

Writer's Own Experiences

Live Experiences of the Tarkhad Family with Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi

I am sure that after reading these priceless experiences of my father, you may be inclined to think that I might have also gathered some experience of my own. Well once I narrated one of these experience to a lady devotee. She told me that I might not have come across that kind of rich library of spiritual experiences like my father, but as I have taken birth through such "Punyatma", I must have inherited an iota of "Punya" from him, and hence must have come across some experience certainly worthy enough of narrating to all Sai devotees of the present era. This way I can also distribute part of that "Punya" to all of them. This response of that lady devotee gave me a jolt and I decided that, however small & silly it may be from my point of view, I should be disclosing to you all whatever I have encountered so far. In this way I can express my "Sai Preeti" and a token of Saiservice from my side.

My full name is Virendra Jyotindra Tarkhad. There is a small story behind our names. It goes this way. My great grand father had named all his sons in such a way that their first name ends with letter "DRA". The originator to this theory was none other than the Nobel Laureate late Shri RabindranathTogore. It so happened that before proceeding to U.K. he had stayed with my great grandfather in his Choupaty Bungalow. This was with a purpose to acquaint him with English etiquette, as the Tarkhad family was well known for that at that time. Late Rabindranath was very fond of Astrology and he had done deep,study of the subject. He prepared the 'Kundali' (Horoscope) of my great grandfather and concluded that the Tarkhad's are originated from Lord Indra and hence they must identify (the men folk) themselves by that name. He impressed upon my great grandfather to therefore name his sons accordingly. My great grandfather must have been convinced and he named his sons as Ramchandra (my grandfather) Dnyanendra etc. My grandfather entrusted names of his two sons as Satyendra and Jyotindra (my father). Further Jyotindra named his sons as Ravindra (my elder brother) and Virendra (myself). Ravindra had named his son as Devendra and I have named my son as Mahendra.

Offcourse from my childhood I am attending the Aarti of Sai Baba in our house on every Thursday evening and this ritual is continuing till date. Fortunately my wife also happens to be a Sai devotee. She has been visiting Shirdi ever since she was a 5-year-old child. I visited Shirdi for the first time when I was 18 year old and that too along with my two friends Amar Bhagtani and Shashi Bhatia. After marriage I started staying in my mother-in-laws flat. My wife had lost her father when she was 5 years old and they were two ladies who needed the presence of a man. As my mother-in-law and my wife both were Sai Devotees there was no interruption in my 'Sai Sanskars' in fact they grew higher and higher.

Guru Poornima in Shirdi

I started attending the 'Gurupoornima Utsav' at Shirdi along with my mother-in-law and to the best of my knowledge I attended 18 'Gurupoornima Utsavs' consecutively. You all must be aware that Gurupoornima Utsav is of three days duration and one of the items is continuous reading start to finish of 'Sai Satcharitra' 'Akhanda Parayan' as it is called. Sai devotees have

to give their names and then through a kid 54 names are randomly picked up who have to read the chapters of 'Sai Satcharitra' in front of Baba's Portrait in Dwarkamai. On one such Poornima Utsav I also gave my name and number 9 was allocated to me. This meant that I had to read chapter 9, which described love & devotion of Tarkhad family towards Sai. Believe me that it was a great pleasure. After I read the chapter in Dwarkamai I received in return a coconut and a photo of Lord Sai as Prasad. This photo was laminated, framed and placed in our house for regular Pooja. Till date every morning when I am out of my bed I stand in front of this photo and do "Namaskar" and pray to Lord Sai saying HECHI DANA DEGA DEVA TUZHA VEESERA NA VHAVA"(Oh Lord grant me only this wish that I should never forget you).

Creation of Vijyot

Dear readers I am of the opinion that each one of us carries within him/her a strong desire. My father would remind us that he was also a wealthy man with a bungalow, a car and a store room filled with all kinds of eatables filled in China clay pots. Of course at a later stage of his life all this had gone away. I was his last child. So obviously I carried a strong desire God willing I would strive to get back that lost wealth in my own way. Of course to own a bungalow in Mumbai was an impossible task. My wife was also brought up in a bungalow at Khar. So there was a joint desire to have a bungalow of our own whereby at least in our old age time could be spent in comfort. Then in the year 1991 we purchased a N.A plot admeasuring 6 Gunthas (726 Sq. Yards.) at Vangaon. (Railway station on western railway 100Kms away from Mumbai). I was able to get a loan from my company and by 1993 we were able to construct our bungalow at Vangaon. We named it as "VIJYOT". Way back in 1960 when I had visited Poona, a school friend of mine had shown me a bungalow called "LAKAKI". It was the bungalow belonging to famous Industrialist, LAXmanrao KAKasaheb Kirloskar. You will know the secret behind that name by picking up the first letters from his name i.e. LA—KA—KL We were required to sell our bungalow at Khar due to financial constraints in the year 1959. On seeing Lakaki, the only thought that came to my 16 year old mind then that, if ever I build my bungalow, I would name it as VIJYOT.

