



SAI PROMISES
UNDERSTANDING SAI BABA'S ELEVEN ASSURANCES



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Mandrake Publications



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First Edition - 2021

Copyright @ Sumeet Ponda 2021

ISBN : 978-93-90540-36-5

Book Composed by : Anant Book Design

Cover Designed by : inker.com

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FOREWORD

*Sai alone is our prosperity;
Sai is our total consciousness of Bliss.
He alone is our lasting detachment from
worldly afflictions. And our ultimate refuge
is none but Shri Sai!*

(Ovi 197, Chapter 2 Sree Sai Satcharitra)

A rare privilege and honour for a humble blogger and writer to sketch the foreword of a book penned by the well-known Shri Sumeet Ponda, fondly known as 'Bhaijee'. I became acquainted with him when on a fateful day in late 2015 my number was added to a Sai WhatsApp group named **Shree Sai Amrit Katha**. A spontaneous reaction was bewilderment and if I may admit mild anxiety, since it was with much coercion of my then colleagues that I downloaded WhatsApp, in the first place. Despite reservations, for reasons unknown to me, I did not exit this group or delete it, giving it a few days of 'test-time'. After all it was a Sai group! What could possibly go wrong? I surprised my own otherwise sceptical self with the decision



of staying put. A few days of observation made me realise that the group posts were educating me more and more about Sai. Sai pictures and messages, Sai bhakti and devotion were the essence of the group. Incredibly helpful in enhancing my spiritual progress. I continued. Gradually, the group drew me so much that after finishing college (where I then taught) I waited to get back home so I could scroll through the meaningful messages. 😊

My first understanding of *Bhaijee* was that he is a rather strict man, for should anyone post anything other than Sai or break the norms of the group, after a stern warning, she/he was removed from the group. Such was the first introduction to Shri Sumeet Ponda or *Bhaijee*. My thoughts have changed, and I have come to understand him as a Sai bhakt steeped in Baba's bhakti doing much to spread Sai teachings. It might surprise you to know that *Bhaijee* and I, have yet to meet in person. Sai *Ichchha*!

The book **Sai Promises**, understanding Sai Baba's 11 assurances, incorporates *Bhaijee's* thoughts and views about Baba's 11 assurances given to devotees for all times to come. These Sai promises were not made in a sequence or on a single occasion but conveyed through parables and occurrences. The promises are indicative of Baba's eternal, infinite presence, beyond time, space and matter. At the face, they seem simple words which guarantee the Sai devotees wish fulfilment, removal of



obstacles from life and consequent happiness leading to bliss.

However, Sai words have immense depth. They cannot be skim read. This would amount to superficial understanding, a mere brush with surface of Sai wisdom without reaching the profound core. Baba's words are an ocean of meaning and open to interpretation. To fully understand Baba, we need to ponder on His utterances. A devotee who swims the surface is unable to do justice to Baba's teachings, the learning He wanted to drive home. Sai hoped His devotees would realise, understand, accept and adopt certain spirituality modes. And that is possible only through contemplation. By reflecting on every word, *bhakts* come to gauge their true intensity. This might take time, Sai time.

Interestingly, perception of Baba's words varies with individual thought, experience, ability, aptitude and comprehension, resulting in different interpretations. Yet each step forward in understanding brings the devotee closer to peace and love, nudges him closer to Sai.

Shri Ponda is amongst those rare individuals who has spent weeks, and months musing over Baba's promises and with His grace arrived at stunning revelations about Baba's promises. For instance, his understanding that as time passes, we tend to move further and further away from the timeline of



existence, is unique. This increasing distance makes it difficult for the saints, who eagerly await devotees and yearn to hear their voices, to hear them. Since *bhakts* are barely audible, response to prayers becomes difficult. The reason for this growing distance is not just the time lapse but also the fact that as time goes by, humans tend to lose sight of Truth! And as we all know untruths keep Gods and saints, the divine and the good at bay. This captivating interpretation comes from the inspired author, *Bhaijee*.

There is little to write home about me, an unknown entity, once a teacher, now a small time writer and blogger, but immense Sai work undertaken and accomplished by *Bhaijee's* presents tremendous scope of writing about him. One of his mediums is discourses, which he calls **Shree Sai Amrit Katha**. These in person sessions are organised in different cities across India and are held online as well. A dedicated Facebook page and Youtube channel take forward the work of educating thousands of devotees and those newbie fence sitters who begin to understand better and are set on the path of spirituality. Sai teachings are spread across the globe through these channels.

Shri Sumeet Ponda ji is Baba's medium. He blogs. He shares Baba's stories. He links them with everyday living. He presents the **Satcharitra** in a simple form, ensuring thousands who are unable to read Sai stories, to hear and benefit. His mission has been to propagate



Baba's loving, spiritually uplifting words amongst as many people as he can, through regular discourses. That Baba speaks through him, making the river of knowledge flow, is a well-established fact. Taking an extract or an episode out of ***Shree Sai Satcharitra***, *Bhaijee* explains, linking to the current context, citing experiential examples. He mesmerizes with *bhajans* sung in his tranquil, baritone voice. It was in 2014 that the first ***Shree Sai Amrit Katha*** session was held in his native city, Bhopal. Sai Himself blessed this session. There has been no looking back ever since.

Bhaijee resides in Bhopal, where he meets his worldly obligations as the Chairman of the Red Rose Group. The Red Rose Group imparts quality education to thousands of students via the institutions- Red Rose School, and M K Ponda College of Business and Management. Several awards for contribution in the field of Education, adorn his office yet *Bhaijee* remains unaffected by worldly honour and has instead opted to dedicate himself to the service of Sai Baba.

Everything happens in Sai time. Baba connected me with *Bhaijee*. Sai inspired *Bhaijee* to record what the 11 Vachans (promises) signify to him. *Bhaijee* penned 10, the eleventh taking close to a year to take shape and be inked. Sai time! *Bhaijee* connected with me providing a wonderful opportunity for Sai *sewa*-translation of his writings. Baba's 11 Assurances with their interpretation have been written. The writer



is Shri Sumeet Ponda, one of the rare few capable of doing justice to understanding Baba's teachings and sharing with the world.

Sai Baba's Eleven Promises, the assurances he gave when he was in the visible Form in *Shirdi* motivate, inspire and encourage devotees to take the not so easy spiritual path. Much joy and contentment come with the acceptance of these words. The sacred words give courage, faith and strength to devotees to take the spiritual path which leads to Sai Himself at the end of which Sai waits with outstretched hands ready to embrace *bhakts* with open arms.

It is human nature to hope and expect; and after hoping to await a positive outcome of prayers. Wish fulfilment expectation is a very human thing! Should this not happen, disillusionment sets in and it is not unlikely to stray from the path Sai indicates. Why so? We are like little children who continually need positive reinforcement just so that we show greater enthusiasm, involvement and zeal towards a task. Come a small hurdle, we feel disconcerted. At this juncture, Baba steps in. His 11 reassurances guarantee returns, and don't we thrive on the concept of good returns! 😊 How much we revel in the glory of receiving something good, something more, in excess! Caution! That is the superficial level! We're surface swimming if material successes bring us joy. Mind you this happiness is mostly short-lived. It's only when we delve deeper that



new vistas of the ocean of knowledge open before us, introducing never before seen or heard experiences and sights. Baba wants us to experience such glorious intensity. A revelation which will bring unfathomable, everlasting bliss and perpetual peace.

Through his book **Sai Promises, Baba's 11 Assurances**, Shri Sumeet Ponda has made attaining this deep understanding, possible. He ensures that the readers come closer to knowing and practising Baba's teachings. To understand what Sai Baba conveyed when he said ***One who comes to Shirdi will drive away his difficulties or none who comes to me ever goes back empty handed or The one who takes refuge at my feet is doubly blessed...***and more.

Let us explore this book with the reverence and contemplation it expects and deserves. In doing so every reader will begin to see Baba through a lens and in a light she/he may have never seen before.

May Sai blessings be with each one, eternally.
Baba is taking care of our welfare...

Om Sai Ram
—Bindu Midha
Author, Blogger



PROLOGUE

UNDERSTANDING BABA's 11 PROMISES

Sai Baba is an unassuming superpower, a God so easy to get. There is no fixed manner or a method in worshipping Him. While He was in the mortal coil, Sai Baba never asked anyone to worship him. He always maintained that the worship of Guru is the foremost worship. Yet anybody could worship him the way they wanted to. If somebody wished to offer sandalwood paste on His feet or forehead, Baba would simply allow. If somebody offered to shower flowers on him, Sai would oblige. If someone penned a few lines, he would be allowed to sing them as *aarti*. Sai would even pay for the coarse cloth that he wore and its stitching. He would happily roam about in that coarse cloth even after it had worn out considerably. He never asked for any ornaments. He would be in total bliss sitting on a sack cloth, used to keep ready crop, in *Masjid*. *Radhakrishna Mayee* once got a silver palanquin made which had two silver elephants affixed on its corners

and because there was no space in the *Masjid* where this palanquin would be kept, she put it in the lane adjoining the *Masjid*. One night, some thief stole the silver elephants from the palanquin. Instead of complaining or getting angry, Baba thanked Lord for it. Baba never sat in this palanquin during the *Chawri* procession. He always walked besides this palanquin. When *Tatya* brought a richly embroidered robe for Baba to wear in this procession, Baba would oblige but his torn coarse *kafni* would always be beneath this robe. When the procession reached *Chawri*, and *shejarati* sung, Baba would stand up in respect of Saints *Gyandev* and *Tukaram* and the Almighty. Such simplicity! He would often go for begging barefoot and would happily eat a few morsels from whatever was given to him. How humble of this God! After the *aarti*, he would himself distribute the sacred ash (*udi*) from the holy fire he kept alive in the *Masjid* and which He called *Dhuni Mayee*. Sai would always keep away from pomp and show and never asked any believer to indulge in any mainstream or orthodox method of worship. He always believed that God resides in the heart and if one cannot find God within, it can never be found elsewhere.

The manner of worship of Sai Baba that is now followed in *Shirdi* these days is an evolution from the days He was in mortal coil and is mainly inspired from

the manner of worship of Lord *Vitthal* in *Pandharpur*. ***Shree Sainath Sagunopasna*** compiled by *K J Bishma* with some traditional hymns, some vedic chants, *mantras* and psalms composed by *Dasganu Maharaj*, *Mohiniraj Pandit*, *Madhav Adkar*, *B V Dev*, *Upasni Maharaj* and *Bhishma* himself forms the basis of Sai Baba's worship in *Shirdi*.

After Baba's *mahasamadhi*, chanting of 11 assurances or promises of Sai Baba gives us a blissful experience of feeling him just besides us. Marathi version of these 11 promises is played every morning in the *Samadhi Mandir* after the *Kakad Aarti*. Reciting these 11 promises is like sensing Sai Baba from the closest quarters. Perhaps, the easiest way to manifest Sai inside us! These 11 assurances of Sai Baba are compiled by *Mohiniraj Pandit* who is believed to have extracted these from various chapters of ***Shree Sai Sachcharitra***, a biographical account of Sai Baba written by *Annasaheb Dabholkar* with Baba's consent. *Mohiniraj Pandit* was a Revenue Officer from *Malegaon*. After his retirement, he offered services in the publications department of *Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi*. He is also credited with '***Namaskar-ashtak***', (the hymnal octave of obeisance), '*Ananta tula the kase re stavave*' (roughly translated, it means: Thou art the infinite One, how can I extol thee!). This *Namaskar-ashtak* is sung during the noon and evening *Aartis*.

It is apparent that after the publication of **Shree Sai Sachcharitra** by the **Sansthan** in 1923, *Mohiniraj Pandit* may have compiled these 11 assurances from various chapters of the holy book that is read by millions across the globe today. It is unclear whether *Mohiniraj* took any explicit permission for this from Baba but it is very much apprehensible that without the consent of Sai Baba this wouldn't have been possible that merely chanting a few phrases would have such a calming effect on countless restless minds.

Seemingly, these 11 assurances may sound simple but Baba's words, always, bore a deep meaning. Every single word that Baba uttered had a life-enriching element built in. I have been reciting these 11 assurances for the past close to 35 years and every time I have whispered them or sang them aloud, I was always taken over by their sheer power of putting the wandering mind to rest. It is equally true that these assurances of Sai Baba have the immense power to add tremendous value to otherwise indifferent and mundane lives marred by the lure for material belongings of His devotees.

Through this book, Sai Baba has made me elaborate and expound his 11 assurances. I have firm belief that by reading the narratives and understanding the crux behind of Baba's 11 assurances, the readers would experience sheer bliss. Every single assurance brings



us a step closer to Sai. It took me close to five years to reach from the first assurance to the eleventh. It has been some journey! While I was browsing through the contents before they went to press, I was amazed at the selection of words and the lucid expressions contained in this book because I simply find myself grossly incapable of expressing anything the way it has been keyed in here.

