

CHAPTER X

Baba's Siddhis, Their Origin, and Their Use

When Baba first came into Shirdi, he was a totally unrecognised fakir, and when after some stay he went out for three years and returned with Chan Bai Patel's marriage party, he was still practically in the same condition, though he was reported to have shown siddhi powers to Chan Bhai Pate! in the jungles near Aurangabad. When he came into Shirdi on that occasion, he had evidently in his mind that Shirdi should be his permanent abode, and wished to find some place to rest his head. The Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nest. But the son of Man hath not where to lay his head, (Math. 8-20) said Jesus, and the Gita says that the best beloved Bhakta is homeless (*Aniketana*). It was the same with Sai. There was no place that he could call his own. Everything was his and nothing was his. He had perfect vairagya and no attachment to any person or place, though, especially at Shirdi, there were numerous persons and places at that time that had relations with him by reason of rinanubandha association and the ties arising from such association.

The first place that he came to after parting with Chan Bhai Patel's marriage party was the shaded temple of Kandobha, a small mud structure surrounded by shady trees. It was an ideal spot sufficiently removed from the village with sufficient holy association to be selected by any hermit for his place of meditation. In fact, many decades after Baba came, when Upasani Maharaj came and wanted a spot for his solitary meditation and hermit life, he hit upon the identical spot and was allowed to stay there for a period of about three years, 1911-14. But when Sai Baba (a young fakir) expressed his appreciation of the site for the residence of a hermit like himself, Mahlsapathy, the person in charge, objected to Baba, whom he took to be a Muhammadan, residing there. Hence Baba had to seek some other place. Baba found the foot of the Margosa tree a suitable place to stay for some time, a place in immediate proximity to his former Guru's tomb. A tree foot being however a very uncomfortable place for human flesh and blood, especially in times of rain and wind, he had to choose the dilapidated Mosque. While he was staying under this tree or at the foot of other

trees or rambling in the woods, he did not exhibit any powers but was concentrating all attention on his Guru-God. It was a considerable time before he first exhibited his siddhi power by converting water into oil. He was provoked into it by the gracelessness of the local vanis (i.e. Oil-mongers) who thought him to be a crazy fakir, and wanted to have some fun at his expense. When Baba wanted the oil badly for lighting up the lamps at the Mosque, which would be totally dark without the lamps, they told him that they had no oil, though it was a lie. Then he went up to the Mosque and (after completely clearing off even the last drops of oil sticking to the tin or timbrel, as he called it, by putting water into it and drinking off the solution of the mixture of oil and water) filled his lamps with water, inserted wicks into them, and lighted up the wicks. To the great surprise of the villagers, the wicks not only started burning but kept on burning all night, as though they were fed by supply of very good oil. Now this is what is called a miracle, *chamatkar*, or *siddhi*.

What took place was the conversion of water into oil. Somehow oil came into the lamp in a sufficient quantity to burn all night. Now this is not explicable to ordinary men with their notions of chemistry and physics. Water is not converted into oil except through castor plants and other plants which suck up the water, mix them with their other ingredients, and produce oil in the seeds of the fruits that they give. Without any such process, Baba was able to fill his lamps with oil. What is this *siddhi* called? Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, 15th Chapter, amongst other books, give a list of *siddhis* attained by yoga processes, and what Baba did would be called '*Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhih*' and '*Apratihata Ajna*,' that is producing whatever one wants by mere will power or supreme command. There are so many complicated processes mentioned in the Yoga Sutras. Sutras 16 to 50 of Chapter 3 of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras show what powers are obtained in what way.

In Chapter 15 of Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, verses 5 to the end of the Chapter, a similar description is given. Mantra and Tantra books show how magicians produce articles. The question naturally would be raised by the learned as to what process Baba adopted, and how he effected his object of

replacing water by oil for his lamps: The one short answer we might give to all such questions would be that Baba was not a Mantric who got his powers for specific purposes by adopting specific processes or specific mantras so far as we know. He seems to have been concentrating his desireless attention on God always thinking of Allah and as he put it, constantly saying. *Allah Malik*, or 'Hari, Hari, Hari' till Hari at last appeared before him. The power he got to produce what he wanted may be easily classified (if classification is necessary) under the 32nd stanza of the 15th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda. That stanza says:-

jitendriyasya dantasya jitaswasa atmano muneh

maddharanam dharayatah ka sa siddhis sudurlabhah

This means, 'What power is beyond the reach of the sage who has controlled his mind, senses, nerve currents and disposition, and concentrates on Me (Krishna or God)? Whether it is the Krishna form or Guru form or any other form, God is one and the same. The only requisite is that the concentration should be powerful and prolonged so as to bring on the properties of the contemplated form on the contemplating soul.

So, '*Yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*', that is, 'realising whatever one wants', and '*tasya cha ajnayatha mama*', namely, 'Getting one's command obeyed everywhere like God's command', are two portions of the siddhi chapter in Srimad Bhagavata sufficient to explain all The siddhis, chamatkars, and the powers etc., exhibited by Baba throughout his life. No doubt in some cases, when he was putting it in the form of prayer to God, and his will and God's will became one and the same. In such cases, Baba said, 'I am praying to Allah, He will carry out the prayer'. If this is kept in mind, it would be easy to understand the innumerable chamatkars which are found in the life of Baba as reported by devotees and as embodied in books like the Gospel of Sai Baba, etc.

One thing is clear, that is, during the early days of his stay at Shirdi he was keen on concentrating his attention on his Guru-God or Allah, and did not wish to waste his efforts by using the siddhis.

He realised what he himself said to some of his devotees (like R.A. Tarkhad) that utilising siddhis for obtaining earthly objects produced distraction,

that is, drew one's mind away from God. This is the advice given in verse 33 of the above Chapter 15 in Srimad Bhagavata and in Mantra 35 of Chapter 3 of Patanjali's Yoga sutras. Therefore, Baba did not waste his time in trying to work miracles or chamatkars in his early years. After lighting the lamps in the Mosque by converting water into oil, he did not repeat his chamatkars. This display of power was wrung out of him on that occasion by the levity of the "Vanis". He reserved all power within himself and held his mind on to God not only from his natural love of concentration on God but also in obedience to the well known dictum of Kabir "*Jinne Paya Vnne chupaya* ", that is, 'He who has achieved something keeps it a secret'. There was nothing to be gained by him by a display of powers, for his desires were all controlled, and his barest necessities were met by his going about with his begging bowl in the streets, and, from there calling out for roti or dhal, and returning to the Masjid which gave him shelter. There was nothing else that he wanted. Food and shelter were provided. The tattered clothes that he wore quite sufficed especially with the help of the dhuni or the fire which he kept up in the Mosque.

Conquest of Indriyas is said to be a siddhi, but would be better termed a perfection of the soul from within, which Baba had achieved by the grace of his Guru and by the long training he had under his foster father or first Guru, the fakir and under his final Guru Venkusa. He was desireless and unaffected by the jeers or the praise of people about him, To such a person, there was no necessity to utilise siddhi powers, to produce articles as Kusa Bhav did. Kusa Bhav wanted fame and emoluments, which his power of production or materialization enabled him to get. But Baba wanted nothing. Baba's siddhi powers, however, were not an encumbrance. They were part of his equipment. His Guru had divine powers in him, and by *Saktinipata*, at the time of parting from him, the Guru had passed them over to Baba either potentially or in full force or perhaps partly potentially and partly in full force. He could invoke the Guru's own power to raise the dead as he did about the time when he parted from his Guru. Baba said to Kaka Dexit, 'I can revive the dead boy and bring back his soul from the body into which it has entered, into the corpse of the cobra-bitten boy here, but that would be interfering

with the karma of that soul' and showed Dixit the impropriety of exercising such siddhis merely to gratify the sympathy of Dixit with the cries of the agonised mother of the cobra-bitten boy.

