed building?' Like this Abdul had various blessings and prophecies, and Baba sat with Abdul at the *chavadi* in the morning before he started for the Mosque. Abdul's statement about *Avatars*, his book shows, has reference to all the *Dasa Avatars*, and there is a hint that Baba treated himself as one of the avatars. Baba also prophesied that the British Empire in India, would have only nine rulers in India. In 1947, evidently at the time of the ninth king, India passed out of British jurisdiction.

The remaining devotees who have given statements are just a few, namely Rajabali Mohamed, Abdul Rangari, Thanadar and Adam Dalali. Of these Rajabali Mohamed, being educated and a *Khoja*, having read Swami Vivekananda's lectures and books, has something useful to say about Baba. He regards Baba as a great saint with vast powers, which are possible only to those who have got *Atma jnana*. he went to Shirdi, because he had some business at Nasik and that business was delayed. So, during the time when there was no work at Nasik, he visited Shirdi which is not far from Nasik. When he went and presented Baba with a coconut and sugar candy, Baba did not ask him for *dakshina*. Rajabali Mohamed asked leave of Baba to go away. Baba said, "That man is not yet ready to deliver your goods", showing that

the Nasik man was not yet ready for completing his business contract. So, Rajabali Mohamed spent two or three days in Baba's company.

Rajabali Mohamed only wanted to strengthen his faith and he wanted that at the time his death, he may have full *imam* or faith, so that he might be sure of good end. So, he prayed to Baba mentally for it. Baba then placed his hand on his head and blessed him. Rajabali Mohamed's faith steadily increased. He got great benefit from faith in him and faith in *udhi*. For example, in 1931, his buffalo was in great travail trying to calve. Pained at her suffering Rajabali Mohamed sent for the Veterinary surgeon. He tried his best, but to no purpose. Then at once Rajabali Mohamed took Baba's *udhi*, placed some *udhi* on the head of the buffalo and hoped that Baba would come to its aid. In ten minutes, she safely calved. There was no more trouble. In several other cases similarly, he used Baba's *udhi* with great success. He takes a bit of it, applies it over his chin, eyes, forehead and thinks of Baba. Then all his difficulties are removed. So, Rajabali Mohamed feels convinced that Baba is a saint of vast powers. He feels convinced also that Baba continues after *Mahasamadhi* to exercise that power.

According to Islamic tradition, saints do not die. They only pass from one state to another. Rajabali Mohamed has seen Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur and Baba Jan of Poona. They had given him earthly benefits. They also strengthened his *imam* or faith. being in the company of a saint is better than saying a hundred prayers. he keeps Baba's porcelain statue and a picture of Baba in his family house. Scented sticks are burnt before them on Thursdays.

The other Muslims who contacted Baba are all worldly people, namely Abdul Rahim, Adama Dalali and Abdulla Jan.

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