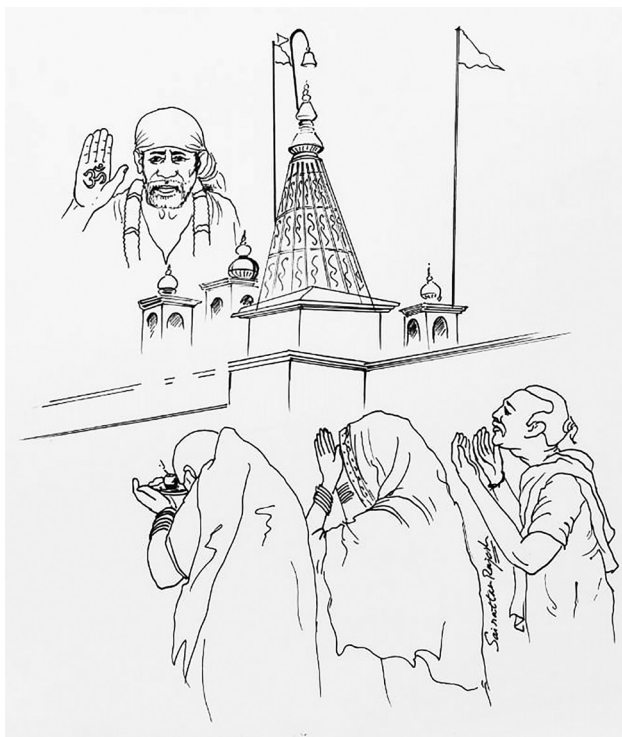
Towards Sai... Baba bhali kar rahe...

Bhaijee

Sumeet Ponda 'Bhaijee'



SAI BABA'S FIRST PROMISE
ONE WHO COMES TO SHIRDI WILL
DRIVE AWAY ALL PERILS AND
TROUBLES





The first amongst Sai's eleven assurances to his bhakts which have been enlisted in the Sai Sachcharitra- One who comes to Shirdi will drive away his troubles/catastrophe- showcases Sai's magnanimity and also his assurance. This assurance is the most significant in the spiritual upliftment of devotees since Shirdi yatra (journey) which begins with a devotee's (physical) arrival in Shirdi then gradually leads to the last or eleventh Promise of Sai by which time the journey transforms from that of the body to one of the mind. That is the journey elevates from a physical to a spiritual level.

When a devotee after repeated visits to Sai's Samadhi tires of asking him for worldly things during every visit, even though Sai never gets tired of giving each time he asks, then the devotee begins to ask for that which Sai always wanted to give him/her, but he/she wasn't willing to accept. In the thirty second chapter of Sai Sachcharitra Sai does say, "*The treasury of my God is full and overflowing. I keep saying anyone can dig it (the treasure) out and fill the vehicle with it. One who is a true son, devoted, will fill it himself in his car and take it with him.*" What is this treasure that Sai wishes to give

His devotees since times immemorial? By 'treasure' Sai means the treasure and cache of spiritual wealth.

But then receiving this divine treasure isn't a cakewalk at all.

Troubles and disasters, trying circumstances are an inherent part of life. Life is a mix of joy and sadness, happiness and misery, good and bad, right and wrong. No two days are alike. The agreeable and disagreeable, favourable and unfavourable hold hands and travel together. They are almost cyclical. If we go by the principles of action (karma), it becomes abundantly clear that whether good or bad, each outcome is a consequence of an individual's own deeds. In Chapter 32 of Shree Sai Sachcharitra, further ahead, Sai says, *"Whatever a person does, later in life he is bound to undergo the consequence. And the one who remembers this statement of mine, will receive substantive, immense bliss."* We receive good in return for the good that we do; ill-deeds beget unpleasant experiences. Man is free to act, to do deeds, as per his choice. But the outcome does not rest with him.

One must always remember that till such time as deeds have not been done, they are the slave of man, but once a deed is done, man becomes a slave to them, i.e. he has no control over the action that he has already done. He must take the consequences of those actions, come what may. The fruit of any action is directly proportional to the strength and intensity of the

action. The consequence of every action rests with that invisible supreme power whom we call God. His way of imparting justice is unique. Under any circumstances one cannot evade the result of one's action.

Contrastingly none can avoid karma or deeds! Since we have been gifted with life, it is essential that we engage in actions. And only because there are deeds that we need to suffer the consequences, accepting the fruit that comes with them is a compulsion. Those actions which have yet not been undertaken and we are their masters are called *kriyamaan karma* or future karma (actions whose consequences will be determined in the future). Those that have been performed but await their result, their fruit, are called accumulated actions. While those deeds that have been done and whose consequence too has been either borne or which we have to undergo are called fate or destiny. Those actions which bring forth unhappy consequences to our destiny are considered a pain causing catastrophe. Whenever an individual reads Sai's first promise the very first time, he spontaneously begins to feel that no sooner than he arrives in Shirdi all his miseries will come to an end. But does this assurance suggest merely that- immediate end to all woes and anxieties? The answer to this question rests in the response that Sai gave to Damuanna Kasar in Chapter 25 of Shree Sai Sachcharitra. Damuanna asked Baba if every individual who comes to Shirdi for

darshan is benefitted. In response to this query Baba had said, *“Look at the blossoms laden mango tree. Does every blossom transform to a mango? Some blossoms are shed, they fall off on their own. The ones that remain are also torn away and destroyed by storms. Finally, only a few of the original number remain.”*

What did Baba mean when he said this to Damuanna? And then a subsequent question pops up in one’s mind that if every individual who goes to Shirdi for darshan may not benefit, then why should we visit Shirdi at all? If we try to understand what Baba had said, then we would realise that a visit to Shirdi is quite like the formation of a blossom on the mango tree. People visit in large numbers, but a few remain and are committed to a life of devotion and love.

It is said that we remember God only in times of distress. Mostly when the dark clouds pass, people forget God. Sadness identifies and chases such opportunists, or such an individual who thinks of Almighty only in grief is himself responsible for attracting the pain that comes with it. The one who remembers God even in joy do they face sadness? Yes, they too face difficulties but remain unaffected by them. Likewise, before starting on the journey to Shirdi, people have a change of mind and they are unable to reach Shirdi. The discontented state of mind makes it wayward. The mind wanders and is not still. If some amongst such folks do manage to reach Shirdi then they are merely physically present

over there. Their mind continues to wander. They remain distracted. Some think about their jobs and others about business and family. The mind entangled in profit and loss is away from Shirdi even if they are present there in body. This wandering mind negates their presence in Shirdi. These blossoms do not even carry the quality of transforming into mangoes.

Quite like the mango blossoms that drift away some devotees stop coming to Shirdi when their wishes are not fulfilled immediately. Perhaps they are unaware that every problem does not elicit an immediate solution. It takes time. Those who expect and anticipate miracles from Sai right after darshan, are perhaps unfamiliar with the fact that it is not Sai who works miracles, but it is our faith in Him that compels Him to do the extraordinary for us. And can this possibly happen overnight? It takes time to transform faith into belief, the hope we have from the Supreme Power and so also belief into faith and faith into devotion (shraddha). Logic poses obstacles on the path of belief and faith.

Devotion and logical arguments walk together in the same direction but like the tracks on which trains run, they never meet. Both are in conflict with each other. Logic prevents devotion from moving ahead while faith wants to defeat logic. While logic seeks new conflict points giving rise to arguments, faith gives birth to belief. Logic seeks reasons and faith looks

for new dimensions and angles. Argument weakens the mind while faith strengthens belief. Arguments negate the occurrence of miracles and miracles bow in reverence to faith. Logic continually seeks the truth. Faith is truth itself. Arguments give direction whilst faith provides momentum. Argument makes us restless while faith provides peace. Logic disappoints. Faith fills us with hope, optimism and gaiety. If we have faith in Sai, then logic is defeated because Sai stays away from arguments. If we wish to seek Sai we will have to look away from logic.

If Shirdi is Shraddha (devotion) then worshipping Sai is Saburi (patience). Faith opens the doors of Shirdi i.e. devotion. If we are unable to witness miracles then it is not as if Sai lacks, rather it is the lack of our faith in Him. Sai is ever willing to give. But the one who longs to receive should have the capability to do so. Only when capable does wish fulfilment happens. Those blossoms which along with being capable take to the path of devotion, find one less obstacle on their onward journey towards transforming into the fruit, i.e. the mango. Still, their connect with the tender branch of faith is weak, since it is nascent. With time and dedication, it becomes stronger and stronger. Of course, patience or saburi is the key element here. Do nurture patience, my dear!

Just as the blossoms that have a weak link with the branches fall on account of the storm or strong



gusts of wind, so also some devotees on account of attachment and greed lose connect with Sai. Some grow distant on account of their disaffection and jealousy. Lust prevents the mind from resting in Sai. Caught in the stormy turbulence of the mind these blossoms too cannot stick and in time, fall off the tender branch of devotion. Now the few that remain, begin walking on the path of growth and go on to forming the ripe fruit of mango.

At this juncture it is essential to understand the piety of Shirdi and why Shirdi was Sai's choice for continued stay.

In the olden times Shirdi was called Shiladhi. As times went by the need for change arose. Instead of the complex Shiladhi, the name Shirdi began to be used. In Sai Baba's Ashtorshat (One Hundred and Eight names of Sai Baba) Namavali in the fifth place, is stated one name of Baba which calls Him 'a resident of Shiladhi by the banks of river Godavari'. The word 'Shiladhi' can be split into 2 parts as 'Shila' + 'dhi'. 'Shila' refers to mountain and 'dhi' refers to knowledge. In other words, a place where the mountain of knowledge resides.

Truly immense the power of the village! The power of a place is primary. In this way Shirdi's power became important. In our epics, the abode of all Gods and Goddesses is said to be located at a height. In that manner of speaking, Shirdi is also a mountain. That



pure, sacred, high and immoveable mountain which attracted saints like Devidas, Jankidas and Anandnath, several Sufi saints etc and later it pulled towards itself the Saint of Saints, Paramhamsa, Shree Sainath. One need no further explanation of Sai's choice of Shirdi. Shirdi has its own magnetic pull and appeal that is inherent within it, an outcome of the blessings showered and virtues obtained from the penance of many saints.

Going to Shirdi or coming back from there is equivalent to ascending a 'meru' or mountain. From the top of this mountain, the world appears different albeit smaller than it actually is. Moreover, the vision can extend further, to a greater distance. Hence, the point of view changes. At such a height the air is pure and fresh yet makes one shiver. To stay rooted, to stand firm before the intensity of the wind becomes a challenge. At this height the sun is closer and more intense providing greater energy. Likewise, the coolness of the moon is also nearer but makes one a bit frigid. We can clearly see the twinkling of stars. But their inspidness makes one sad.

Yet it is not easy to climb this mountain. The ascent is steep, absolutely vertical. No ledges to secure your steps or hold on to. One becomes breathless and feels suffocated. To reach Sai in Shirdi, one has to go through many examinations. If we pause for breath

the mind and thoughts go into a tizzy if we were to look downward. When we see the distance travelled, we feel dizzy.

In Chapter 2 of Shree Sai Sachcharitra to explain the importance of a Guru to Shri Dabholkar, Baba had recommended attaining such great heights, taking a similar path to reach there. In the company of a guide, the ones who reach the summit of the mountain, unhurriedly, albeit panting, tumbling and getting up on the path which proves to be not only difficult but also riddled with needle-like thorns which they dodge together with accosting animals, are truly the ones who are eventually relieved from all the troubles of life. Having gone through much, such individuals reach that place where grief stops affecting and disappointing; the mind having attained happiness doesn't take uncontrolled flights of fancy.

Since the point of view changes at this height, instead of attachment the sense of parity comes in. One can see the reflection of Sai's energy on one's visage, experience it and this intensifies the moon-like tranquillity which reflects on the countenance, as Sai's light. The twinkling in the eyes of Sai's loved devotees is sharper, it is strong enough to light up and open a new universe, new avenue in life. The wandering, drifting mind finds succour and can see distinctly, both the path and the goal at the end of the path.

Since we are with Sai, the fragrance of his very breath, transmits a new hope in the world. Lust transforms and relates only to procreation for continuity of lineage. One feels anger, only for one thing-one's own incapability. One is attached to Sai's feet alone, nothing or nobody else. We get lost in the worship of Sai, devotion to Him. It is in Shirdi that perils and threats seek an escape route. On reaching Sai's holy feet, the adverse effects of ill-actions and misdeeds become feeble, they really weaken.

With the modification the mind-bent and thoughts therein, we see a change in actions. Since kriyamana karma (future actions) change, their effects too see a change. Those actions accumulated from the past change, in their form. We gain the conviction to accept and stomach what comes with our destiny. With the loving warmth of Sai, the nature of actions and deeds begins to change.

Let us consider an example. When we heat gold, it turns red. All the impurities, its adulteration is removed once it turns red after heating. On similar lines, Shirdi is that place where Sai lived in two separate stints for close to 63- 64 years, thereby making the place stronger and purer with His penance and overflowing warmth. It is here that Sai removed the dust that had gathered on the virtues of humanity, of kindness and generosity, making it clean and pure. He taught the

difference between religion and inequity/immorality (dharma and adharma). Here, Sai erased the difficulties of so many individuals and those whose destiny and past life actions were causing pain thereby taking away their joys in their current lifetime. Sai took away all that pain. He lit a new hope in the lives of those who were despondent and in despair. It is in Shirdi itself that Sai blew life into the dead using the Vibhuti (udi or holy ash) that came out of the eternal fire lit in His dhuni. Shirdi can be nothing if not totally blessed!

Shirdi is that place where Sai's body made of the five elements continues to rest, its soil giving hope to millions of devotees. Sai's body has become one with this soil of Shirdi. Whether Sai has become Shirdi or Shirdi identifies as Sai is difficult to ascertain. They are one and the same. The soil, which is laden with Sai's divine energy, how can dangers remain there? What is required of individuals is absolute and complete surrender to Sai. This and this alone is the condition to be able to come to Shirdi. It is also the single essential capability too.