Baba Said, "Death is inevitable and when it takes place at the appointed time, the proper course for a jnani or yogi is to encourage people to face the sorrow and not to exercise his powers to bring back the departed soul from the new body into which it might have entered. On that occasion, he showed his *Pratibha*, which single term would cover the numerous instances in which Baba had shown his knowledge of things which took place far and near and of the hearts of all people including creatures like lizards. This *Pratibha* is referred to in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, verse 34, which runs thus, '*Pratibhadvā sarvaṃ*'. This means all siddhis and knowledge are attained by the development of *Pratibha*, namely, this spontaneous enlightenment or illumination that blazes out in oneself, by and as a result of perfect satwa or purity, that is, perfect concentration on God. These powers of Baba's *Pratibha* and his perfect concentration on God resulted in "*apratihata ajna*", "*yatha sankalpa samsiddhiḥ*", "*Bhuta jaya*", "*akasa gamana*", "*manojava*", etc., and formed a full panoply and perfect equipment for his work as Samartha Sadguru for **those** whom he wished to lead on their path to God.

A Samartha Sadguru must have all powers, though he may or may not exercise them. The powers are intended to be exercised to help the sishya to grasp the real nature of his Guru and his real greatness, and to overcome numerous obstacles from time to time that may be impeding his progress. The Guru also might utilise them for the benefit of the very large class of persons approaching him not as sishyas prepared to go through the full course of a spiritual discipline, but to have some benefit at his hands, mostly temporal, and it may be partly spiritual.

Taking for instance the case of G. S. Khaparde, whose object was mainly to escape from the jaws of the foreign Government and be free from their molestation in his legal, social and political life. Baba exercised his vast powers, especially of thought control, and crushed out from Government Official minds all

ideas of prosecuting Khaparde for the speeches he made in his political activities inspired by patriotism. Baba utilised similar powers for benefiting Damia (Damodar S. Rasane) in whose case some invisible and unperceived factors were preventing his having progeny though he lived with two wives and as also for granting longevity to Narke's children born after he gave Narke the blessing 'Allah will bless' (after he learnt that all the children born to him until then died prematurely). There are mantras in Mantra Sastra for practically each one of the above objects; and specific mantras, yantras, tantras, homas, etc., are prescribed for achieving the very same objects.

For example, *Putra kameshti* would suit the object which Damodar S. Rasane had in his mind, and *Simsumara Yantra* puja was what Narke badly needed (for longevity of children). *Maha Karya Siddhi* Homa in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* speaks of controlling all thoughts of persons in the desired direction, and these would be prescribed by orthodox Sastris for G.S. Khaparde. Baba however did not adopt any of these prescribed processes, but purely by his own will power granted relief in all the above cases.

Similarly Baba mentioned frequently facts about the past, immediate or remote, the present and the future, immediate or remote of every one going to him. For example, Baba said that eight children would be born to Damia in 15 years, and also spoke of the appointment that Narke would get three or four years later. Such feats also are referred to in the above mentioned books and other books on Mantra Sastra, and also in books on Jyotisha Sastra. Baba himself said, 'Your astrologers dive into the future and say some things of which a half or so come true'. Baba added, 'I know the future, and what I say comes true'.

As for '*yatha sankalpa samsiddhihi*' Baba said, 'I say here, things happen there (in accordance with what I say)'. Baba did not proceed in accordance with Yoga Sutras or other texts to achieve these objects. By his contemplation of the Supreme, the power of the Supreme were inherent in him. This is what Srimad Bhagavata says:

Maddaranam dharayatah ka sa siddhih sudurlabah?

This means, 'When one gets laya in God, all powers, all knowledge, all wisdom, all perfection, that are termed divine, shine forth from such a person'. Baba was perfect in his concentration on God. Therefore in the above quoted instances as in the other innumerable instances to be found in the Gospel of Sai Baba (i.e. BCS) or other books on Baba, the powers exercised by Baba were the result of his laya in God, that is, they were *really divine powers*.

In many, if not all, cases, the object of Baba was that a devotee should not merely get relief but also a full belief in him (Baba) that he was the Guru-God for the devotee so that the devotee might attach himself firmly to Sai Baba, and develop his life thereafter with his help. This is the great object with which siddhis were utilised by Baba. Temporal help was given by means of these *chamatkars*, but there was always a string attached to the temporal help. The man who got a temporal benefit had at the same time a push in the spiritual direction. When Baba was going to give Damia four fruits he started by saying, 'Damia, people are crying, "Give, give". Here are the fruits; eat and die'. Damia was very much puzzled. He came in order to get issue, but here death was mentioned. Then Baba smiled and told him that the fruits were not for him but for his second wife to eat. And that she would bear eight children for him. Now eight children are a very large portion of *samsara*. *Samsara* makes a man thoroughly absorbed in the world and thus he gets in *Pramada*, that is, forgetting God completely and thinking only of the world and worldly objects as the be-all and end-all of existence. Thus, this *Samsara pramada* is death said Sanatkumara in Sanatsujatiya and Baba gave him an inkling of that danger of *pramada* before pushing him into *samsara*,

Similarly when Baba was asked to give help on other occasions, he gave the help and with it faith in him. For instance, in the case of Narke, Dhumal, and Buty, who all felt that Baba was a person armed with divine powers and was, therefore, *Acharya devo bhava*, the proper person to be treated by them as a Guru, as Upanishads say 'Treat Guru as GOD'. Dhumal got perfect confidence that he was looked after by Baba, when Baba assured him 'Bhav, the whole of last night I had no sleep; I was thinking and thinking of you'. Dhumal noticed how

to prevent his thoughts from running away with him into harmful and sinful directions. Baba was spending his entire night in controlling those thoughts. He could not but get the impression that Baba was omnipotent and omniscient and that Baba was his Guardian Angel so that ever afterwards he could simply place himself in Baba's guardianship under all circumstances and be safe. Such a use of his omniscience was shown also in the protection he extended to Dhumal during times of plague, when Dhumal continued to live in plague-rat-ridden bungalows under Baba's care getting no harm thereby. Cases like this not only increased Dhumal's own confidence in Baba, but helped other people, who noticed Dhumal's immunity from plague, to know about the divine nature of Baba and his fitness to be a Guru to all persons who could summon up courage to surrender to Him and make themselves his disciples or devotees. This is the great use that Baba made of his siddhis from time to time that while granting Dhumal benefits he attached to them spiritual adjuncts. There were cases of great complexity coming before Baba in his dealings with hundreds of persons, if not thousands, in the course of the 40 or 50 years that he spent in Shirdi before he left his fleshy body.

The most striking difference between Baba's siddhis and use of them and others, (i. e, magicians' and *mantravadis*') siddhis and their use may be briefly summarised thus:

- (1) Baba's powers were part of his high nature and resulted from his concentration with love and intensity on his Guru-God. The powers of magicians are expressly sought and acquired by them by trance, japa or puja of petty deities conducted only for the purpose of acquiring the siddhis.
- (2) The latter class of persons are not desireless yogis but persons desiring to acquire power for the love of power and all the worldly name, fame, wealth and control, etc., that siddhis produce.
- (3) The siddhis they acquire are limited in extent and require the repetition of Japa, trance, etc., as they will soon end; and exercise of siddhis diminishes the supply of power with the indulgence in worldly desires while resorting to Siddhis buries them deeper in samsara.

(4) There might be danger in contacting magicians to the persons resorting to them while there is none in resorting to Samarth Sadgurus like Sai Baba who are intent on the welfare (temporal and spiritual) of those approaching them.

(5) Questions of payment arise with magicians, mantravadis but not with Samarth Sadgurus.

(6) The powers of magicians, mantravadis etc., are strictly limited and cannot have the wide operation of Samarth Sadguru Sai's powers. So, not infrequently the mantravadi's and magician's efforts and statements especially as to the future fail in a considerable proportion of cases. With Sai there is no failure of power to do or to see and speak out the future, etc.

(7) Where powers are acquired and used with the help of spirits, the magician's life and welfare are at the mercy of the spirits and so they use iron bangles, talismans etc.. and some of them are killed or maimed by the spirits. Sai Baba ran no such risk.

The problems get extremely complicated by the egotism and other evil tendencies of various persons. Baba himself remarked from time to time that the times were getting bad, that people were prone to look on the evil side of things and develop their evil side, that he had been praying to God for the removal of these evil things and for betterment, and that God had not granted his prayer but that he had not given up his prayer and that he was determined to push on and see that the evil was removed. This referred to persons who were in very close contact with him. Some of them had dedicated their entire lives to him and still retained vices or evil ways.

Some of them were too egotistic to yield to him unless he resorted to extreme measures which, of course, he was not prepared to resort to. Some of them could never make up their minds to fully surrender. Luckily a few surrendered and obtained perfect calm like H.S. Dixit, Bala Saheb Bhate and Balakram Manker. But the number of these people was small. The unregenerate and the obdurate were the many. They were of both sexes. Some of them were rendering very useful service to him and still were sticking on to evil ways. It was his self inflicted duty or prerogative to correct them and put them in the right way.