Sai Prasad from Aba Panshikar

Of course the real things lies ahead. When we made the blueprint of our bungalow we decided to have a small marble Mandir for Pooja and meditation purpose. The Mandir was ready and we had a strong desire of placing a life-size color photograph of Sai Baba in it. We tried very hard but were unable to get one. It was the month of April 1993. Mumbai had witnessed tragic bomb blasts in the month of March and all people were scared to talk to any stranger. One day an unknown person rang our doorbell late in the evening. My wife attended the door, when one stranger was insisting that he wanted to see me in particular. He was unable to say my name so my wife was rather doubtful about his identity. Then I intervened and he recognized me. He recalled that we had met in Lendi Baug in Shirdi and that I had narrated the experience of Baba to him. Well I was then clear, he was one social worker from Sai Mandir Pune and I allowed him into our house. As it was our dinner time we offered him dinner and he obliged. During our discussion I told him about our desire of a colored photograph of Sai Baba. He instantly replied that the life-size portrait we will have to get it painted from an artist on the canvass and if we are looking for a color photograph, then only Mr. Aba Panshikar can help us. He had telephone number of Mr.Prabhakar Panshikar a well-known stage artist of Marathi Theatre and younger brother of Mr. Aba Panshikar. I then telephoned him and obtained the telephone Number of Mr.Aba Panshikar in London and gave

him the call. On hearing my request for a color photograph he only replied that, in the month of May he would be in Mumbai and I can get in touch with him at his brother's place in Prabhadevi. So I waited till May and got his appointment for one Saturday evening. We all went i.e. my wife Kunda, my daughter Sujal and my son Mahendra. on 22nd May 1993. I had no idea about him at all and a gentleman in Saffron color robe, wearing a "Rudraksha" Mala had appeared in front of us. Mr. Aba Panshikar introduced himself and I offered my "Namaskar" to him with folded hands and gave him the introduction of my family. He rather scolded me saying that how come we are with empty hands and not having any Garland and Pedhas (a type of sweet) etc. I was rather surprised because he had never told me that he had brought the photograph for us. I anyway pleaded guilty and rushed to Siddhivinayaka Temple area and purchased a garland of flowers and some Pedhas. He then went inside and brought along with him an elephant size drawing storing box. He opened it and removed the drawing paper roll. He unrolled the same and there was Our SAI in front of us sitting on his famous Throne and giving his eternal smile to us. As advised by him, I garlanded the colored photograph printed on 1mm. thick Kodak paper and distributed Pedhas to all. Mr. Aba then wrote a message on it stating "To Virendra, Kunda, Sujal and Mahendra, Sai Prasad from Aba Panshikar" and signed at the bottom. He then said, "Please take your Treasure". Believe me readers that was the, golden moment of my life. I was speechless and did not know what to do. Undoubtedly it was a priceless treasure for me. I took out Rs.1001/- from my pouch and offered him but he refused to accept. He said, he does not sell photographs of Baba. Then I told him to accept as donation to his Sai Temple in London. Reluctantly, he agreed but did not take money in hand and told me to place the same on the table. He then inquired with us about our background. I then told him the connection my father had with Sai Baba. On hearing me, he literally embraced me and said he had received the greatest pleasure of his life that day. He was emotional and went inside and brought two one Rupee coins and gave it to me. I took them and prostrated before him and said, "Now I am in receipt of real Prasad of Baba". He requested for the explanation. I stated that "These two coins denote the Universal message of Baba i.e. "Shraddha" and "Saburi" which he emanated to the whole world during his life-time. Aba was overwhelmed with my explanation and tears of joy rolled from his eyes and he went on to declare that he had met the true Sai devotee that day and gave a bear hug to me.

Then Aba narrated his own story to us. His father was a chief priest of Ganapati Mandir in Girgaum and when he was 8 years old one Muslim Fakir came in their compound and offered a Sai Baba photo to him. Aba replied to that Fakir that he is the son of a Brahmin and is not permitted to keep a photo of a Muslim Baba in his house. The Fakir told him that "BETE AB TU ISE MAT LE PER TERI KISMATME LIKHAHAI KI TU ISKI ZINDAGIBHAR SEVA KAREGA AUR ISKE PHOTO LOGONKO BATA KAREGA." (My son you may not accept this photo now but I can read your destiny that you will be serving him through out your life and will distribute his photographs to the people). The predictions of the Fakir were cent percent true and Aba Panshikar was in the service of Sai Baba till his end. I request your pardon that; I should have termed him as Late Aba Panshikar as he is no more with us.

Subsequently I organized to laminate the Precious photograph and made a good wooden frame for it. On Guru Poornima day in the Year 1993 we consecrated the same in our small Sai Mandir in our bungalow "Vijyot" at Vangaon. Ever since then we celebrate our Guru Poornima over there in a simple and homely way.

So this is a small self-experience of mine. I do visit Shirdi whenever I have a desire. I am a retired person now and with Sai's grace living a comfortable life. We now only pray to Baba that both our children should also get their life-partners who are Sai devotee's in-order to maintain the continuity of love and devotion of the Tarkhad family towards Lord Sai.

Lastly I request all Sai devotees never to forget the two Maha Mantras given to us by Sai Baba i.e. "Shradha" and "Saburi" which means faith and patience and if one truly abide by these two Mantras Baba grants your wishes without fail. I would now like to end this book with my endless bows and the following apt salutation to our ever-loving SAIBABA

"ANANTAKOTI BRAHMANDANAYAKA RAJADHIRAJ YOGIRAJ

PARABRHAMA

SHRI SATCHIDANANDA SATGURU SAINATH MAHARAJ KI JAI

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