Wishes are bound to be fulfilled in such a holy place whose very aura oozes sacredness and piety! However, the wishes of only those individuals is fulfilled who having arrived in Shirdi, keep faith in Sai and are willing to walk the difficult path of devotion. Seated in Shirdi, Sai removes pain and difficulties from the lives of all devotees no matter which part of the

world they live in. In order to reach Sai, to attain Him, this is the single and most significant as well as most difficult halt to make- Shirdi.

*Baba is taking care of our welfare...
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.*



SAI BABA'S SECOND PROMISE
ONE WHO CLIMBS THE STAIRS
OF THE SAMADHI,
TREADS UPON HIS PAIN

(is relieved of his burdens and sadness)





Discussing the second assurance of the eleven that Sai has made to His devotees, One who climbs the stairs of the Samadhi, treads upon his pain/ is relieved of his burdens and sadness- too has a very deep spiritual connotation. This promise is about Sai's generous, benevolent and philanthropic Nature.

If the first assurance of Sai is about the initiation of a devotee on the path of Sai worship, then the second one takes the believer to a new, hitherto unattained height. It takes the bhakt so much closer to Sai. This first step taken on Sai's Samadhi is extremely significant for any Sai bhakt during his journey towards Sai.

If we consider the meaning of the second assurance at a very basic level then it suggests that as soon as bhakt takes the stair of the Samadhi, his troubles cease to exist with immediate effect. This too is a possibility. But then it depends on the trust we repose in Sai. It's proportional to the degree of faith we place in Him. Faith brings results, complete faith bears abundant fruit! That a devotee's grief ends entirely or partially or not at all depends on the deeds of the devotee together with his faith in Sai. Before a person can set foot on the stairs of the Samadhi, he has to face intense hardships, many tests of life. A devotee's faith



and the account of his actions and deeds are put to test at this holy spot. It is these that determine his ascent.

To be able to fully understand the significance of the second assurance, it is important to understand what Samadhi is. What climbing the Samadhi entails and what it means. Further, what should the capability of the one who takes the stairs should be? It is important to reflect what sadness is. And how will it be trod upon, trampled by one's feet. Each aspect needs to be explored and assimilated. Only then can the true meaning of Sai's 2nd Promise be arrived at.

Samadhi is that state of the heart, mind and soul in which the past, present and future, collate at a common spot; the 'now' and 'here' are assimilated within. This state is about the 'now'-ness. Whatever happens is taking place 'right now', 'right here'. The sense of past and present is erased. The one who manages to monitor 'time' in this manner, is able to control the 'then' and 'when', establishing a victory over these two, he becomes a recipient of the 'now'. He lives in the moment. In the same way one who can control the 'place' earns a victory over the 'where' and 'there' and wins over the 'here'. Everything happens 'here', change of place is unimportant. The 'now' and 'here' help exercise control over time and place. This was how it was with Sai. He could control time and place. He could carry and uplift people beyond the



restraints of time and place and continues to do so even today. Actually, the Samadhi state is that supreme state of yoga in which time and place lose value, become inconsequential. Everything happens at the same time, at the same place.

This state is beyond and above bodily needs, beyond desires and lust. In this state, the body becomes capable of willing another's illness and ailments, taking them upon itself as well as destroying both. So sickness can not only be adopted and transferred but also adopted and cured, helping the original recipient. In the seventh Chapter of Shree Sai Sachcharitra it is clearly stated that Baba had taken the buboes related to plague which had afflicted the son of Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde. It is also believed that Sai had willingly accepted the illness of Tatyaa, Bayaja maa's son and having taken the grave illness upon himself, taken Tatyaa's fate i.e. his inevitable death too upon Himself which eventually led to Sai's passing away. (Shree Sai Sachcharitra, Chapter 42)

What is the Samadhi state?

In the Samadhi state, the mind remains free of vices like anger, lust, jealousy and pride. When the mind attains this state it rises above and beyond aspirations, expectations, fears, disparagement, dishonour, self-esteem, hatred and rage. Such feelings become petty. The fact that Nanavalli asked Baba to vacate the pew



(seat) which He willingly did indicates that Baba had not an iota of pride, or anger nor was he the least hurt or insulted by this unexpected demand. Sai remained calm and quiet despite this insulting action. Again, when the traders of Shirdi refused to give Him even a drop of oil to light the lamps in the Masjid and He lit the lamps with water alone, Sai did not once curse or insult them nor did He punish them in any way. In fact, Sai merely explained gently that by lying to Him that they did not have any oil, the grocers had gone against God in whose honour and glory the lamps were to be lit. He thus helped them realise how and whom they had wronged! Not Sai but God Almighty Himself! It is evident that Sai has worked towards the improvement in individuals without ever using punishment or any such tools. Even today, Sai continues to do so. Bring improvement, uplift gently, lovingly. The difficult times which people consider as God's wrath and punishment is actually an outcome of their own deeds and actions. It is a known fact, a truth that every action leads to a consequence, always, no action can never be quelled without bearing its fruit.

Can the state of Samadhi be attained easily?

It takes years and years for one to reach the state of Samadhi. Samadhi is the ultimate form of yoga. The highest stage! Not easy at all! Yoga itself means restraint, meditation. That is the one in whom the mind



ceases to have any leanings towards anything physical. Unlike its usual restless state, during Samadhi, the mind becomes stable, does not wander, instead of focussing on the self becomes philanthropic, moving outwards towards the others. It is filled with goodness for others. That is why when we arrive in Sai's shelter, the mind is assured that sins are being purged. And when sins are washed away, life becomes simpler.

On reading Shree Dabholkar's Sai Sachcharitra we come to understand that the virtues of the Samadhi state were constantly, perennially inherent in Sai. He remained in such a state of meditation at all the times, whether seated or walking, sleeping or awake. Sai regarded Himself as the faithful servant of God. This is stated clearly in the 34th Chapter of Shree Sai Sachcharitra. Baba told Shama that the one who gives up his ego and gratefully surrenders to Him (God) placing complete trust in Him, will be the one to be rid of all anxieties and worries and is bound to attain moksha (salvation).

The one who is free, is the one who is truly in the state of Samadhi. Such a state of the body, mind and soul is attained by ceaselessly remembering God, surrendering to Him without any conditions attached and acknowledging His Omnipresence and Supreme power in the entire universe. It is because of such absolute faith and surrender that Sai was all powerful



and paramount when He was physically present and is so even today, even after He has given up His body and is still on the earth. Sai represents the two Supreme qualities of omnipotence and omnipresence.

With such divine powers came the ability to know everything about a devotee, to know his thoughts. When alive, Sai foretold the past, present and future of the bhakts who were near Him. To do this, He never ever needed to take a look at the fate lines on the palms of a person or study the astrological charts. He never indulged in Rumalology (sortilege) or even Hypnotics, nothing of the sort to be able to know about the devotees past and future. So intense was His concentration that Sai could immediately narrate the past, re-count the present and foretell the future of an individual accurately. He forewarned people of impending disasters just like He prepared Damuanna for the loss in the cotton and grains trade which, initially, Anna was extremely eager to undertake. The transactions bespoke of Anna's greed and so Sai prevented that sin. (Chapter 25, Shree Sai Sachcharitra). If Anna insisted and continued with the deal he was bound to suffer grave losses and the gentleman was fully aware of that no matter how much he felt bad at the time when the permission was not granted. This and other such incidents show that not only did Sai know of the exact occurrences of the future, but He also

saved His devotees from undesirable yet ascertained sufferings. Likewise, Sai protected and cured Bhimaji Patil of tuberculosis relieving him of the sins of his previous births. (Chapter 13, Shree Sai Sachcharitra). All such occurrences are evidence of the fact that Sai had complete knowledge about the past life deeds and the outcome of those deeds in the present, of all those who came to Him and sought refuge in Him. When an accomplished palmist and astrologer, Mule Shastri visited Shirdi in the company of Bapusaheb Buti, Sai gave him darshan as Gholap Swami, Shastri's revered Guru. (Chapter 12, Shree Sai Sachcharitra). This incident showcases Sai's ability to read an individual's mind, to know before-hand about his present, what his wishes were. There are many such instances which apprise us of Sai's dexterity as a trioist (a *trikaaljana*), his adeptness at knowing the past, present and future. (Triennology)

And this continues even today for Sai speaks through His Samadhi. In the Sai Sachcharitra, Baba has assured His bhakts that His Samadhi will speak to them, will protect them and in this way help them remain close to Baba. The feeling of being close to Sai is certainly inherent in devotees. Is Sai's Samadhi different or apart from Him? Has Sai after giving up His mortal coil, surrendered all His powers and abilities to the Samadhi and gone to another place, in

another form? Why had He said that His Samadhi is no different from Him? Sai remained unattached to His perishable self, His body when He was alive. Then after passing away, how could He possibly consider his body to be a doer after attaining Samadhi? Omnipresent Sai together with his Samadhi has mingled with the eternal aspect of the world, that which never dies. He has become formless and so His Samadhi located in Shirdi has become a symbol of His presence on earth, thereby encouraging and giving credence to *saguna bhakti* i.e. manifestation and worship of Sai in the human form.

When saints depart to their abode we call it the state of Samadhi. Sai too is a saint who was gifted by Godly powers to do good to the world.

Who are these saints who can do so much for the uplift of mankind? In Shrimad Bhagwat Gita Shri Krishna said to Arjuna that saints are a form of God Himself. The one who carries his own end, with himself is a saint. That is one who has the ability to end his physical desires. To be alive and yet be able to end all material wants and urges is a quality inherent in saints alone and gives them unparallel and indomitable powers, that of being able to control oneself. It is this power that makes them do immense good for mankind when they are alive and after they pass away it makes them 'samarth' (capable of extraordinary) and



Paramhamsa. Paramhamsa that is the white bird, the pure swan which is regarded as the Creator's vehicle. It remains as much beneath the water as it does above it. These great individuals, the saints, too when they walk the earth live as much apart from their physical self as they delve into spirituality. They attain the very zenith of spirituality. Sai Baba is one such Paramhamsa, a great saint who not only works towards his own spiritual upliftment but also works ceaselessly for that of those dependent on Him. He continuously worries about His devotees.

To successfully take the stairs that lead to the Samadhi of such accomplished saints, to reach near them, the one seeking refuge ought to be pure of mind, spotless and unsullied. If in the past times one has done tasks to cause pain to others, then at first one needs to atone for such misdeeds. In the event of being unable to repent, one needs to give an assurance that the sins would be atoned for, redemption sought sometime or the other. The urge for happiness and ability to accept pain, the sensitivity that accrues from it is what makes man a human being, so different from the accomplished saints. Every deed a man does is attached to the principle that one receives either happiness or sadness due to that deed. What gives joy to one individual may give pain to another. Moreover, the experience which gives one joy today may be



the cause of pain and distress in the future. Joy and sorrow are relative to time and person. Man can never be free from actions (karam) and action itself from the connect to consequence, with joys and sorrows, gain and loss, bliss and pain. It is man who undertakes tasks, is responsible for what he does and how he acts, yet ironically, he blames God for his individual unhappiness! Strange are the ways of man!

In this world, everybody carries the burden of unhappiness. Some suffer on account of their body while others due to lack of wealth. Some on account of their relationships and others due to their circumstances. Some pine for a square meal while others struggle to digest what they put inside themselves! Some feel fed up of their constant sleepiness while others their lack of sleep, their insomniac state! One who owns only a cycle is sad since he can't afford a car; whereas one who has the luxury of car rides is troubled by the protesting weighing scales and in order to lose the increased weight, he rides a cycle. One trouble or another, but what creates them? It is desires that make us unhappy and one nurtures longings and wishes till one dies. Fulfilment of one wish leads to the birth of another one. Actually speaking, desires and longings shouldn't end because it is through them that the path of spirituality opens before us. Tiring of our wishes we seek succour and arrive at the steps of the Samadhi. So,



spirituality is about understanding oneself, it means the state of self-discovery. The state of Samadhi which very few, only a handful can attain is reached with much struggle.

Overcoming emotions is essential to Samadhi.

In the three different time periods of past, present and future, sorrow takes on a distinctive shape. The sadness of an occurrence in the past bothers us all the time. Be it an insult, a painful occurrence or a defeat—we take it to heart and recall it regularly. We tend to forget that the individual who has insulted has done so once, whereas we are insulting ourselves every day if we remember the mishap daily. We take one defeat or loss to heart and forget that it was just a single bad hair day! Our entire life isn't bad at all! If a day goes badly, it doesn't mean that our entire life is such! By remembering a loss daily, we relive it and doing so, we are defeated daily. The same goes for unhappy events whose sting we love to nurture, allowing it to fester like a wound.

Attachment to the present is also a form of sorrow. The desire for wealth and property doesn't allow us to enjoy the present moment. We are always restless; we lose our peace of mind. And in the urge to earn more and more we lose the present moment which is way more valuable than any wealth we can ever acquire. In this onward rush, we shelve those relationships which



are our very life-breath. It's not that we cease to have contacts or relations. We do have relations in our life, but no life in the relationships. Intense attachment to our progeny prevents us from thinking of their true welfare. In an attempt to manage and maintain the relationships we have forged we cling so much to them that it becomes suffocating for each side. Consider this. When reading a newspaper, it is essential that we keep an assigned distance. If we bring the paper too close to our eyes, it becomes difficult to see the words clearly. Likewise all relationships. Distance makes the heart grow fonder. Consider social status. That too is also supremely important to us. To elevate our position in society we build such a big façade that it becomes challenging to identify and locate our own true selves. So, attachment is a sure-fire killer.