People are always attracted by things uncommon and many persons jump to conclusions that an unusual thing is produced by superhuman power, and if the power, which is superhuman, is divine, that is, that of a saint, they call it a miracle (for example Jesus's miracles). If not that of a saint, it might be the working of unseen spirit, elves, ghosts, spirits, pitrus, etc. Mohamad Bay employed his brother's deceased spirit to know the minds of others (his visitors) and used unseen spirits to scribble on paper (when pencil was placed on paper at their disposal) to write out those thoughts. He was considered a marvellous man and piled money (See Paul Brunton's book, 'Search in Secret India'). For one Mohamad Bay that Paul Brunton came across, we have hundreds of similar persons whose motive is the same, viz, fame and money, and who employed mantra, elves, and trance, power, etc., to read thoughts and hazard answers to mental questions of their visitors about the future and the readings of the past of the mass of persons (both men and women) are generally found correct and their predictions about the future are found almost invariably worthless though occasionally they hit the mark by chance.

Some of these persons combine palmistry, clairvoyance, necromancy, etc., with their own cleverness and make a name, acquire fame and wealth. And several of them are employing written books or palm leaves purporting to have been written long ages back and containing accounts of their visitors, past experiences, with sometimes remarkable accuracy. As a rule these leaves called *Nodi grantham* can be read only by their owners and not by others, and some of them are comically inclusive of the very time of consultation of the visitor and other present day detail which may be near effect of thought reading or plain knowledge of the so-called thought reader. Those which are based on astrological calculations do come out correct in a percentage of cases. But mostly they are remarkable failures as to the future, for their writers, or at least their exponents, though mentioning the exact moment of consultation and other details attendant on it, are unable to understand the future. Stories are told as to how great Sages have failed to understand the future, e.g.

Yada vyasah cha dasah cha yamena mrutyna saha

Kalosya gruham aayanthi tada daso marishyati

'Dasa, the pupil, asked Vyasa, his Guru, when dasa would meet with his death; (that being a future event). Vyasa could not say, and the two went to Yama and enquired of him, who also could not fix the time without asking Mrithyu, who also could not fix the time of death without asking Kala. Hence, all the four went to Kala to ask about the time of Dasa's death and at that time Dasa died. The above stanza was found written in Kala's book saying that Dasa would die when he, with Vyasa, Yama and Mrithyu, visited the house of Kala.'

This is but a story and is not part of any Sastra or result of yogic experience. The time of death is stated to be found by a person himself in Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Part III, verse 23 - *sopakramam nirupakramamcha karma tat samyamaadaparanta jnanam arishtebhyava*.

Karma is of two kinds, namely (1) fructifying immediately (2) fructifying later. By making *samyama* on these or by the signs called *arishta*, *portents*, the Yogis know the exact time of separation from their bodies.

This may correctly describe the psychological process in the mind of the Siddha, but the fact is well known that in a good number of people, the processes are quickly conducted to amount to an intuition and some holy persons or even apparently ordinary persons derive an impression that the death of a person whose face they see is very near. In the case of a blind man who went to Sai Baba for restoration of his eye sight, and who was given no encouragement by Baba for getting his eye sight, he went to Upasani Maharaj at Khandoba temple, who, when he saw him, derived the impression that death was not far off and in fact, within a month the man died.

Other instances of such intuition about others' death and about one's own death are fairly well known, though they are of course scarce. This siddhi of knowing the time of death is not after all so important as it looks. It is chiefly valuable to enable a person to spend his last moments in the thought of God. But to a very large number of persons the time when death approaches is fairly easily understood though not exactly fixed by noting the condition of the body with or without medical advice, and above all to ensure that the last thought should be

about God is done by adopting Sri Krishna's advice in Bhagavad Gita, Chapter VIII.

*tasmat sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhyacha
mayi arpitha manobuddhih maamevaishyasi asamschayam*

This means, 'Therefore, at all times, remember Me and then do your duty of fighting; when you have surrendered your mind and reasoning power unto Me, you will surely come to Me'. There is a Tamil song, which means, "*I have told now itself what I have to say then (at the time of death)*". This is based upon the stanza in Mukunda Mala, in which the following lines occur:

*krishna twadeeya pada pankaja pancharaantah
adyaiva me visatu maanasa raja hamsah
prana prayaana samaye kapavatapithaih
kantavarodhana vidhou smaranam kutaste*

This means, 'O, Krishna, into the lotus of Thy feet may the Swan (Rajahamsa) of my mind enter now alone. For at the time of death when the three humours (phlegm, wind, and bile) are holding the throat and oppressing the Soul, how is one to think of You?' The idea of these lines that we must immediately surrender to Lord Krishna, is right. Though there is no guarantee at the last moment, one can think of Krishna as advised in Bhagavad Gita, Chapter VIII.

Still there are a number of cases in which persons have died with clear consciousness upto the last, and have kept in mind their Ishta Devata or Guru Devata at that time. H.S. Dixit is a notable instance of this sort. There are several other cases also which might be known to the readers and might encourage hope in the reader that he might adopt the way of Sai Baba and his Guru, Noolkar, Vijayananda and others of spending their entire days before death amidst holy and inspiring studies, sights, and sounds, and thus pass on to God. Above all, firm Sai devotees with *drida bhakti* in him are assured by Baba in his Charters & Sayings that at the time of their death, Baba (B.C.&S, 95 and 96) would draw his devotees to himself even though they might die 1,000 miles away from Shirdi. Baba added, 'I will not allow my devotee to be lost. I will account to

God all those devotees drawn to Me.' Those with firm faith in Baba, as Guru God, will thus be drawn to God, who is identical with Baba. Baba said that the wife of Upasani Maharaj and the child of M.B. Rege thus came to him at the time of their deaths, and that they would be eternally with him. It would be ridiculous to ask which of the siddhis mentioned in Patanjali Yoga Sutras or Bhagavata, Ekadasa Skanda, Chapter 15, enabled Baba to do so. It is not a siddhi in the ordinary sense that gives this power. Sai Baba had by the grace of his Guru and by his prolonged and continuous Dhyana, Dharana Samadhi on God, Guru-God, attained laya in Him and all the powers flowing from God are found in such a devotee who had got poorna laya in God. In verses 31 and 32 of the XV Chapter of the 11th Skanda of Srimad Bhagavata, it is stated,.

*upasakasya mamevam yoga dharanaya muneh
siddayah poorva kathita upatishtanthi asceshatah
jitendriyasya daantasya jitasvasaan mano muneh
maddharanam dharayatah kaa saa siddhih sudurlabha*

This means, To the sage who worships Me in the foregoing ways through yogic concentration, the above mentioned powers come in their full measure. No power is beyond the reach of the sage who has controlled his mind, senses, nerve currents and disposition, and concentrates on Me'.

These confirm Patanjali Yoga Sutras in Chapter III, especially those about *Pratibha* and *Sarva Bhava Athreshta Trithva* and *Sarve Jnathruthva*. Patanjali has said therein that by concentrating on the *Purusha* and developing *Suddhasatva* one attains *pratibha* (knowledge of everything), and one can do everything, i.e., achieve omnipotence and omniscience. Patanjali proceeds to point out that the seed of desire may still be there and if that is overcome, *Kaivalya* is attained. With Sai Baba, there was no seed of desire, and his reaching the *kaivalya* state is expressed by his words '*Maim Allahum*' and the other words found in Charters 66 to 68 prove that he had a Cosmic personality and not an individual personality. Being a person possessed of all siddhis and undertaking to look after devotees' temporal and spiritual welfare to lead them on to God, he had to exercise all these divine powers in him. When a theosophical

lady entered his Mosque with a doubt in her mind, whether his powers, chamatkars, etc., were instances of black magic, he spoke out (B. C. &S. 57), 'This (referring to himself) is a Brahmin, a white Brahmin; a pure (Subhra) Brahmin. This Brahmin will lead lakhs of people to subhra marga and take them to the goal right up to the end (the end, of course, is reaching God)'. It is hardly necessary to enquire into each particular case of his exercising this extraordinary power and see whether he adopted any of the processes mentioned in the Yoga Sutras or in the 15th chapter cited above or in the Mantra Sastras. Being merged in the Supreme especially by intense prayer and concentration, all power was with him. Yet the curious reader would like to analyse the various sorts of power he exercised on particular occasions, and see whether he achieved the so-called miracles. Whether we take his first achievement at Selu of reviving the dead man with no other remedy or mantras than the throwing of his Guru's *pada duti* on the corpse with a prayer for revival, or his taking water at his Shirdi Masjid and filling his lamps with that water for feeding the wicks with a prayer, we find his concentration on his Guru God is the only means.