And what to say of the future? The fear of the upcoming and unknown makes our present anxiety laden. The fear of losing all that we have in the present time, that which we have thanks to Sai, runs so deep that it mars our personality. By tossing the stone of fear of the future in the tranquil waters of life, we stir the muck that lays hidden within. We make the pure waters impure. And the funny part is that in the end we realise that all the fears we had, were misplaced, unsubstantial and pointless. They were without a foundation. Fears are a consequence of our mind's



flight of fancy in the dark. But, unfortunately, we realise this only towards the sunset of life, when not much can be changed or improved.



Mourning for the past, attachment to the present and fear of the future, all three keep us away from peace and happiness. This happens with everybody. By living for ourselves and our loved ones we tend to forget that the best way to attain peace of mind and happiness is by doing good to others. The tranquillity attained by giving joy to others dissolves all our sadness and pain. Attachment dissipates and dread flies out of the window. The feeling of doing good unto others helps us climb a step higher, that is take the first step towards Sai's Samadhi where not a single negative emotion can survive. That's because the path of goodness leads straight to Sai.

Kindness to others is what makes Sai distinctive. He dons worn out garments Himself but with a single word of blessing makes his devotee prosperous. Suppressing His own state of faqiri (poverty) with a smile He begged for food and alms simultaneously giving away a cache of goodwill. If he asked for dakshina (donation) of someone, He provided an opportunity to rid the burden of old debts. Accepting devotion, He lavished *udi* on the forehead of the individual. Sai changed the path of the very stars and the fate lines too. Sai received this power in lieu of the world of good that He has done and continues to do for mankind.



So generous is Sai! Hence, an attempt to take the steps of Sai's Samadhi should be in accompaniment to generosity, to do good. This alone is the essential pre-requisite to climb and also the requisite quality of the ascending individual too. If we are successful in realising and understanding the fact that by doing good unto others, the amount of good and happiness that comes back to us is so beautiful and immense, then we would never ever ask Sai for anything for ourselves. Do good for the others. Think of their benefit. The goodwill that is generated on account of this is powerful enough to melt away all the sins and effects of our actions (karma)

However, if we choose to place a request when taking the stairs of the Samadhi then we will get only as much as we are capable of carrying on our shoulders. Contrarily, if we ask for happiness for the others, seek their welfare, Sai will give not only give us way beyond our capacity but also increase our potential. He will change our sorrows to joy, relieve us of pain. But of course the decision is our's. Sai's Samadhi is willing to bear our burdens. It is we who have to take the first step. Once we begin to understand life well, then we will know what crying with happiness is and that life is about smiling when in pain. It is then that we will begin to tread on our sorrows, defeat them.

 *Baba is taking care of our welfare...* 
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.

SAI BABA'S THIRD PROMISE
WILL RENOUNCE MY BODY AND
LEAVE THE EARTH;
WILL COME RUSHING BACK
FOR MY DEVOTEES





Baba's third assurance to his devotees amongst the eleven he made- Will renounce My Body and Leave the Earth but will come rushing back for My devotees- instils a sense of supreme confidence and removes any feelings of fear a bhakt may have. It is a promise that eliminates fears.

To understand the very essence of this oath one has to delve deeper and understand if Sai's presence, existence and entity are actually dependent on his physical form.

Sai and His physical self have always been apart from each other. His body was always a perishable means of connecting with people in order to make them better human beings, to help them progress on the right path and to firmly establish the name 'Sai', a symbol of fearlessness. No sooner than this mission of instilling fearlessness was accomplished, Sai gave up His mortal body to become one with the Infinite, Supreme Power. Sai regularly declared Himself to be the slave of this Omnipotent entity.

Today Sai isn't present in His physical form, yet His name and His unique deeds continue to provide protection to his devotees. Even today, a hundred years after Him, recalling this assurance brings tears to the

eyes of Sai's devotees. It stirs excitement and transmits confidence through them when they chant His name with faith. Through the medium of this Promise, Sai reassured his devotees of a continued, seamless presence in their lives. This assurance controls the turbulent emotions of the bhakts, steadies their heartbeats and awakens the sensations that come in the wake of His worship. Sai's physical form may be absent, but His existence is felt by millions across the world.

On 15th October 1918, at the late afternoon hour of 2:30 pm, on the auspicious day of the festival of Dussehra Sai gave up His body and chose Samadhi. This action of Him giving up His body may be considered His own wish. It is said that he had taken upon Himself the death of his devotee Tatyā Patil, thereby granting Tatyā the gift of life, a sort of re-birth for the man.

But this wasn't the first time that Baba had taken Samadhi. Almost thirty-five years prior to this occurrence, in 1887, Baba had taken a small, self-desired Samadhi of three days. Back then, by the time the day ended, Shirdi residents had assumed that Baba would not return. Yet it was the steely determination of Mhalsapati, the one who gave Him the name Sai and was His first bhakt, that won the day! He did not allow a single resident nor authority figure to lay a finger on Sai's comatose body, having gingerly placed Baba's head on his own lap. Refusing to move or bow to the wishes



of anyone, no matter how highly placed, Mhalsapati sat firm, while Baba remained in the Samadhi position for three days. Praise be to such devotion and belief! Great is the devotee Mhalsapati. If he had buckled under pressure and had agreed with the likes of those who wanted to perform Sai's last rites, then we would have been deprived of Baba's true Nature, His Greatness and all the miracles that he performed subsequently. Towards the end of the third day of Samadhi, life force returned to Baba's body, exactly as He had indicated to Mhalsapati before assuming the Samadhi state. Such are Divine Powers. Beyond the reach and comprehension of common man!

The act of separating the life-force from His body and then regaining it at will, cannot be anything other than an extraordinary nor the person who is able to do so, an ordinary human being. Having read about Sai's yogic abilities discussed in the seventh chapter of the Sai Sachcharitra, it is evident that Baba had a remarkable and miraculous control over His body and mind. His Brahmacharya (bachelorhood) was as staunch as that of Lord Hanuman. All the women who came in contact with Sai were viewed with utmost respect. Never a direct gaze, Sai addressed each one as Maa (mother). Such a divine being was bound to show amazing prowess. Sometimes, Sai would practise Khand Yoga in which he would separate his body parts only to re-join them later. At other times, He



performed Dhauti kriya, the act of removing all the internal organs, wiping them with a cloth and hanging them on the branch of trees to dry. Once dried out, he would put them back in place, inside His body! Marvellous, extraordinary acts! But these weren't the only tasks He could accomplish. Sai could sleep on a wooden plank barely a palm wide. The plank remained suspended from the ceiling by worn out rags, to the awe of villagers who would wonder how Sai managed to climb up or down some 6/7 feet above the floor without using a ladder! None were seen in the vicinity! Not only that, lamps remained lit at both the edges of the plank and Sai lay down between them. At night, before sleeping He would remind Mhalsapati to take care and ensure that the chanting of Bhagwat Name in His heart did not stop. Sai, who had so much control over His senses and body. How could He possibly die? He could die only when he wanted, as per His wish. A death which merely took life away from his body, the physical self, nothing more than that. For Sai is everlasting and eternal! Sai is seamless, perpetual and ceaseless. He is infinite. Death did not come to Him. Rather, He had embraced death! He chose to give up His body and that wasn't at all difficult for Him.

What made it easy?

Attachment to the body makes it difficult to give it up. The one who is extremely fond of his physical self finds it difficult to forsake his body, the physical



form. The one who interlinks life with body and thinks one can't be without the other, finds it difficult to quit his body. The same goes for the one who relates existence and life with the presence of the body. Sai was an epitome of renunciation. No interest in wealth or property, no inclination or urge to indulge the palate, no attachment to any individual male or female or any kind of greed or lust. Sai lived a life of sacrifice and abstinence. Could such an accomplished one have fixations for His body?

Sai had no attachment or love for His body. He never adorned His physical self nor took the slightest of interest in clothes, adornments or ornamentation. He wouldn't take a bath for several days on end, yet the purity of His heart reflected on His face, creating an incomparable divine glow. Though He Himself wore torn garments, He stitched together, seamlessly, the worn out and fractured fate and destiny of His bhakts. Seated on the untiled floor of the dilapidated masjid, Sai transformed the hard-hearted making them gentle and loving. Sai dedicated Himself to the service of others while sitting in front of the blazing and scorching fire of His dhuni. He had no discomfort in leaving such a pious body. To Him, Life, vital air and body are illusion. It's stated in our scriptures that our soul which keeps our body alive and provides energy to it is immortal, unbreakable, eternal and unfaltering. And Sai was in agreement with that.



In the eighth chapter of Shree Sai Sachcharitra while referring to the importance of human life it is described that repeatedly taking birth in different forms, when the sins and good deeds of the soul merge, it is then that we get an opportunity to be born as a human beings. It is in this human life form that we get a chance to burn the sins and perform good deeds, helping us attain moksha (salvation) and eventually merge in the Almighty.

The Almighty is incomplete, and we are a part of Him. Together, we complement each other. We are quite like Him, so partially; we represent Him. If we are a drop, He is the seven seas. If he is the mountain, we are a tiny pebble. If we are feeble, He is all powerful. But He is always with us. And we a part of Him, a part of the almost whole. We provide the tune and the music and are the singers of the glory of His immense powers. The problem begins when singing about Him we go haywire in the notes, the tune, the words, the rhythm and melody. When these are ruined, then the form of our deeds is also affected. They become jarring. At such times we should understand that we are drifting away from the two basic and most important principles of the Almighty, those of love and brotherhood. We are instead sliding on the path of evil, progressing towards committing sins. Our downward spiral has begun. We feel tense and are never at ease. We feel unstable and unhappy. It is then that our need for a Sadguru arises.



He is our sole saviour, the one who uplifts us from this conundrum.

The way to eradicate our sins and deeds is learnt at the feet of the Sadguru alone. The Sadguru accepts his disciple, despite all the inherent bad qualities, initiating the process of leading him towards God Almighty. Sai Baba is one such widely acclaimed and worshipped Sadguru. Some regard Him as God while others as a divine entity and again certain others revere Him as an Avatar.

While the birth in human form is dependent on the deeds, God takes avatar, assumes the human form, out of compassion towards man. Whenever, across eternities, humanity loses its way, then this Supreme Power, whom we refer to as God, Allah or Ishwar, comes to the earth as an incarnation. He may come either as Lord Ram or Krishna or Jesus or even Prophet, or Nanak or Buddha or again as Mahaveer or as Zoroaster, to perform specific tasks and having accomplished what they set out to, having purified the earth with the very presence, return to the abode, after quitting the mortal coil.

The spot where their body comes to rest or merges/ blends with the five elements becomes a sacred place (Dham). Drawn by the magnetic pull of this holy place where the mortal coil rests, people arrive and bare their hearts, hoping redressal of their concerns. The tenderness, chastity and purity of their holy body, can



accord any place the sanctity of a temple, a tabernacle. Exactly in the same manner, Sai Baba's body irrigated by His power and purity has made Shirdi a holy place. People are pulled here in large numbers quite like sparrows drawn by the string tied to its leg. In return, Sai Baba too comes rushing to His devotees in every lifetime, sometimes to show the path of truth and at others to eliminate the rising sins; sometimes to embrace the bhakts in a hug and at others to console them, to offer solace. This happens all the time. In every life-time! Eternally!

How can such a celestial being ever die?

The Sai Sachcharitra oft times refers to those incidents which Baba cited to His devotees from their past lives. Once when Sai Baba pinched the cheek of the village school master, Shama, then in mock anger Shama said to Him that they needed a God who would give them all good things like new food stuff each day, fine clothes to wear and would also ensure each devotee's well-being. Pat came Baba's reply that it is to do the exact same that He had come to earth! And then he told Shama, "*You and I are related to each other since the last 72 lives!*" In the same manner, Baba sent for the Collector's private secretary, Shri Nanasaheb Chandorkar and informed him that Baba and he were related since the last three life-times. Sharing the account of previous births of Mrs. Khaparde, Baba ate the food she had herself prepared for Him, relishing



every morsel. Examples of past life relationships abound. In a previous birth, two brothers killed each other on account of a property dispute and were reborn as goats in their current lifetime. Speaking thus, Sai bought the two goats, at an exorbitant price, fed them lentils, pampered them and after a while, sent them back to the owner of the herd! Yet again, after saving a frog from the vicious grip of a snake, Baba shared the stories pertaining to several previous births of the two, viz Veerbhadrappa and Chainbasappa. Baba narrated how in every birth, He had saved and protected the frog. And then the Durandhar brothers who came seeking His darshan! Sai informed the devotees and the brothers that they had been related with Sai in the past sixty lives!

Such is Sai leela- eternal and everlasting, perennial and undying!

When Sai forges a bond with His devotees he doesn't let us out of His sight. He keeps us in His shelter, protected! Sai does not allow a bond to be formed so easily either. How often it transpires that one who nurtures a strong wish to visit Shirdi fails to do so, while on the other hand one who arrives in Shirdi, fails to climb the steps of Dwarkamayee! It is Sai's bidding! If Sai does not so wish, none can go near Him.

Whom does Baba prevent from coming near Him? Those who are filled with the pride of wealth, status and position as well as family name are the



ones whom Baba dislikes strongly. For instance Haji Siddique Phalke was very proud of the Haj he had accomplished. Even the ones who were proud about their riches had no place in Sai's durbar. Like the trader who had come to Baba seeking Brahm Gyaan got so entangled in the illusion of Maya that when Baba asked for a mere five rupees, despite having Rs. 250/- on his person, he could not contribute that small and insignificant sum. A devotee like Megha, on whose death Baba had Himself shed tears, was also a recipient of Sai's anger during the first visit. Sai was annoyed by the fact that Megha considered Baba a Mussalman and had reservations about meeting Him. With time Baba helped enhance Megha's devotion. In another instance, Sai protected Nanasaheb Chandorkar when in the presence of a beautiful Muslim lady, Nana felt the stirrings of passion, Baba gently nudged away these feelings, explaining how there is no harm in enjoying good things but only if they don't consume the senses. In this way, he helped reduce Nana's guilt of being attracted by the woman's mesmerising beauty. Once, in the distant Pandharpur, a lawyer had poked fun at the faith Tayasaheb Noolkar placed in Sai. When years later, the same lawyer came seeking Sai's darshan, Sai reproached him. Why was Sai angry with this lawyer? He strongly dislikes words that belie trust, a tongue that lashes against a person's faith; words uttered in contempt ought to be condemned.



It's not as if Baba stopped people from coming close to Him. In fact quite the opposite. He simply opposed those negative sentiments and thoughts with which people arrived in Shirdi. Baba was clear that none who bore such harmful feelings could climb the steps of the masjid. In such detrimental feelings rested either the misfortune of the one who had come to Him or the one for whom he harboured such feelings. Such ill-begotten feelings not only hamper the personality of the individual but are also harmful for others present. Bearing feelings that posed an obstruction in attaining God, no one could come anywhere near Baba. And this was done for their own benefit.

Those who are counted amongst the first few devotees of Sai; although rich, were very simple. However, they were detached from accumulation of wealth. Baba oft said, "*Poverty is true Kingship. The rich have millions of distractions. Allah is brother to the poor.*" The one who does not have any wish, is a king, lives like one too. Wealth is supposed to serve mankind but when man begins to serve wealth and it becomes his master then man becomes servile to wealth. One who has no attachment to wealth lives best, like a king.

*With Desires departed, stress departs;
your mind becomes unattached.
Those who need nothing are the
King of Kings!*



Baba believed that it is not wealth itself, but the attachment to wealth that distances man from God. Baba never prevented anyone from earning well or even accumulating wealth. All He said was that whatever wealth one has, one should never consider it as his master, only for himself. Instead the wealthy should use resources for the welfare and benefit of the needy. Should engage in charity.

Devotion via wealth i.e. philanthropy helps one to come closer to God. Freedom from this attachment to wealth opens the path that leads to God. It opens the doors to Sai. An individual who considers his own self extremely powerful, Almighty, what need can such a self-conceited individual have for Sai?

Today, when Sai is not present amidst us in His physical form then it is natural to ask how is it possible that people who consider themselves as all powerful can be stopped from taking the stairs of the masjid? Quite like how Baba personally stopped them all those years ago. Who can scold them or prevent them from climbing the holy steps when the doors to His Samadhi Mandir and Dwarkamayee are open to one and all? When He himself is not there, how can Sai stop the likes of such who come to Him? This query can be satisfied very simply by stating that such individuals can never experience the presence Baba, his benevolence, till they discard the false skin of pride that they wear on their person. They can sense Sai's



presence when they are free of the attachments. Till they change internally they might continue to receive from Sai, but they can never get Sai Himself! There isn't much difference between such persons and the beggars who line outside a temple. The only difference being, they simply beg inside the temple. In some ways the beggar outside may be better off, for he is out there in the open, asking. Whilst these persons ask, hiding in the precincts of the temple. Technically both are asking, both are extending their hands, both are poor. Both are in pain. Not much different except in their status. None returns empty-handed from Baba's door. The only difference is who receives what; each one returns bearing a different gift.

But then true worshippers are those who do not need anything other than Sai Himself! When Sai is ours, the entire Universe becomes ours. Sai can become yours if as per Sai's words, you change yourself. Surrender without any conditions! The only condition being devotion to Him. Sai always comes running to us. We only need to remember Sai. Just like the wallet in the pocket that becomes our personal responsibility, so also, those who seek shelter in Sai, come under His umbrella are looked after by Sai. For several life-times! Eternally!

At first Sai draws us to Him. Thereafter when we begin to act like Sai and become like Him, then we can sense Sai's power within us. Recall that piece of iron



which does have magnetic qualities within it, and that this quality is inactive till it comes in contact with a magnet? Exactly the same! We come in touch with Sai. The magic begins! Sai, in turn, is drawn towards us. If you long to call Sai towards yourself for protection, then first offer yourself to Sai and then become Sai. Every longing is fulfilled. It need be expressed by an earnest heart.

It is devotees who make a God. Devotees without their God and God without his devotees are each incomplete, unfulfilled. Both complete each other. They complement each other! Likewise, a soul without the Almighty and the Almighty without a soul are incomplete. For instance, when you were a part of Sai, you went running towards Him, since you felt and were incomplete. The second half of your person was with Sai, housed in him. When Sai has become a part of you, a part of your being and your personality, then he is incomplete without you. You complete Sai. He comes running to you. This is Sai's assurance and promise too!

*Baba is taking care of our welfare...
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.*



SAI BABA'S FOURTH PROMISE
REST ASSURED,
HAVE CONVICTION THAT MY
SAMADHI WILL FULFILL
YOUR WISH





Of the eleven assurances Sai Baba has made to the devotees, the fourth one- Rest assured, have conviction that my Samadhi will fulfil your wish- enhances the faith devotees place in Baba's Samadhi. This assurance opens as well as lights the path which begins at hope and leads towards faith.

It is this Sai assurance that helps devotees believe that Sai's Samadhi is the extension of Sai Himself. From the depths of their heart, they begin to worship Sai and are drawn deeper into His devotion. In their conscience, arises a deep-seated faith in Sai's Samadhi for it represents those promises which He made to nudge the devotees out of the darkness that comes with disappointment and be initiated on the well-lit path of hope and belief.

To understand the 4th assurance of Baba one ought to understand what the mind is, what it comprises of. What it means to have complete, absolute faith. One need understand what Hope and faith are. How hope helps in the transmission of faith. And how the Samadhi helps fulfil our multitude wishes and expectations.

Let us be assured that Sai resides in our mind. We look for Sai in temples forgetting that our mind is the seat, the temple where Sai resides. To us humans,

religious places sanctify and reiterate the presence and existence of God. No matter which religion we believe in, we have been taught that before we enter the religious place we must take off our shoes, so that the dirt and dust stuck to the soles does not find its way into this holy shrine, polluting it. We care about physical impurities, but we forget this about our mind which is steeped in all the filth that comes with ego and pride. Lugging this muck, we enter the place where we have seated Sai. We take care of our physical cleanliness and hygiene, but do we ever remember or bother to purify our minds?

Donning footwear which take with them the heat and fire of anger, the steely sharpness of acrimony, the seed of enmity, the feeling of hatred which actually hurts us most and the incessant greed which pulls us away from our goal. Not to forget the effervescent lust which makes us fall in our own esteem, our pride which habitually nurtures our false ego, trickery which ends befooling us more than the others it is meant for and the like. Carrying such wickedness and vile sentiments we enter the holy place, the temple. Do you think God could rest in such slime? Have you ever seen God in such sludge? Can you imagine Him being there for you in all this dirt?

But Sai is way different from the others. He stands apart.



Sai remains seated, amidst all this. He continues to reside in our minds which bears so much filth as stated above and gradually, over a period, Sai makes this unliveable space clean and liveable. He purifies our mind, His abode, and Himself. He wants us to improve and get over all the idiosyncratic vices that clutch us in their tentacles. He helps us return to more acceptable, gentle self, which is our true Nature, with which we were originally born. The sheet that wrapped around us when we arrived on earth was fresh, pure. It was spotlessly clean. We make this sheet dirty with our changing Nature, that temperament which we come to acquire from the outside world, the community. Even when we are fully aware that we will get nothing fruitful from this sludge and dirt, we sink deeper and deeper into it. When we don such dirty raiment, we begin to dislike ourselves. Embarrassed, we try to bury the unpalatable within ourselves. We begin sleeping with this churning within us. We feel suffocated within ourselves, feel sad, restless and hence begin to lose sleep. Eyes open, sleepless, we keep tossing and turning, trying to iron out the folds of misery. Our own breath hurts our ears. Carrying the burden of a lifeless, confused body, we remain in a stupor, oblivious of the moment when death arrives at our doorstep and embraces us.

How impure, how contaminated our thoughts become with so much negative within! It is in this



unclean mind that we carry many wishes which we ask of Sai. At such a time, thoughts become primary. They overpower sentiments. This has several ramifications. Sentiments give birth to Hope while expectation is an outcome of thoughts! Feelings belong to us, they are inherent in us, whereas thoughts come from outside, from our environment. Feelings create and foster love for Sai; thoughts make us expect from Him. Sentiments make us long for the welfare of others helping us realise that our benefit lies hidden in that of the others. Thoughts, on the other hand, are instigated/triggered by selfish motives giving rise to greed and lust. Sentiments seek simplicity whilst thoughts are perennially twisted, complicated. While emotions keep the mind in check, thoughts scatter it in different, divergent directions.

In this tussle between thoughts and feelings when we arrive at Sai's door to ask Him for something, we request that which is in our thoughts, and hence not always the best for us. Sai knows it all, He knows what is beneficial for us, yet, smilingly He gives us what we demand. He knows not how to say 'No'. Bearing the hope that someday we will turn around and let Sai give us what He wishes to, Baba continues to give us what we want. He has read our sentiments and understands them!

As he keeps giving us, our faith in Sai increases but our pride too increases with this bounty that we



continually receive. We are fully aware that whatever we have received is due to the blessings of Sai, yet it becomes very difficult for us to accept this truth. We are insignificant in the larger scheme of things, mere particles but begin to consider ourselves the doer, as the one responsible for all that we have. Meanwhile, during this time if some wishes remain unfulfilled because our good rests in the same, we feel dejected and disappointed. Our faith in Sai becomes shaky. We waver. At this juncture it dawns that all this while Sai has been the actual doer, the one making things happen which we proudly credited ourselves with.

Gradually, with wish fulfilment, our faith begins to grow, and this is called trust. This is the first step on the path of devotion. This trust blossoms on the fulfilment of more wishes and transcribes to belief. That's it! Most of us stop at this step itself not letting this belief gain strength, grow roots. We do not let it transform into Shraddha (reverence and adoration). The temple in our mind is nothing without absolute surrender. Conviction and belief are the key ingredients of each brick that is added here!

To prepare such a brick of trust it needs to be placed in the kiln of one's mind, and provided the flame of worship, a flame which is borne of the coal that kindles the pyre of our intense and continuous longings. And how do we keep the flame going? By



fanning with the fan of patience. It is this patience that Baba calls Saburi.

It is Saburi alone that helps us tide over the biggest of difficulties and hurdles that life may pose. It reassures in these turbulent times that everything will be fine. Saburi helps us realise how brave we are, and strong too. It teaches us to control our thoughts. It strengthens our self-confidence. Helps us get over sadness. In a nutshell, Saburi shows us results way better than even our own expectations.

When the brick-like sturdy faith is baked in our kiln-like mind, fed by the fire of devotion which is triggered in the firewood of longings, then our wishes go up in flames turning into ash, that is, desires are lost in the intensity of our worship. They undergo a transition. These desires change in form. Let us liken our body to a dish. When we dab our dish-like body with the ash of our wishes, we add a sparkle to ourselves, for in doing so, we kill the germs of lust. The grime of greed gets washed off our hands. When we apply the ash of our greed to our forehead then we become detached from all that is worldly. Ash has so much good hidden within itself. We are fully aware of this reality of ash, but our weaknesses make us overlook this sublime fact. When wishes change their form they tend to acquire a different use. Earlier these wishes were for selfish motive, for personal aggrandisement;

in their changed form they pertain to God. In the past, our wishes misled us but in their changed avatar they purify our minds. This change in our wishes goes on to change our inherent nature too.

Our changed form makes it difficult to recognise our own selves. So remarkable is the transition in us! We still nurture wishes but not ones laden with poison of greed and lust. By laying the brick of devotion in our heart, one at a time, we begin to build a sturdy structure in which Sai can reside.

Sai's Samadhi in Shirdi is not an ordinary one. It is made by putting together such bricks of faith and devotion. When Sai burnt all his wishes on a pyre, surrendering in devotion to God, with the hope of salvation, the bricks that came out of this kiln were sturdy. And the flames in this kiln? How did they continue to rise? They were fanned by Sai's saburi. It is such bricks that have been used to lay the foundation of Sai's Samadhi. Can you imagine their immense power, their intensity, their ability to do good to all those who rest their head on it, reverentially?

Chapters 43 & 44 of Shree Sai Sachcharitra have detailed Sai's Mahasamadhi yatra. From these chapters we learn that when his obedient servant Madhav Phasle accidentally dropped and broke a brick, Sai indicated that his Mahasamadhi was close at hand since He had lost a lifelong companion, the brick. Baba slept resting His head on that brick and always

kept it carefully and safely. It was close to Him all the time. Why would anyone keep a brick of all things, safely? This brick epitomised His belief and Sai, is the epitome of devotion. Baba slept, placing His head on this Shraddha (devotion) It was very important to Him and so he kept it safe. Shraddha was His life partner. This invaluable brick was Shraddha. It was His constant companion. When this brick broke and went to pieces, it was like an order from above that for His inexhaustible devotion to the Almighty He had been rewarded and would become one with God. One can only imagine the energy of devotion that must have radiated from the splinters which were bound to have scattered here and there, their energy ricocheting across the world with an even greater intensity.