The Mantra books are full of various mantras, tantras, and oushadas with a full detail of varied processes for *Mohanam*, *Vasikaranain*, *Akarshanam*, *Vidveshanam*, *Maaranam*, *Uchatanam*, etc., and these have absolutely no application to what Baba did. When Upasani Maharaj was trying to run away from him and Shirdi fully determined not to return in 8 days as promised, in June 1911, Baba fully gripped his mind and the minds of all those that he (U) came across and made him return within the 8th day without understanding or remembering his determination to return back home to Satana to be with his wife and mother. The force employed by Baba was mere will power i.e., *yata sankalpa samsiddhih* and did not require the usual tantric devices employed of drawing a line of water, addressing Indra, etc., to stop the passage of the runaway. As mentioned in the last stanza, for one resting in God with perfect *laya ka sa siddhih sudurlabhah*, what is the accomplishment or achievement that is unattainable? Baba knew everything that took place everywhere, every moment in connection with his devotees and could boldly give assurances even about the

future (which is stated in the stanzas quoted previously as being impossible for any except Kala).

Baba said about Nana Chandorkar when he was threatened with imminent death, 'Nana is about to die, but will I let him die?' The tonga in which Nana and Lele Sastri were seated was upset, and Baba, knowing the grave danger they were in, exercised his power of saving them "with four, four hands stretched out (unseen) to support them" and Nana was thus really saved from death. When Nandram Marvadi of Shirdi, from whose house also Baba begged for bread, caught the infection of plague, which was rife and rampant at Shirdi, and when he wanted to run away, Baba told him that he would not die and Baba would not allow him to die at any rate, until Baba's own body perished. This Nandram Marvadi was saved from death and continued to live for several decades. When an astrologer told Buty that there was a '*Ganda*¹' or danger of death to him, on a particular day, Baba Said, 'What! Does he say that Death will attack you? Strike. Let me see how you strike and kill". Later in the day a snake came near Buty, but did not bite him or kill him. The ability or power to say that death shall not come to a person is diastinctly divine.

Baba's powers, therefore, are seen to be divine powes and no curious readers or explorers can trace the origin of his powers to the employment of Mantra Sastra, Tantra or Yantra. Quite right were the devotees who identified Baba with God and treated him as their Guru Deva, or as Shama used to call him merely 'Deva". The distinction between the Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman or Personal God and his agents armed with "vast and practically unlimited powers" is of no use to the Bhakta and proves to be a mere cause of confusion. In the presence of Baba devotees like Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiv Tarkhad and others felt nothing could hurt them so long as they were in his presence, not even death. And besides the protection (*Abhaya*) there was the feeling of Bliss radiating from Baba and permeating the devotees for hours and hours, such as that experienced by Narayanasram, G.S. Khaparde, the South African doctor and others. These fully justify the conclusion that Sai Baba, from whom such

illimitable Paramananda came, must himself be full of Pure Sat Chit Ananda, i.e., himself was (and is) God, whatever Narke and others might think.

Let us take the question of Swetcha Marana, which pertains to the human side of Baba, and consider what light might be thrown on the three occasions on which the problem arose. In 1886 Baba told Mahlsapathy that he was going to meet Allah, and might not return again, and if he did not return within three days, his body was to be interred near the sweet margosa tree, and if he returned, he might take up the body and live again. Then within a very short time of leaving the body, the body turned into a corpse. In the inquest he was declared dead, and the officers wanted the body to be buried. But the burial was prevented by Mahlsapathy and other devotees. Three days later, Baba came back to life and lived for 32 years thereafter. In 1916, it looked as though Baba would pass away, and Baba declared that his *simolanganam* (crossing the border) was the Dasara day. In 1918, he fully anticipated his departure on Dasara, 15th October. He had Hari Vijaya read at his Mosque and sent up money (Rs. 250/- or so) to a Muslim Saint Shamsuddin for the performance of Davalu, etc., and sent word to another Saint Bannemea that on the 9th day of the 9th month, God was taking away the light which he had himself lit (meaning, of course, the life of Sai Baba). Banne Mea shed tears on receipt of this information. Baba passed away calmly leaning on the body of Bagoji conscious to the last moment. This was just like the sage of Narayanapuram (*Surakka Paradesi*) at Narayanavanam near Puttur, Renigunta, and like Parikshit passing away in the Bhagavata. That one must always be in a detached state and must be thinking of God (which is the direction given in Bhagavad Gita) was exactly what was done by Baba. He was always thinking of God. Serving God is serving man and serving creation. He had evidently no need to determine the time of his death by noting the Arishta or omens or ripeness of his karma according to Patanjali Yoga Sutra No. 23, for all knowledge to him was an open book. His undertaking on behalf of his devotees to give them happy and blessed deaths, e.g., his promise to H. S. Dixit to carry him in a vimana, were fulfilled by him with remarkable accuracy through his divine power. His drawing devotees to himself at the time of their deaths even though they might be

thousands of miles away from Shirdi and his placing them in the best situations for their next birth, for instance, placing Pishya, Rohilla, Galwankar, Sapatnekar's child, and Baba Pradhan each in his mother's womb are all very remarkable and are not described in any of the Sutras of Patanjali or any of the Mantra Sastras, but are simply evidence of the omnipotence and omniscience and vast kindness to look after every devotee's interests, as our God and Guru Deva. Further analysis of his powers to trace their origin is absolutely unnecessary.

The way in which he used his powers, especially his omnipotence and omniscience are all clearly set out in the Gospel of Sai Baba or Charters & Sayings under properly arranged heads and in other books on Baba without such arrangements. A careful study of these will fill one with full appreciation of Baba's divine powers. It is mere idle curiosity or impertinence to go beyond the above and try to trace out the source of Baba's powers to Mantra Sastra etc.

The question, however, arises especially to metaphysical minded persons whether the doctrine of karma places a limit on the powers of Sai or God, whether there is a free will at all, or whether destiny has fixed up every item to occur in the future. Questions like these have perplexed and will perplex men to the end of time perhaps. Whatever may be the metaphysical solution of this problem, it is the best, wisest and the safest course for the main mass of readers to seek their safety and advantage by pinning firm faith with full bhakti in Baba and leaving it to him to deal with these questions.

There are passages in Charters and Sayings, for instance, where -from widely divergent and opposite inferences on the above matter may be drawn. But the safest course for a bhakta is to fix his faith firmly at Baba's feet, leave it to him to decide, and to guide us in every particular. This is Baba's own advice and many devotees have profited by adopting that course, and the reader cannot have any advice better than the above.

If any reader wishes to know what were the various ways in which Baba used his divine siddhis and the reasons for them, an exhaustive answer is, of course, impossible. Even a fairly full answer will take many pages. But as the

subject is one of vast importance and interest, a few paragraphs may be given here giving a very brief and very incomplete list of the above.

Of the siddhis which are said to be Ashta Mahasiddhis, directly inherent in God and God alone, according to verse 5 Chapter 15 of Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, there are *Anima*, *Mahitna*, *Laghima*, *Prapthi*, *Prakamyam*, *Eeshitwam*, *vashitvam*, and *Kamavasayita* (or *Paramananda*). These are found inextricably mixed up with the next succeeding ten, and the later five siddhis which are mentioned in verses 6 to 8. Hence some degree of intermixture of terms is inevitable, but substantially the power referred to under any head of the Bhagavata must in the case of Baba be attributed solely to his concentration on his God (Allah or Hari), and to his perfect laya resultant in the flow of divine powers to his surrendered soul. Hence in a very rough way we shall proceed to pick up, arrange, and bundle some of the reported manifestation of Baba's siddhis with a view solely to show how he utilised them for his benign purposes.