This brick of devotion was put together with a valuable ingredient and placed along with other such priceless objects in Sai's Samadhi. An indicator of true faith and devotion, the destiny of this brick was made such that when it was whole, it was with Sai all the time and when it broke it continued to be with Him, becoming an invaluable part of His Samadhi. Sai's Samadhi has many bricks, but this particular brick occupies a place of prominence in being the first one to form the foundation of the Samadhi.

It is this Samadhi that Baba had donned while walking the streets of Shirdi, making the land holy, regarding the nondescript village as the Universe itself,



guiding several individuals to attain salvation. To make this happen Sai at first helped fulfil their physical needs and then later he sowed the seed of moksha helping them to attain liberation or salvation. How many fruits can a seed help bring forth, depends on the fertility of the soil too. In the same way Sai, plants thoughts and desire for salvation in every devotee but how many of us take this path indicated by Him depends on our thought process, upbringing, grooming and inherent nature. Not every devotee treads the path of self-discovery. Most of us get embroiled in the Maya (wealth and prosperity) that Sai has given to us. Only a handful can circumvent this attraction of Maya and take the spiritual path.

Those who begin to walk on this path, at first place their hands, on Baba's Samadhi, in such a manner that they feel Sai, become aware of His very presence. For the ones who reverentially touch the Samadhi and bow in absolute surrender, Sai himself writes their destiny. They feel the warmth of Sai's hands in theirs. This holy warmth melts the binding chains of mental anguish. When these individuals who are passionate about Sai place their head on the Samadhi, they touch the very brick which represents pure devotion. They come in contact with Sai and when His own breath falls on their ears fate changes completely, entirely. And Sai's breath as we know emits Allah's name in every inhalation and exhalation.



When our hands are placed on Sai's Samadhi, the form of hope we place in Him changes. It merges with the expectation. That which resided in our sentiments but emerged through our thoughts undergoes a change; it now emerges through our sentiments itself and is thus pure. Expectations turn to hope. Hope is noble, it is altruistic; on the other hand, expectation is selfish, it is based on self-interest. Hope takes us towards fulfilment while expectation keeps rising making us feel incomplete. Hope is eternal whereas expectation presents itself in a new form each passing day. Hope gives birth to contentment whilst expectation leaves us dissatisfied and thus unhappy. Hope makes us stand out of the crowd, but expectation makes us a part of the swirling crowds, for each one carries many expectations in their minds. Hope is another name for victory whilst expectation creates competition. The disappearance of expectation and the strengthening of hope are dependent on Sai's grace and blessings.

Once expectations end, and hope goes from strength to strength then the friction between thoughts and feelings come to an end. They begin to sync. The mind and heart begin to see and pursue the same objective. Feelings arise in the mind, feelings about thoughts we have, feelings about actions that are a result of our thoughts and destiny an outcome of our deeds, all become aligned; they are in tune with each other, synchronised. The music of life plays out.

The serene mind's intense faith in Sai and that holy brick, (Sai's life-partner) in Sai's Samadhi together change our destiny and help fulfil our hope for salvation. That salvation, in which we become one with Sai, surrendering our pride and ego at His holy feet. We assimilate His immense humility, and this not only makes us one with Him; we become Sai Himself, we are Him!

The Samadhi fulfils hope, keep certitude, maintain strong faith.

*Baba is taking care of our welfare...
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.*

SAI BABA'S FIFTH PROMISE
KNOW THAT I AM ALIVE, ALWAYS;
GAIN EXPERIENCE TO RECOGNISE
THIS TRUTH





Sai is Truth!

From amongst the 11 Promises of Sai Baba, explaining the 5th one, Know that I am alive, always, Gain experience to realise this truth- weaves the emotions around Sai Baba's true Nature, opening the path of truth in our lives. Truth alone is eternal, perennial and seamless. It is indestructible. This assurance brings devotees face to face with Sai's everlasting, imperishable, limitless and perennial Nature. Sai has neither a beginning nor an end. Sai is the name of perpetual, consistent Faith. It is through this assurance that we learn of Sai's true Nature that is evident. It is by experiencing this truth that we become aware of and experience the radiance of the truth about Sai, in our lives.

Many decades ago, Sai took Samadhi. Recently, we observed the centenary year of His Samadhi. If we look at the timeline, as compared to the present times, Sai did not live in too distant a past. That is why, when He hears us calling to Him, in good faith, He turns around and smiles at us. As the time rolls and the gap on the timeline of existence grows bigger, that is the gap between us and Sai as well as other kindred pure

souls increases, our voice becomes fainter and fainter before it reaches them. They have moved too far away in time from us. Hence, our voice reaches them in a delayed fashion. This delay occurs because the truth in our lives has dimmed while these holy souls wait, they ache to hear our voices. They are restless to hear us. It is we who tend to become weak; our voices become feeble and fade.

As these *yugapurush* (great, holy men of the time) become part of a receding timeline, they become more and more distant from us going further and further till their influence, in their absence, begins to have a diminishing effect on our hearts and minds. Their presence in our lives becomes minimal. When the eye that watches over us becomes invisible the following transpires. Untruth assumes significance and exercise great control. It is not as if the importance of these pure souls reduces in our lives. They are still important to us. But then our brain demands proof! What actually happens is this: When these contemporary enlightened souls cease to live amidst us, the truth about their life and existence withers away, it loses its true nature, significance and direction with passing generations. The later generations do continue to pass on what they have heard to their next generation but, what they have experienced cannot be expressed and communicated with the same intensity as their own experiences. It is at such times that the life of these



great holy men appears more like a story that is passed down from one generation to another, rather than fact, the truth. With the passing of more years and appearance of further generations these facts tend to take the shape of fiction, a figment of the imagination. Hurling in this waterfall of disbelief, emotions slowly disintegrate and dissipate.

At this juncture, the life stories of the *yugapurush*, involve more speculation and imagination than devotion! Partly on account of the limited memory of the person sharing these beautiful experiences, continuity is lost. Furthermore, the imaginative aspect gets added making the narration begin to sound imaginary. The stories are bound to carry forward but no longer do they create a psychological impact. Rather, they become a source of entertainment and amusement. In such times of uncertainty, hollow practices come to be accepted as religion. When rituals hold no emotions then they do not translate to worship and devotion. Emotionless rituals are akin to mere physical actions.

Such a situation arises because God or His Avatar is not a subject matter of the mind but that of the conscience. While the brain is a medium of untruths, conscience is the vehicle for truth. Our conscience appears in the examination that the brain/mind presents before it. Our performance in the examination is based on our emotional state.



To understand the workings of the mind and the conscience let us compare them. The path of prudence, conscience is difficult and tortuous as well as circuitous. But the mind seeks shorter, easier and more comfortable routes. Mind centres on the intellectual while conscience (Vivek) on devotion. Vivek gives rise to compassion; intellect makes one uncharitable, too practical. Kindness is the life-force of devotion giving it the foundation. When Vivek is overpowered by the intellect then devotion weakens. Untruths are born. As falsehoods rise and gain strength, our voice weakens to become feeble. Hence, being both distant on the timeline as well as our voice being weak, it cannot reach the ears of the holy souls. When our voices fail to fall on their sacred ears, then they have to reincarnate, take avatar again, return to earth for our salvation to save us from the resurgence of falsehoods. It is to remove the untruths that we carry around in our minds that God takes one avatar or another, from time to time. He arrives for our upliftment and salvation.

It is certain that Avatar's, in their true form, are bound to come to the earth periodically. Whenever untruths manifest themselves and continually increase through lies, deceit, cheating, misbehaviour, enmity, greed, misconception, injustice, then to destroy these vices Avtar's or *yugapurush* arrive on mother earth. They may come in the form of the modest Shree Ram, or in the form of Krishna as Arjun's charioteer or



again in the form of peace-loving Lord Mahaveer, or even in the form of Buddha, the epitome of sacrifice. These holy men may arrive bearing the message of the nirguna (without a shape) form as Prophet Hazrat Mohammed, or yet again to convey the lesson of unity the Avatar may come as Guru Nanak Devji, they may arrive as the most refined example, the emblem of supreme sacrifice, Jesus Christ or could arrive as benevolent Sai Baba to give a lesson in humanity. The life of these great holy men extracts the truth from the existing untruths that have become a part and parcel of our lives over the ages, presenting to us the very essence of truth.

The time when we begin to regard the truth as an untruth, a lot of undesirable change happens. In such times we do worship Lord Ram but the lives we lead may be compared with that of the demon Ravana! We do stand before the idol of Lord Krishna, hands folded in so called devotion, but in our hearts, we bear the sentiment of Kansa, Duryodhana and Jarasandh (evil characters exemplary of the malevolent within us). We do see Christ on the Cross but are unable to adopt and assimilate the compassion He represents. We do talk about the Prophet, but we choose to understand and explore His teachings in a distorted manner, the way it suits us best. Likewise, we do believe in Sai but do not accept what He says. We do not agree with Sai in



entirety because we doubt the perfection of Sai. We do not believe the fact that we are a part of Sai, and we long to attain a sense of completeness and perfection by uniting with Him. This is just because we can no longer see Him. For such a disbelieving mind, Sai has attained Samadhi; He has given up His life, he has ceased to exist in the physical form. We can no longer see Him before us. From the worldly point of view Sai has passed away. At this juncture, He has become merely the source of our wish fulfilment. We do ask Sai for wishes but have forgotten Sai Himself. For us he has become nothing more than a source of miracles. But such miracles happened when Sai was alive and continue to occur even today.

Sai's miracles that we hear about and draw us to Him truly take place for the upliftment of devotees. Sai does miracles for our betterment. Sai is not a small-time magician, who needs to conjure these miracles for His livelihood. We was a fakir, a mendicant, with little expectation from life. And, if He did not make miracles, even then He would receive alms, that would fulfil His basic needs. Why? Because He was fine with wearing worn out raiment. Food was equivalent to sustenance not a thing for the palate. Shelter- a worn out overhead protection. Yet he performed extraordinary deeds! He performed these miracles since he was overwhelmed by and drawn into the love, humility and devotion of



his devotees. Creating miracles was Baba's unique way of reinstating virtues and good habits in his bhakts. Every miracle that Sai does is to rebuild values and goodness in us.

These unique acts continue to take place even today. When they happen, a change begins to take place. When the 'I' that had become all powerful is subsequently displaced for different reasons, then once again, spirituality begins to take its true form, becoming an inherent part of our life. Spirituality comes with its set aims. Recalling the long-forgotten values and value system, making them stable, attaining peace by introducing oneself to one's own self are the real objectives of spirituality. When we know and understand our self, truly so, then we are on the path of truth. The search is in a manner of speaking not for Sai; it is for one's own self! That is the real and main objective of Sai's miracles.

Sai's way of showing us the path of truth is extremely simple. He wants to give us something else, but He is completely aware of what we are looking for. So, He gives us that. Those things that we continue to ache for, to pine for. More often than not these are wealth and property, marriage, offspring, victory in legal matters, and similar things that we continually ask Sai. And He? He keeps giving these lovingly. He even changes the course of the stars and planetary positions



for us. Without changing fate lines, He changes what is destined for us. This is His power! Such is His prowess that He gives us that which is beyond our reach and means. With every gift our greed for more keeps on increasing. We ask for even more. And He gives more. The process of asking and giving goes on. Gradually we begin to tire of asking Sai; we even begin to feel guilty. We feel we have become like beggars.

Think about the times when an individual owns nothing, he isn't scared of anything or anyone. What does he possibly have, to lose? But when we begin to own things our fear escalates. The more we have the more is the fear of loss. Now that He has given us so much of what we love, the fear of losing all that we have received heightens. This fear takes root in our hearts. No sooner than our wishes are fulfilled the fear of protecting these worldly things triggers lack of peace, disquiet within us. No sooner than one want is fulfilled another takes its place and the cycle continues. It makes us guilty. When out of jealousy we begin to live with the sentiment of hatred and enmity, sadness is left behind in this melee. The further we advance ahead of others, the more the enmity. When we see others happier than us, we feel envious. Sadness accompanies grief. That which brings joy today becomes a source of grief in the future.

In the past whenever we asked Sai for something,

we asked for the destructible and impermanent, the perishables. So, all that we have taken from Sai is bound to perish one day. Now that we have what we longed for; our mind can't be still. We feel restless. We become the walking dead, like zombies. At first, we give wings to our wishes, then are bent towards their fulfilment and finally when our wishes are met, we carry the weight of their existence; saddled by their weight we walk around like the living dead. All sensations and emotions begin at base level, a zero. But they eventually become stuck in the mire that is bad habits, ill-culture and vices. Eyes long to shed tears that have long dried up since we have already shed all the tears we could, in the struggle to fulfil every wish of ours. Our tongue longs to express anguish, but the words are long lost in the din of our demands that we continually make of Sai. Can there be more proof of being a lifeless being, a walking dead?

But then we ourselves had demanded that which would soon die. Sai Himself said, "*All man-made objects are perishable. Those made by God remain forever, they are eternal.*" Have you ever seen the sun or moon disintegrate and disappear? We can spoil Nature, ruin it, cause harm but can we bring it to an end? Man has changed his form and nature but has God ever lost faith in His creation, man? Even today a new breed takes birth now and again. When we get attached to

the perishables, we are bound to experience grief and a sense of loss when it perishes. The impermanent is a fabrication, the untruth. Falsehood floats in the air and tumbles face down, it has a fall, for it can never find its feet. It doesn't have a long life. It dies young. Our body is like that, perishable. It is impermanent and even an untruth. What is real is the atman (soul). Our soul is eternal. Shape is destructible but form is not. Form is permanent. That is the only truth.

Subject centred happiness has a short life. No sooner than the subject dies, the joy associated with it ends. This is a fact. In the same way, happiness generated by resources is an untruth because as soon as the means come to an end, joy ceases to exist. Peace, joy and happiness are eternal and are the only truth.

If you wish to ask Sai for something, ask for Sai Himself. Ask for something that never ends. But again, what is the point of asking anything of Sai? When we ask Him, we make Him realise that we do not have faith in Him. By placing our demands before Him we make Him feel as if He is unaware of what we want. By extending our hand before Sai we fall in our own eyes. We are oblivious of the fact that Sai is waiting with an unfathomable cache, an ocean, whereas we are satisfied by only the minimal, a mere fistful of water! Sometime, maybe now, just leave it to Him. We gloat and are happy after sprinkling only a few drops on



ourselves whilst He waits to soak us, drench us with his benevolence. Just this once, forget about asking Him. Just place complete faith in Him. Gratefully receive what He wants to give and see the change!



When we turn to Sai, we hope to feel alive once again, we expect miracles to happen, then we expect a new kind of miracle.

Sai, too, performs the miracle. Leaving our burdens to Sai, we come alive, become vibrant once again. The tears that have long dried in the depths of our eyes, resurface and pour from the eyes like a waterfall. Tears no longer taste salty. They turn sweet. Words of gratitude that once dried up on our tongues roll to its tip. Our weightless body, rid of its burden, floats ahead on life's path revelling in its weightlessness. The burden of wants and desires is now off our shoulders. This life, such a one, is for good. Feelings for Sai are reborn. We can recognise and identify truth. We realise Sai is the truth, Sai is eternal. What we receive from Him can never come to an end.

When Sai begins to give us what is His wish, then he fills our heart with truth giving us so much joy that we are soaked in that happiness. We emerge dripping wet. We no longer feel attracted towards objects nor suffer from grief at their loss. No longer the fear of losing the physical things nor the sadness that emanates from their departure.



Consider me alive... always...experience and recognise the truth. Having understood that Sai is with us, He is alive, we are able to complete the journey of life to the accompaniment of joy, peace and pure bliss.

 *Baba is taking care of our welfare...* 
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.



SAI BABA'S SIXTH PROMISE
ONE WHO COMES TO ME,
NEVER GOES EMPTY HANDED





Sai Baba's 6th assurance to His devotees reconfirms and reiterates Baba's greatness and his grace. Of Sai Baba's 11 assurances which comfort, guide and give solace to the devotees, the sixth one promises that not a single individual from those who come to Baba and seek refuge in Him, returns empty handed. In fact, so strong is this assurance given by Sai that He has gone further, granting liberty to the ones who have faith in Him to file an appeal should they even once return dejected or empty handed! They can lodge a complaint with Him. Such a Promise illustrates Sai's magnanimous Nature and intensifies it, highlighting His glory. Likewise, the one who hears this Promise of Sai is made aware of His all Powerful presence and help understand that He is the King of Kings. He gives generously without discrimination! The feelings of reverence and devotion take birth in a devotee who surrenders to Him. The bhakt realises that Sai is a King who pledges to his subjects that once they seek his asylum, they can never ever be sent empty handed.

To expand and analyse further, Sai's merciful Nature is also made evident through the 6th Promise. Through this assurance Baba promises the one who surrenders to Him that in case wish fulfilment remains

elusive then he can even lodge a protest with Sai Himself, thereby plugging any holes that exist and removing any doubts that may have surfaced in the bhakt's mind. These words leave no room or scope of any lack of fulfilment for anyone! Such fairness and generosity! Such magnanimity!

To understand this Sai guarantee, one must understand what it means to be in Sai's shelter, to seek His refuge. It is important to identify the ability a seeker ought to possess, to receive his mercy. Further, one must understand, once the devotee reaches Sai's shelter, what is it that she/he receives which is so special and exclusive? And if an individual were not to receive what he desires, what can he say to Sai? How can he present his complaint before the merciful, generous benefactor? The answers to all these questions would help us absorb the true intensity and meaning of Sai Baba's 6th promise to us.

The first and essential step towards seeking refuge begins with arriving at Sai's Holy Feet; devotion is the first step to filing an appeal with Baba, in case our wish remains unfulfilled.

Wishes are inherent in the appeal we make to Him. When we first approach Sai, we do so as applicants, as claimants. We expect miracles from Him. It is from here that our loving relationship with Sai begins. In the examination called life, when we fail to understand a question paper or are stuck at a juncture,



we go to Sai seeking solution. So acute is our desire to seek and receive the solutions, that merciful Sai grants them to us. Trapped in the vicious clutches of greed and lust we end up asking Sai for sadness, thinking our happiness rests in that. How so? Today, what we consider as happiness, turns out to be the source of our unhappiness in the future. This happens because we ask Sai for all that is perishable. Objects that we seek and are bestowed with today are bound to perish in the future creating pain and sadness in their absence. Sai wants to give us something else but stops short since he finds us unprepared to receive that which he wishes to give us. Sai's treasury is laden with invaluable objects and experiences, yet we pointlessly continue to ask him for materialistic things. Just as soon as we receive some, our demands for more increases. This process of asking and receiving continues till we begin to feel ashamed and embarrassed about placing requests for the worldly before Sai. He becomes saddened by our habit of requesting all the time. Yet He continues to remain a giver. He doesn't stop giving. During this entire process, he helps us change, to become better individuals.

With Baba's kindness and our persistence, we are loaded with perishable objects. From this emanates and arises the fear of losing these so called valuables. The more the possessions the greater the fears. Contrarily,



when Sai initiates the bestowal of that which he always wanted to shower on us, then begins His actual work, His guidance.

Sai begins to erase the pain caused by all that we demanded of Him. In accordance with our past actions, we do continue to experience pain and sorrow; but now the change is that we remain unaffected by these. We are not inclined to wallow in self-pity due to the sufferings. We do not become sad because of them. The process of becoming better persons has begun. Once the feelings of sadness dissipate, with Sai's grace we grow wings of happiness, yet we do not begin to fly beautifully or seamlessly. We gain stability and permanence. We begin to recognise and understand Sai' true Nature. We begin to accept and believe that whatever Sai is doing is for our good! Our faith intensifies.

Sai represents the infinite. He is expansive. He is present in very particle, each atom and every heart. He is present in heaven and earth. You could say that whatever is present in this Existence, every bit of it, is present in Sai. Or that in everything animate or inanimate, Sai is present. So simple and straightforward. Sai is all powerful. He is omnipresent. He is omnipotent and He is everywhere It is difficult to differentiate whether Sai is everywhere, or every place is a manifestation of Sai!

To be able to surrender to Sai or become one with Him, one needn't make special efforts or do something special. Nor does he need to visit a specific place. There is no requirement of any rituals or offering (ahuti). One doesn't need any specialisation or a special ability to be able to attain Sai. No requirement of reading a scripture or puran. No need to rote learn and recite a mantra or perform a *tantra* (ritual). One needn't don special clothes or make offerings of garlands, flowers, incense, chador (sheet) or any expensive article. Sai doesn't need any of this. What we present to him is our own personal and individual wish. Can we give to the generous benefactor? What can we give back to Him? Even thinking that we can return His favours is cheating ourselves. Everything has been given by Him. And our relationship with all these objects is only till our body, which is His gift, lasts. Our body is perishable and so are all the relationships This is an eternal truth. Sai is immortal and so is our bond, once formed, with Him. To forge this eternal bond, to bridge the gap between Sai and us, nothing perishable or destructible can ever work!

To be able to get refuge in Sai, something ordinary like chanting of names is not essential. There is no need to even move the tongue and lips. Only remember Sai's name with a pure heart, within. Remembering Him is sufficient. If the heart is pure and the faith in Sai is strong, then Sai takes us into His shelter.

But then how can the heart be made pure? What makes it conducive to become Sai's residence?

Having made it impure and brackish with malice, enmity, arrogance, unpleasantness, jealousy, avarice and hatred, we need to bring about changes. Drastic transition. Complete transformation! To improve. We need to accept the challenge of changing our heart for the better to usher Sai into it. If you improve, everything else improves. If you are able to realise yourself, everything else is attainable. If you are able to initiate the process of self- realisation then the feeling of reaching Sai, attaining Him will surface and become prominent. You will receive his shelter. With time as this realisation gains strength, you will begin to sense and experience the love towards Him.

Devotion which began with an appeal reaches its zenith, the pinnacle, that of Love. The occasions or moments we're without Sai, in the absence of His loving words, without His *darshan*, we begin to feel incomplete and when this sense of incompleteness completes you, then know that this is love for Sai. To understand such love it is important to understand Meera's love for Lord Krishna. Love has the power to transform poison to elixir (Amrit).

Sai is love. Infinite love! Incessant love flows from His heart, perennially, for us. It is by diving headlong into this infinite, ceaseless waterfall of love, submerging in it, that we make ourselves true. No difference exists



between Sai and us. The gulf between us is bridged. Going to Sai, surrendering to Him is akin to becoming one with Him. When love becomes infinite, then every pore becomes pure, saint-like. Having received Sai's proximity, His presence, we become saints. When in love, it is necessary to become like a lover. The sentiment of sainthood surges from every pore! Our body becomes a temple. It becomes Sai's temple in which an eternal flame remains lit before Sai, who resides within! Unparallel, seamless, eternal flame! It is with such an eternal love for His Guru that Sai had lit the dhuni in Dwarkamayi, which till today continues to ensure the well-being and welfare of mankind.

When each pore attains saint like characteristics or sainthood, our body transforms into a temple. It is then that our heart changes, our mind transcends to that of a saint. Extraordinary love for Sai is His true refuge. The path to our rescue and upliftment opens up.

Offering love to Sai and receiving His love, one never remains empty handed or unfulfilled. Our cloth bags begin to overflow. They become too small to receive Sai's bounty. Even before one can extend one's hand to ask, prayers are accepted. Even before one bows with reverence one receives multiple gifts. Such is Sai's Leela. He does not know how to send away a devotee unfilled, without his blessings, love and grace! He is generous and giving!



The gifts come as a shower! When in Sai's protection, the attachment to impermanent things dissipates. We begin to realise the futility of this chase. Our love for the transitory begins to fade. Lust disappears. Attachment to Sai begins. His refuge brings us joy. We begin to understand the true meaning of love. The form of attachment changes. We attach ourselves to Sai's feet. We feel restless without Him. Chanting of Sai's name goes on ceaselessly in the mind. Sai is always with us. This Sai attachment transitions to bliss. The joy is in being with Sai.

The future pans out before us. The uncharted becomes easy to explore. Earlier everything seemed hazy; since the future is undecided and obscure, we tend to be wary of it. It is the uncertainty that gives birth to fear. Another facet of fear is death. One who is afraid and fearful can be likened to the dead. With Baba beside us, this fear of the future goes away. Chanting Sai's name creates fearlessness. *None can harm me.* Such thoughts arise and are established in the mind. In this whirlpool of dubiety and ambiguity, being with Sai, we experience the blossoming of courage .

Sai's refuge begins to change our thoughts. We come as a petitioner, a seeker. When we come to Him, we come with an emptiness. But Sai erases this emptiness. He fills it with true gifts-happiness, peace and joy.

Let even one person try to say that she/he has returned indigent from Sai's shelter. It's unlikely! Sai has never ever sent back anyone without His bounty.

*Baba is taking care of our welfare...
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.*

SAI BABA'S SEVENTH PROMISE
AS THE SENTIMENT OF AN
INDIVIDUAL SO MY COUNTENANCE





Sai Baba's 7th Promise, "As the sentiment of an individual so my countenance," teaches his devotees the concept of togetherness, and mutual give and take. Sai's emotion matches those within our heart. Sai resides in sentiments, He is present where there are true feelings. This statement is authenticated by Baba's 7th reassurance to his bhakts; it gives strength to the statement. The more power and energy we give to our feelings, the more intense Baba's feeling too becomes. Baba's 7th Promise glorifies reciprocity. And reciprocity is so true of emotions.

Sentiments are the output of our heart. Fanned by our will, sentiments prosper and grow as per our will. It is these sentiments that lead to thoughts which in turn result in action. In turn, it is these actions that create our destiny or fate. It's clear then that we are the outcome of the sentiments we bear. Feelings determine human nature. (Temperament)

The Highest Power, whom we address as God, shows no action. This Power is Nirguna, shapeless and formless. It does not nurture sentiments. It is devoid of emotions. We long for that which we don't have. We pine for the element which is absent from our lives. Whatever is missing, it is exactly that we earnestly

seek. It is because of this that Gods descend on earth in the form of humans, seeking, receiving and savouring the emotional and loving devotion that is offered to them. It's not an untruth when it is said that God hungers for love. This is because He seeks this emotion, which is otherwise absent. And to fill this lacuna, God employed a unique way!

Nature which is the Creator's (God's) better half is an inherent in His Creation. Nature is nothing but *maya* (illusion). God has made it breath-taking. Carrying beautiful sentiments within, the entire Creation is an outcome of *maya* and is illusory.