About *Anima*, one recalls what he said to Mrs. T. of Bandra and her son when they were with him at puja time. Baba said that he visited (by *Akasagamana*) in his *Leghima* body, their Bandra house to partake of the Naivedya, if any, offered there and that the usual naivedya (sugarcandy) had not been offered that day, a fact which he discovered by entering into that closed puja ;.x>m, (which means, by the exercise of *Anima* power). This fact of the omission to offer sugarcandy as naivedaya was discovered by Mr. T. only at the time of noon meal, and then he repented. The mention of the omission of sugarcandy in the naivedya was confirmed by Mr. T's letter written to Shirdi and showed the truth of Baba's visit to Bandra to that lady's house. There may be thousands of other cases, but this one will suffice to illustrate the points of *Leghima*, *Anima* and *Akasa Gamana*, and also to illustrate the more important truth that Baba, as the Guru God of his devotees, was observing the Gita dictum,

Patram pushpam phatam toyam yo me bhaktya prayachati

Tadaham bhakti upahrutam ashnamī prayatatmanah.

This means, 'When any bhakta offers a flower, fruit or water, with full bhakti or faith, that article offered with faith I accept and enjoy'. In the above

case, Baba told Mrs. T. on the day in question that he returned from her house on that occasion with unappeased hunger. Baba like Sri Krishna and other forms of God appreciates Prema or love and takes immense trouble to keep watch over his bhaktas, their puja, offering, and conduct with a view to ensure their welfare. As stated in B.C. & S.2, his eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love him. This loving universal watch at all times and places can only be termed divine. Similarly another instance is this. When H.S. Dixit was doing his puja at his Shirdi quarters and forgot to place betel and nut as part of the prescribed offering, and when later Dixit approached Baba at the Mosque Dwarakamayee, Baba asked him for the betel and nut to make his puja complete. Instances of this sort can be multiplied innumerable but the above would suffice.

His watchful eyes exposed attempts at wrong or fraudulent efforts of the devotees when they approached him. When N.V., a printer, knowing that Baba would ask for dakshina, handed over his coins to D.V. Sambhare, who accompanied him to see Baba, exposed his device by telling N.V. 'Give dakshina, and take it from D.V.S'. Similarly when persons intending to give certain amounts gave only a part and took away the remainder, Baba asked for the remainder. A woman intending to give eight annas gave only four annas, and kept away the other four annas. Baba said to her, 'Why cheat me, a poor Brahmin? Pay me the remaining four annas also.'

All these are instances of Baba's use of power to help devotees to complete their puja or vows. Proceeding next to *Mahima*, i.e., immensity and *Prapthi*, i.e., enjoyment through the sense of others, and also *Pmkamyam*, there are no particular cases to record. *Ishatvam*, the next item of the Ashta, i.e., exercise of power over all this includes "*Aparajaya apratihata ajnya*," "*yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*", *Aparajayam* means not being overcome; "*Apratihata ajnya*" means supremacy of orders, and *Yatha sankalpa Samsiddhih*, means the very thought becoming translated into fact and becoming effective.

Of these many hundreds of cases are recorded in Baba's Charters & Sayings and Devotees' Experiences. It is better to refer to these instances under the minor headings that we shall take up in succeeding paragraphs.

The seventh of the Ashta Mahasiddhis as given in Srimad Bhagavata is *Vashitwa* (i.e. non-attachment to sense objects, through self-control). This is a pronounced characteristic of Baba and may be easily understood by all as a saintly value. No one has pointed out even a single instance in which Baba was attached to any sense object. He told Nana, Jog etc., one day "prepare Pooran poli, *sanja* (kesari) etc." These were asked by Baba because these were considered delicacies and not because Baba had any liking for them or for Mangoes, Sitaphal, Guavas, etc. Baba was never a slave to sense attachment. As stated by him, his Guru Mourshed had taken him away from the *Dehatma Buddhi*, the delusion that a person is his body. Hence we can understand why there was no attachment in his case to sense objects.

The eighth siddhi which is the crown of all is stated in Srimad Bhagavata to be *Yat Kamah Tat Avapsyati* that is, the end of all desires. It may be interpreted negatively as the absence of all desires. But it is also interpreted positively as a state of *Parama Ananda*, i.e., the highest happiness described in the table of happiness, mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad.

The same terms are used in various books and by various people in different senses or suggesting shades of difference. These may cause some difficulty for a person who is anxious to have one definite sense always attached to every word. In the case of "Paramananda", or "Ramaswaminayudu", it is impossible for us to have a good grip of what is connoted unless we ourselves are in that state. As no writer, so far as we know, on these subjects has given us a definite description or definition of Paramananda, we shall take it that the highest conceivable happiness is included in this as the eighth of the Ashta Maha Siddhis which belong to Iswara according to Srimad Bhagavata 11 (35) 8. We may say a word or about that before proceeding to deal with other siddhis.

Sometimes people raise puzzling questions as to whether Baba is a *Gunatita*, a *Sthita Prajna*, a *Parama Jnani*, a *Parama bhakta*, etc., or whether he is in the absolute *kaivalya* stage. Without a grasp of the exact connotation of all those terms and a complete knowledge of Baba's state, it is impossible for one to give definite answers to these conundrums. Luckily for us, it is unnecessary to

furnish an answer to every question which may be raised. We might just note a fact or two about this Paramananda. This term was first used by a South African doctor, who first approached Sai Baba without full faith in him. Being conscious of his high Brahmin birth, he did not wish even to enter into Baba's Mosque or Dwarakamayee for fear of being polluted; but, contrary to his agreement with his Mamlatdar friend who took him there, he suddenly rushed into the Mosque and fell at Baba's feet and when asked for the reason, stated, 'This Baba is a *Yoga Sampoorna Avatar*. I am a Rama bhakta, having spent years with Rama bhakti but have had no Sakshatkar of Rama. And now for the first time I see Sri Rama with all his *chinh*as in the Mosque in the figure of Sai Baba. When I looked on Sai, I found he was Neelamegha Shyama Rama, my Ishta Devata, and hence I bowed to him.' He then made up his mind that as Baba was Rama and knew everything in his heart he would not go to the Mosque again till Baba should grant the highest desire of his heart, namely the perfect bliss of Satchidananda. Therefore for three days he abstained from going to the Mosque, though he was at Shirdi. On the last day an old chum of his came up and talking with him, he forgot all about his vow, and both together came and fell at the feet of Baba. Baba kindly asked him, 'Did any one send for you?' He felt ashamed' but seeing that Baba knew the secrets of his heart, hoped that Baba would grant his highest desire. And Baba did. During the succeeding days when he stayed at Shirdi, Baba filled him with the strange feeling of bliss which the South African doctor called "Paramananda", that is, a feeling of bliss not resulting from external or internal contact with any objects of the senses, but which filled the heart completely and gave it its highest satisfaction. This is our idea of Paramananda or Atmananda. The doctor was quite happy at having Paramananda or Atmananda with the help of Sai who to him was Rama being recognised by every real Hindu as God. If the question should be asked of that doctor whether Sai was a *Gunatita*, a *Parama Jnani*, or a *Parama Bhakta*, he would certainly answer that he was all these and more, namely, Satchidananda Himself.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. If a person could grant another Paramananda, he must have Paramananda in himself. That must be his nature.

Baba being perfectly free from desires, thoroughly self-controlled and ever dwelling upon God (Satchit Ananda) must certainly be soaked in Satchidananda. Therefore, of the eight divine 'Ashta Maha siddhis'. if the eighth is treated as sufficiently expressed by the word Taramananda\ Baba had it. There was ample proof of it to those who were capable of drawing that Ananda on to themselves. The above mentioned doctor called Baba VI *Yoga sampoorana Avatar*', because he could at will display the Rama form over himself and show that he was having Godhead, Satchidananda.

This yogic power of displaying any and every form will be referred to later on as one of the siddhis, namely, *Kamarupa*, though this is much inferior to Satchidananda, which is just now being discussed. About Ananda itself, others who have practised yoga and who live up to Satchidananda and are competent to talk about it, have described Baba as 'A Yoga sampoorana Avatar'¹ that is, one who had the fullness of the Satchidananda derived by yoga and that this Ananda came out from him at will.

Amongst the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, in the third chapter, the last verse of the Siddhi Chapter refers to *Kaivalyam*, the ultimate state of pure bliss. When they reach Atman or Brahman, Yogis are said to have the power of imparting what power they please to persons who come to them in a condition fit to receive the gift of bliss. G.S. Khaparde was a highly cultured Sanskrit scholar and had evidently read yoga sastra. He has referred to certain instances and experiences of his in his diary in the year 1911-12, while he stayed at Shirdi. Therein repeatedly he mentions that Baba cast Yogic glances at certain persons who were immediately filled with a wave of bliss, which overpowered all their other mental activities and kept them immersed in bliss for hours without break. Khaparde kept on for three hours or four hours enjoying such bliss after a yogic glance from Baba, and he has noted this in his diary. On some days, he says, 'Baba cast no yogic glance to-day'. This would imply that Baba himself was *Ananda sampoorana*, and could at will give a taste of that Ananda, a sort of foretaste at least (a Pisgah site of the Promised Land) to those who are competent to receive it. Others also have noted such a power in Baba.

The power to thoroughly grip one's entire mind has been set out already, and will be again set out amongst his siddhis. He had the power to completely black out some lines of thought, e.g., that of returning home from Upasani's mind for eight days after his first visit to Baba. This yogic power which blacks out completely unwanted thoughts would also evidently imply the power to give positive bliss to persons fit to receive it. If a person is comparatively free from sin and vice and could keep his mind sufficiently blank or sufficiently pure even for a while, any ordinary or sufficiently experienced hypnotist with a command of blissful thought could fill his mind with blissful thoughts over a considerable period, and Baba's yoga sampoorana state enabled him to keep several people in such happy state, as they themselves have recorded in their experiences. Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiva Tarkhad says that though she had physical pains in her body and mental worries all making life quite miserable, yet when she went and sat before Baba, that very moment she felt steeped in Lethe, and all her anxieties, pains, cares, physical and mental, vanished. Till her departure from Dwarakamayee, she was enjoying a happy state.

A similar record is made by Mr Jehangir, who is called in the 'Devotees¹ Experiences', a Blerk. This Jehangir, a Parsi, though not acquainted with the holy books that Mrs. Tarabai and Khaparde had read, and though he had no ideas on the subject of yoga, still enjoyed this state mentioned by Mrs. Tarabai. When he went to Baba, he had his miseries and anxieties about the difficulty of getting his sister married, and the difficulty of getting his insane brother cured. As he sat before Baba for hours, all these thoughts completely left him. He was in Lethe and bathed in Baba's aura, the sense of perfect safety, and the feeling of happiness overcame him. This has been recorded in his statement, and he says that even after Baba left the body, he appeared in his dreams, and he had the same experience. All these go to show that Baba's powers over the mentality of others, which may be included in his yoga sampath, were used by him to confer happiness of the highest sort known to us, namely, freedom from all anxieties and physical pains.

Thus far we have dealt with the Ashta Maha siddhis. Proceeding to deal next with the ten major and five minor siddhis recited in Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI, Chapter 15, stanzas 6 to 8, we shall take up *Anurmimatravam*.

Anurmimatravam means freedom from hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death, etc. Baba exercised various powers, and he had no delusions and sorrows so far as we know and never suffered from the pangs of thirst or hunger. As for old age and death this was inevitable in his physical existence, as also to Avatars like Rama and Krishna. In Srimad Bhagavata, Krishna is said to have been attacked by *jara* (old age) at the age of 125. and according to the well established law that all things that have a beginning must have an end, bodies which have had their commencement must have their end. and so death and decay being the end, are the necessary consequence of physical existence.

The next siddhis are *Durasravana darsanam*, ability to see or hear things at very great distances in spite of obstacles hiding the view, etc. This can be called, when exercised by petty human beings, clairvoyance. When exercised by Baba, these are the results of his laya in God to whom there was nothing like *dura* or distance or space limitation. At the same moment Baba could be at Bombay and also at Shirdi, and Machendragad and Jejuri. Therefore, there was no question of distances for him. It was not necessary for him to see or hear. Without seeing or hearing he had the power to know, for his nature was pure *Chit*; and his *Pratibha*, the power of illumination, unrestricted by the ordinary limitations that bind other men, enabled him to see or hear at the same time what went on at different places and make use of that knowledge for the benefit of his devotees.

For instance, when the son of Thakersay Sait, the master of Kaka Mahajani, was talking to him at Bombay about the necessity of Kaka Mahajani going straightaway to Shirdi to ask Baba for his advice whether the Sait should or should not continue at Nasik for his health, Kaka Mahajani replied that Dixit was at Shirdi, that he could be written to, and that he would get Baba's answer. The son's reply was that would not suffice, and that the Sait would be satisfied by

nothing short of Mahajani's personal questioning of Baba. Baba knew the whole of this talk and told Dixit at that time at Shirdi, 'What talk is going on there? What deliberation?' When the next day Mahajani came, Baba informed Dixit that he was referring to this particular visit of Mahajani when he made his remarks the previous day. Dixit and Mahajani compared notes and found how Baba could simultaneously see and hear what went on at Bombay and Shirdi. So, this is referred to as a case of *Durasravana darsanam*. But as stated already, it is hardly worthwhile to try and classify Baba's powers under the heading we find in books like one mentioned above, or the Mantra Sastras. Baba is one vast mass of power, and, therefore, there is no use in analysing further. Still as there may be persons not convinced of the uselessness of such classification, we shall give some more instances of Baba's exercise of powers and see whether they can be brought under any of the headings mentioned in the above stanzas.

Leaving *Manojava* aside, we shall proceed to *Kamarupam*, that is, taking on any form or body, and also *Apratihata gati*, that is ability to go anywhere and ability to assume any form that one wants. Baba had undoubtedly all these powers. Baba appeared before Nachne's brother in the hospital in one form, at his house in another form, and at Shirdi, when Nachne saw him first, in a third form. Yet, Baba at Shirdi said, 'I went to this man's house. He did not give me *Eendibaji*'. That convinced Nachne that though the rupa or form that he saw at his house on the occasion of his brother's medical operation was different from Sai Baba's Shirdi rupa or form, it was still his. *kamarupa*, a form assumed by Baba at will. Similarly Baba assumed various other forms with various other people. Balakrishna Upasani states in his experience that at the Tapovan near Haridwar, he met a Sadhu who showed his rinanubandha with his family and used certain Hindustani phrases, meaning that there were two persons on the same tree or branch, one went up and the other came down. Baba, when he (Balakrishna Sastri) met him at Shirdi, used the same phrases to remind him of his identity with the Tapovan Sadhu. Thus, Balakrishna Sastri who found that the figure of the two was *the same, though the dress was different*, concluded that

Baba, who said never to have left Shirdi to go to Tapovan, could assume *Kamarupa*, that is, any shape in any place.

There are other occasions also in which Baba took up forms, suiting the occasion. The best instance, perhaps, of this taking up a form was that which is mentioned by himself, on the occasion of B.V. Dev's udyapana dinner, samaradhana, which he got up, after finishing a study. Dev had written to Shama and invited Baba for the dinner to be held at his place. Baba agreed. Later, not finding Baba at the dinner, he wrote to Shama complaining of Baba's breach of promise. When the letter came, even before it was read, Baba exclaimed, 'What! He complains that I did not go and attend the dinner? Tell him that I did come along with two others, and that I told him that I came not for money but only for the dinner'. Then Dev remembered how a Sanyasi with two sishyas attended his dinner, and how he had said exactly the same thing and realised that Baba had appeared in the form of that Sanyasi to partake of his dinner.

These will suffice for the present to show that Baba could take *Kamarupa*. In fact, his visiting Mrs. T's house at Bandra to take the naivedya in *laghima* form or *Anitna* form, entering into the puja room to taste the naivedya. is another instance of *kamarupa*.

Amongst the 10 powers noted next in Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, Chapter XV, the 6th is *Parakaya pravesanam*, i.e., actually entering into the bodies, living or dead, of other creatures. We have no information of this power being exercised by Baba, and that may be due to the fact that there was no necessity for Baba to enter into others' bodies. As he declared, he was not the mere body called 'Sai', but the *Antaryami*, the innermost soul of every creature, especially of his bhaktas. As stated in Sainatha Manana,

Ahamatma his chandorkar, sarabhutascaya stitah,

Pipilikamukhena aaddmi, makshikasya mukhenacha.

which means, 'O, Chandorkar! I am the Atman or Antaryami residing in the heart of all creatures. I eat through the mouth of the ant that eats and the fly that eats'. Sai Baba is the Antaryami of all. To teach Chandorkar this, Baba once asked Chandorkar to bring 'polis' as Naivedya. When "polis" were brought to Baba, and

placed before him, flies and ants settled on the "polis". Baba then said that he had eaten the polis and that Chandorkar might remove the plates. Chandorkar could not believe that Baba had eaten the naivedya, because the polis kept on the plate before Baba were not even touched by Baba. Baba declared that he was the Antaryami of ants and flies that settled on the polis, and he had taken the polis as ants and flies. This statement appeared to Chandorkar as something out of scriptural text or a philosophical doctrine, and not an actual fact. Nana Chandorkar asked Baba, therefore, to enable him (Chandorkar) to perceive Baba's *Antaryamitva*. And Baba raised his hands and made some gestures, which revealed to Chandorkar that Baba knew the innermost secrets of Chandorkar's heart, and therefore, must be his Antaryami, and consequently the Antaryami of every creature in the Universe. It is this same Antaryamitva that Baba was meaning, when he said that Hansraj had beaten him, when he went as a cat to drink away his curds in order to save Hansraj from his disease, Asthma, (for which Baba had asked him not to take curds). Baba showed a weal on his shoulder corresponding to the stroke on the cat's shoulder by Hansraj. This must also be the meaning when Baba said that he went on the first day as a sickly Sudra to Khandoba temple seeking food from Upasani Maharaj who, however, did not give food but drove away both. Upasani Maharaj asked Baba whether he could be a sickly Sudra. Baba's answer was that he was in *all these and beyond*, a statement reminiscent of Purusha Sukta, *Sa bhumim viscvato avrutva, atyatishtat dascangulam*. That is, 'He the Supreme (God) premeates the Universe and stands beyond by 10 inches'. This refers to God's *immanence* in and *transcendence* of the Universe.

That must therefore be the meaning of Baba who said, '*Maim Allahum, I am God*'.

The seventh item in the list of 10 siddhis is *Swachanda Mrityu*, i.e. power to depart from the world and one's mortal body at will. In 1886, Baba exercised this power and left the body. For three days, his body lay as a corpse as proved by a judicial document (the inquest report). Thereafter, like Sankaracharya, he returned to the body and lived for 32 years, i.e. upto 1918, which power to return

may be included in the 9th or 10th of the above list of siddhis. The 9th is called *yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*, i.e., achievement of everything at one's will.

The 10th item is *Aajna Apratihata Gatih*, i.e., having one's command carried out everywhere without fail. Almost ever)' one of Baba's mystic achievements, which does not come under any other heading, may be brought under these two. Baba himself said when he saved Balwant Khaparde from plague, 'My orders are supreme'. Similarly, he said to Nandram Marwadi in 1917 that he would not be allowed to die. BCS clearly shows Baba's sankalpa or will was supreme. Also when the danger of (B.C. & S.I-3) being killed by a cobra was awaiting Buty or Mirikar, Baba said, 'Strike, let me see how you can strike and kill!'. Baba's will was supreme notwithstanding all the '*ganda*' astrologers could read from his horoscope, notwithstanding all the cobras that approached the devotees (the children of Dwarakamayee).

Taking up the final list of 5 minor siddhis, the first is said to be "*Traikalika Jnana*" knowledge of the past, present, and future, and the third is *Parachithabhijnata* i.e., knowing the contents of other people's minds in which the past and present are sure to be included. This power of reading thought from others' minds has become very common, and many persons are able now to exercise this power to a smaller or greater extent.

The further power not merely to note the contents of somebody's mind but to note the state of things at any particular place at the present time or at any previous time, which is called the power of "*clairvoyance*," is also to be found widely prevalent though not to the extent that thought-reading is prevalent. That may be the reason why these siddhis are assigned a lower position in *Srimad Bhagavata* and included in a minor list. Any person with a sufficient degree of calmness getting into a trance intentionally or unintentionally not infrequently discovers that he has a capacity to reflect, like a mirror, the minds of other persons and not infrequently the state of things in any particular place at that particular time or at previous times. So many persons calling themselves 'thought readers', "astrologers", "mantravadis", and "nadi yogis", make use of this knowledge and not infrequently they read into their nadi granthams what they

have recently discovered about the past or present. In the Madras City, for instance, there appear to be numerous persons with Nadi Granthams now. These facts show that very probably these faculties may develop in man more and more till they become a common accomplishment with the coming race. At present the performances of these have defects, and they are mostly failures when they venture into the future and try to foresee coming things. Sometimes people are tempted to compare these performers with great saints like Sri Sai Baba, who have *Trikalajnatva* and *parachittadabhijnata*. But this is like comparing fireflies or glowworms with the SUN.

The best performer that has exhibited these powers in recent times under these headings to Sai bhaktas is found to be very petty, very weak, very low and limited when compared to Sai. If they dare to compare themselves with Sai, one feels that one should address them thus, '*Jyoti Rinkana Na Kirn nu manyase, Yat tvam eva timireshu lakshyase*'. This means, 'O, glow worm, do you not know that your light in darkness serves merely to show where you are? Can man make use of its light?' One thing with these professional practitioners or incipient sadhus is that they make an effort to get into a trance, and while in the state of trance and only then they can reveal the past or present, or know of things, and that too, to a very limited extent. While they are in their trance, their normal consciousness cannot work and after some time the trance ends and their normal consciousness resumes its sway, and in their normal consciousness, they can exercise no power.

In the case of Sri Sai Baba, his *Trikalajnatva* and *parachita-abhijnata* were there all the time when he was normally conscious and required no effort, and the extent to which he could see and know was unlimited. It was not merely the minds of persons present that he knew, it was also of persons, thousands of miles away. It was not only places near him that he could view with clairvoyant powers; he could see things hundreds of miles away. What is more, he can appear there with material form and also do things necessary for the benefit of devotees there, such as, applying udhi to Babalkar's son and assuring Babalkar himself that the boy would recover in the morning, and should be brought over to

Shirdi later, and then to disappear at will. He could also reveal the past 2000 or 10,000 years back and reveal the future that is to operate fifteen years later.

These powers of *Tirodana* or *Avirbhava*, i.e., disappearance or appearance, referred to in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra are stated by Patanjali to be the ordinary result of adoption of a certain procedure, though, of course, in Sutra 50, Patanjali states that *Samyama* or concentration on the *Purusha* (with a difference) will give one any power he wants, i.e., omnipotence and any knowledge he wants, omniscience.

This is practically the same as *yatha sankalpa samsiddhih* and *Trikalajnatva*. For knowledge in the phenomenal world is knowledge always of things or events at some time, past, present or future, and at some place, near or remote. Therefore, *Trikalajnatvam* (Verse 8) for practical purposes would be the same as Omniscience and *Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhih* and '*Ajna apratihatahati*' in verse 7 of Chapter XV of Bhagavata, would be the same as omnipotence practically.

The third of the minor powers is what is known as *Sthambana* in mantric books and what verse 8 describes as, *Agni arka ambu vishaadinam pratishthambhah*. This means, arresting the force of (1) fire, (2) the Sun (3) water, (4) Visha (poison), etc. Baba's wide exercise of powers has included many cases that can be brought under each of these heads. He specifically ordered the flames of the dhuni within Dwarakamayee which once shot up so high as almost to catch up and burn the rafters above to come down. He then took his little stick and struck a pillar near the fire uttering the words, '*Sabur, Sabur - Hat Mage, Hat Mage*', that is, 'Moderate yourself, get back, get back'. The fire within a very short time moderated itself and got back, There was no further danger to the building. This can be brought under the minor head or under the above words of verse 7, *Yathasankalpa Samsiddhih • Ajna apratihata gatih*. He ordered Agni (fire) and the winds that were fiercely blowing not to spread the fire from Kondaji's stack of hay to the neighbouring stack in the village hay yard. And nothing but Kondaji stack was burnt.

The following is a very interesting incident of *arkasthambhan*. On a hot summer noon, the atmospheric heat became unbearable, and as soon as puja arti was over, the devotees left the Dwarakamayee, where the puja was done and only 3 or 4 were left behind. Baba told them to remain and sit near the fire. Within a very short time, a cool breeze was felt to be blowing where the men sat. This is the *Sthambanam* of, (*agni, arka, vayu*) Sun, Fire and also Vayu included in *aadhinaam*, i.e. etc".

As for control of water, water might be in the cloud as rain or in a vessel, and Baba controlled both these. Once when Megha was to take only a little of Godavari water brought by him in a pot all the way from Godavari for Baba's bath and to sprinkle just a few drops on the head, as the chief organ of the body, Megha in his over-enthusiasm turned down the whole of the pot on the head of Baba. But wonder of wonders, the water wetted his head only and fell on the ground without touching his clothes or body. This is *jala sthambanam*.

When M.W. Pradhan wished to start from Shirdi, the sky was cloudy, and it was drizzling. There was a downpour near Shirdi and on the Shirdi Kopergaon road the streamlets on the roads were sure to be filled with flood water and prevent the passage of tongas. When Pradhan feared that Baba would consequently not give him permission to start, Baba uttered the following words, '*Allah! barsati pura kar, Mere bache garko jane wallai hai, Vsko sukse janede*'. This means, 'O, God. Stop the rain. My children wish to go home. Allow them to go home safely and easily'. Accordingly in a very short time the rains stopped and Pradhan and party to whom permission was given to go to Kopergaon on their way to Bombay, had no difficulty. This is obviously *sthambanam* of a storm-wind and rain put together. On another occasion a fierce storm with thunder and rain filled the Shirdi lanes with water and the villagers ran to Baba to pray for safety. Baba spoke fierce words and bade the storm cease. In a few minutes, it ceased.

About arresting poison, there are numerous cases when Baba arrested the poison of snakes and scorpions. Even now his udhi is used effectively in the case of scorpion and other poison. But the following is a striking instance of

Visha Sthambana. Shama was bitten by a snake of the venomous class (which is in plenty at Shirdi). He was advised to go to Biroba's temple as was the usual custom in those parts to get rid of the poison. Biroba and all Gods to him were in Sri Sai, and so he came up to the Mosque. But as he approached the three steps leading up to the Dwarakamayee, Baba in a furious tone threatened and swore and uttered the following words in Hidustani:- '*Brahminvar Mat Aav, hat mage, hat mage*'. This meant 'Do not get up Brahmin, get down'. The furious face of Baba made Shama think at first that these words were addressed to him and that Baba meant that he should not get up the Dwarakamayee and that he should go back to his house. He was shocked and perplexed at being so treated by his only resource and Palladium, His God, Deva Sai. But in a minute Baba calmed down and said, 'Come up. That fakir (God) is kind. You will be cured'. Baba then told Shama's companions, Tatyā and others, to take him home and see that he was kept awake and moving and not allowed to go to sleep for 24 hours. On their following that advice, the poison was arrested, and Shama was cured. The words in the above sentence were addressed to the poison, and it was the poison that was not to go up the Brahmin, but to get down, (*brahminvar-mat Aav, hat mage*).

Under the heading *Sthamban* sub item (5) above referred to, any number of cases may be cited, but we shall just refer to the following and stop.

'*Lagudo Uddhrita Rohilla Sthambhanath dharpanasakah*' mentioned in Sai Sahasranama refers to the following facts. A hefty, and strong fanatic whom people at Shirdi called Rohilla (Muslim Jat of Rohilkand) was reciting *Kalam* at nights before Baba's Masjid and carrying on other orthodox Muslim practices. He was greatly puzzled about Baba. On the one hand, Baba's vast knowledge and power made him think that Baba was Parvadhigar, God on Earth. But Baba's permitting himself to be worshipped at the Mosque to the accompaniment of the noisy drums, pipes, and the recital of Mantras, and his acceptance of offerings made to Vittal, Datta, and other Gods, whom orthodox Muslims regarded as Satan, this Rohilla thought to be opposed to Islam. He felt shocked by Baba's saying that all these i.e. Vittal, Datta, etc., were all Allah. In accordance with the

Islamic traditions that the destroyer of Religion should be destroyed, he determined to kill Baba who was in his view destroying Islamic religion by such irreligious practices. Therefore, one day he came behind Baba with uplifted club in his hand and determined to end with a single stroke Baba and all his heterodoxy. Baba, who, of course, knew everything, knew this man's mind and power also. Baba suddenly turned and faced this Rohilla, and fixing him with a glance, touched his left wrist (the right one was held aloft with the cudgel). The effect was immediate. The man lost all power to hold his cudgel or stand. He fell down all of a heap. Baba left him there and went away. For several minutes the Rohilla lay there. When asked to get up by others he declared that Baba had robbed him of all his powers. So he had to be lifted up. This was an excellent instance of *Sthambanam* or *Pratistamba* mentioned above.

Instances of sthambana may take various shapes. When boys from Bombay tried to take a photograph of Baba, they found that the photo showed only his feet and not his body.

Perhaps the prevention of Upasani Baba for the seven or eight days after his first visit from thinking of going home and making him return on the eighth day, (though he had declared that was impossible) might be treated as a case of *sthambana* coupled with *Akarshana* and *Mohana*, which are minor siddhis mentioned in the Mantra Sastra.

The above classification has followed Srimad Bhagavata. But many of our readers would probably be familiar with the miracles of Jesus and would like to see how Sai's miracles are to be viewed in the light of Jesus's sayings about miracles and his performing them.

One common feature of both Sai's and Jesus' lives is that people always had to be convinced of the divine nature of the two only through the miracles they performed. Miracles are a concession that divinity allows for human blindness. When Jesus said to Nilko... 'I saw you under the fig tree before Thomas talked to you there,' the conclusion was at once drawn by the addressee, 'Surely thou art the Son of God'. Jesus said that he would see more wonderful things indicative of divine power. Again when Jesus cured a person stricken with palsy and unable to

rise from his bed, saying 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk', and the man with palsy rose up and walked, the conclusion was drawn that the miracle was a token of Jesus's divinity as also when Jesus cured a man of leprosy.

Some reader might desire to know whether similar incidents happened in Sai's history. First about palsy, a Marwadi had a young daughter of eight years or so with palsied legs. She could not walk to Baba, and therefore had to be carried in a chair, palki or stretcher. She remained with Baba for three days. Suddenly her legs which she could not bend at all till then were stretched out and the second day she could stand. Thereafter, before she left Shirdi on the third day she could walk back. No application, medical or surgical, was made to her. This cure was purely by Baba's will power with his blessings offered with udhi applied to her. Again there was a patient who was suffering for years from inflammation of ulcer in his stomach or bowels, and he could not eat any food. He was brought to Baba. Baba ordered sweetmeats to be purchased and brought and placed before the patient. Strange to say, the man was able to eat them.

Bagoji who was suffering from *leprosy*, was allowed by Baba to shampoo his leg. People were afraid that Baba would be infected by his leprosy. On the other hand, Bagoji's advanced leprosy left him with only scars and marks. In the presence of both Sai and Jesus, evil spirits, obsessions (*abhicharas*) were terror-stricken. The devils said that Baba would beat them. Persons like Mrs. Tipnis, Mrs. Mantri, etc., overcame their spirit obsessions purely by Baba's blessings. In all these cases it was pure divine blessings that operated, while we see in Kusa Bhav's statement that he could overcome these evil spirits with yantras, mantras, tantras, etc., the process known to Mantra Sastra as *Uchchatana*.

Proceeding to *Aparajaya*, the 5th of the minor siddhis, mentioned in the said verse, any one reading Baba's Charters would note how his powers are supreme, not only in his curing Balwant Khaparde of .plague but also in so many other cases.

In Srimad Bhagavata itself, after mentioning 23 powers, verse 9 of Chapter XV says, "what is there impossible for one who has perfectly surrendered and got absorbed in God?" Baba's powers are innumerable; we have

here given only a brief outline. Any student of Sai's life and leelas can learn about his other leelas in detail.

Therefore it is hardly necessary to further lengthen this already long chapter; and we shall close it by saying that Sainath was a *Yoga Sampoorna Avatar* (as the South African doctor declared) and a *Samartha Sadguru* and that when he is pleased he draws all of us to him, not merely by his ancient leelas but also by his recent leelas such as those at Ramachandrapuram, Thotapalli Hills, Shanti Ashram and Ahmedabad. We should no longer ignore this splendid opportunity and the splendid messages, especially that which was addressed to this very author through the Ahmadabad wakil for the purpose of this book itself in the following words, 'Write and tell him Narasimhaswamji that / *am always looking after my devotees*'.