It is Nature, then, that has led to the creation of God. Nature is responsible for the creation of the three forms of God. The Creator, in the form of Lord Brahma, the Preserver, Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahesh or the Destroyer!

God's creation is exquisite; it is perfect. But can He alone savour the taste of this marvellous wonder? No. Since God himself cannot enjoy the outcome and product of his labour, the Universe, mother earth and Nature, He has created man. Man bears within him the qualities of God. Nurturing and bearing God-like behaviour, a perfect human/individual comes to be known as Avtar or God incarnate (Incarnation of God).

The individual in whom Godly sentiments are inherent go on to become His incarnation and are



revered so. Man can experience God through his own sentiments. Adding power to these sentiments with his noble deeds, he is capable of rising to the pedestal of God. It's the precise sentiments that are of prime importance.

Musk (Kasturi) exists in a deer's navel. Has a deer ever seen it? Does he know about its existence? Bearing this fragrance in his own body, the deer wanders from one forest to another in search of the source of this fragrance, oblivious to the fact that the Kasturi rests within him. Likewise, man has never ever seen God but with the weight of his sentiment he has added strength to his belief in the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of this earth. This sentiment is akin to the musk. God, being a part of our sentiments adds strength to our belief. The search for God helps maintain and sustain our identity and existence. We receive the courage to live without fear. The fact that God exists, He is present, and He is everywhere, prevents us from taking the path of evil and sin. It is this thought that is also referred to as conscience. The one who gives a ear to his conscience, listens to it, is able to strengthen the inherent goodness in him, keeping away from the path of wickedness and evil.

The one who ignores the voice of the conscience, makes the Godliness in him feeble enough to turn him into an evil person or a monster. So, God and demon



reside within us, they are a consequence of our own sentiments. As we think and feel, so we become.

True sentiments make the impossible possible. Those actions which seem improbable and beyond the scope of the human body, become possible with adequate feelings and emotions. Our limited knowledge credits God with such unlikely deeds. In everyday language such deeds are called miracles. Miracles do not happen anywhere outside of us. It is our strong and deep-rooted emotions that make extraordinary deeds possible. God who is tied by the bonds of our love and emotions feels compelled to perform miracles, on account of our intense love for Him.

It's our ordinary thinking capacity that makes us bow our heads to miracles. We seek God in these marvellous deeds. Some individuals consider miracles alone as the proof of God's existence. Our belief and faith in Sai, is an outcome of these unique deeds. As our faith in Sai increases in intensity so does the occurrence frequency of these miracles. And gradually, such incidences which we once considered extraordinary, become a routine part of our life. They become an everyday occurrence, commonplace. Contrarily, when emotions are at an ebb, their intensity on a decline, miracles weaken; they reduce and subsequently fade. We know the outcome and repercussion of such an event! Such is the influence of emotions! Such its ability to transform our life.



Sai resides in our hearts and emotions too reside there. Both being in the same space creates a magnetic effect. If a magnet remains close to a piece of iron for a long duration, some of the magnetic pull transfers itself to that iron block, even if temporarily, for a bit. Now consider our hearts, rather, the seat of our heart. Inside it, reside both Sai and our emotions. They are together every passing moment, in proximity. They are bound to affect each other! We remain oblivious and are unaware that slowly but surely, Sai, who resides in our sentiments, begins to purify them! Sai is within us; our emotions become one with Him, adopting and imbibing his energy within us. Emotions transform into Sai and Sai becomes our emotions!

Time for some analysis. Emotions are of two kinds: Devotion and Service. Complete surrender to one's God is regarded as devotion. We see the one who resides within us, everywhere and in everything. Devotion does not call for hollow acts like bowing multiple times or adorning the forehead of the deity with sandalwood paste. These are mere pomp and show. A bodily act. Love's source is the heart, pure and pristine.

Harbouring greed for earning money, a group of bhajan singers from Madras (Chennai) arrived at Baba's Dwarkamayi. They held the hope of receiving a lot of money from Baba. Instead, in accordance with her sentiment, the leading lady of the group saw Sai



in the form of Lord Ram! Kaka Saheb Dixit a staunch devotee saw Sai as Lord Vitthal! Shama witnessed Sai in the form of Dattatreya while Mule Shastri saw his guru Gholap Swami. Dr. Pandit saw Kaka Puranik, where Sai himself was seated! Others present saw Sai, but Dr. Pandit witnessed his guru! Sai gave the doctor permission to apply sandalwood paste on His throat and forehead, a rarity! When Nanasaheb Chandorkar was transferred to Pandharpur, even before he arrived for darshan, Baba seated in his masjid, had created the ambience to show his approval of Nana's moving to Pandharpur. Knowing Das Ganu's ardent wish to go for a holy dip in Sangam, (Allahabad, North India) Sai let the holy water of the pilgrimage trickle from his toes! When Balaji Nevaskar considered a harmful snake as a form of Sai and presented it milk, the venomous creature left without harming anyone! Countless experiences! Infinite miracles. Just as a devotee felt, Baba gave him darshan in the same form or mode. Baba respected their strong belief in their respective God, the one they had been worshipping, and gave darshan accordingly. Such is the power of love. Such the worth of heartfelt sentiment! Without emotion, worship is incomplete. And incomplete worship is hollow, minus effect; it is powerless, and does not help attain anything.

Smt. Savitri Tendulkar bore strong emotions within, because of which Baba changed the very



trajectory of her son's planetary disposition, even changing the writing on his horoscope (kundali) which said he could never become a doctor. But with Baba's blessings the boy cleared the exams. In another instance, Baba reversed the prediction of Bapusaheb Buti's death, delaying it. Several well-known astrologers had predicted that Damuanna would remain childless in his current lifetime. Baba changed that and Anna enjoyed the privilege of fathering children. Similarly, several childless couples who came to Baba's shelter received the joy of bearing children despite multiple obstacles. On the other hand, many were blessed with wealth and prosperity, their fortunes turned around completely. As the sentiment so the experience! They loved Sai and were devoted to him and Sai expressed his love in multitudinous ways.

Even today Sai's miracles are ceaseless. Baba's mercy received on account of our sentiments for him change the path of the stars and planets.

Shama considered Baba as his friend. Perhaps on account of his past life deeds, Shama experienced a shortage of money throughout his life. The intensity of emotions that Shama had for Baba can be estimated from the fact that when the gentleman slept, with every inhalation and exhalation the utterance of Sai's name was clearly audible to anyone who was close by or listening. Honourable Shri Kharpade has corroborated this fact in his diary. Even though Shama



did not own much wealth, due to Baba's loving care, he lived the life of a rich man, never experiencing any shortage of any kind. The very same Shama, however, met the wealthy and well-placed Judges, Mamlatdar, Collectors, Mahant and Abbot (Mathadhish) with Baba's guidance. Shama was regarded as Baba's representative and received great honour and respect in that capacity. He was invited to many functions and was offered expensive gifts by the ones who had extended the invitation. Like the wealthy, Shama had the honour of travelling in a carriage and on elephant back. The privileged ones pleaded Shama to receive Sai's darshan and benevolence. In this way Shama received such comforts and honour which even the very rich could not boast of. Just as devotees bow and pray to Nandi (the bull) before praying to Lord Shankar, so also devotees approached Shama so that they could have a divine darshan of Sai. Shama was Sudama to Sai. He had the right emotions too. Sentiments have the power and strength to change destiny. This is well illustrated by Shama's life.

Quite like Shama's earnest and pure emotions, another devotee, Shri Dabholkar had an urge to write about Baba's *leela* and through these stories, share Baba's glory. Baba acknowledged and respected this wish. Today, Shree Sai Sachcharitra written by Shri Dabholkar is read by lakhs of people daily. Devotees consider themselves blessed, while reading this living



illustration of Baba's personality and character. It was Shri Dabholkar's pure sentiments that led Baba to reassure him that once he overcame his pride and ego to surrender whole heartedly, Baba himself would write these stories, for Shri Dabholkar. Pride is a sentiment, that corrupts other sentiments. Baba kept to his word and today Shri Dabholkar is as revered as Ved Vyas, the writer of Mahabharat. Sentiments have the capacity to transform a particle into a vast ocean! Such is their intensity, power and strength!

How do sentiments become fruitful? When devotion reaches a crescendo, is at its peak and when we see God everywhere, in every being then the feelings of service take birth. Serving others becomes primary. It is at this time that sentiments having taken the stairs of devotion reach further up to take the stairs of service. A transformation takes place. At this stage, Sai is not limited to the temple, or an idol, a photo or a special assigned place but quite like a shower (spray) of water, spreads out in all directions. Emotions are not merely directed at Sai or meant for Him alone but are felt for the Sai who resides within every individual, each person. The form of sentiments begins to change! Then Sai doesn't remain a single entity. He is multiple times that, many. Sai is present as much within me as He is within the others. This thought is born of the query about what is inanimate, what is animate; what is movable and what immovable? It is Sai who is



present in each of these. Respect for everyone arises. We honour each individual. We love each being and shower love upon them. Sentiments and emotions begin to bear fruit.

The most essential condition of sentiments gaining strength to bear fruit is their being faultless, free of any anomaly. If our mind is laden with evil and wicked thoughts the output would be malevolent. And maliciousness does not result in any good. If emotions have a selfish intent in their wake, then they lose strength and weight. If there is selfishness, then togetherness and good company are not possible. The reverse is true as well. If there is closeness to others, then self-centredness is ruled out.

Selfishness creates a lot of extra baggage. Once self-interest is removed relationships don't remain an encumbrance. They become lighter, meaningless. It is with such a selfless attitude alone that we can attain Sai's Grace. When we acquire the ability to be happy in the joys of others and are saddened by their difficulties and sorrows, then we can consider that our ability and intent to serve has become strong. When one feels bad at another's sorry plight, one begins to look for ways to help him overcome the sad predicament. When we wipe the tears off someone else's face, bringing a smile to the lips, get the needy and sick treated, offer food to the hungry, volunteer help to the destitute, it is then that we find and attain Sai. It is in the smile of a sad

face, in their tears, in that piece of roti (chapati), and the help we provide, that we begin to see Sai. It is as if Sai emerges from the idol, diffuses and fills our lives like a fragrance. When this happens know that Sai and you have become one!

It follows then that the ones who serve others needn't pray for themselves. They needn't ask for anything for themselves. These aren't required because even before they fold their hands in entreaty, their prayers are accepted. Having obtained Sai, what more do they need for supplication?

We receive Sai in the form of happiness, peace and bliss. Just as are the emotions in our heart, so is Sai's presence within us. He never lets us become unhappy. Isn't this what we expect from Sai? Pure happiness!

As is the feeling in the heart of an individual, so also the form of our Sai's heart.

*Baba is taking care of our welfare...
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.*



SAI BABA'S EIGHTH PROMISE
YOUR BURDENS ARE MINE;
THIS PROMISE IS THE TRUTH!





Shirdi Sai Baba repeatedly reassured His devotees of His eternal presence in their lives. His 11 *Vachan* or promises made are renowned. The truth of every assurance made by Baba is intensified and clearly evident in the eight promise. Baba Himself states that **He shall bear the weight of his devotees and this promise of His will never prove to be false.**

Seated in Masjidmayee Sai has stated the truth at all times; his words can never be considered riff-raff or untruth.

But then several questions and hurdles arise, as is human tendency, despite the fact that Sai not only readily accepts our burden but also carries it.

The question remains:

- Are we as willing as He is to let Him bear our weight throughout our life?
- Have we made up our minds to let Him be the bearer, the one who carries our burdens?
- Are we prepared, all set to live without the encumbrances, allowing Sai to take them on for Himself?

Let's reflect on what our burden is. When we're born we begin with nothingness, a state of nothing. We emerge from a zero and it is this *shunya* or nought

that draws us in till we return to the same, a state of nothingness. The journey between the two stages of nothingness or zero is what we call life. However, unfortunately, forgetting that we begin with nothing and end in nothing, somewhere along the journey, we begin to carry a heavy weight, a weight of many kinds! That of attachment that comes from affection, the weight of pride, that of revenge, hatred, anger and affront. That's it! The burden increases, its weight becomes unbearable, yet we lug it throughout our lives, sagging under this tremendous weightiness. We become breathless with this heavy load. Our courage begins to fail us. But the weight, well, it keeps on becoming heavier and heavier. And who is responsible for all this bulk on our shoulders? We, ourselves, for it is us who have this habit of accumulation of things be it material or emotional. In the struggle to keep going with this burden on our shoulders we forget to live life the way we should. Instead we merely exist, we breathe and move forward mindlessly.

A look at the stage of childhood will help understand the concept of burden better. We remain happy in our childhood, having begun from the state of zero, needing no reasons or cause to continually be in that state. We smile and make others smile. Our innocent laughter lights up the lives of those around us. When we smiled in our sleep our elders would say



that we were connecting with God, communicating with Him in our sleep. We were innocent, our innocence a result of our emerging from nothingness. We could befriend everyone, since the idea of enmity or adversity is unfamiliar at this stage. At that point, we couldn't even dream of causing harm to anyone, let alone, actually, cause harm! If perchance we offended someone with our words or actions, without a moment's hesitation we would readily apologise and beg forgiveness. We would even forswear allegiance, while expressing regret! We didn't really mind what others said or did, did we? And even if we did feel bad occasionally, a little cajoling was enough to bring back the lost smile to our lips. And the next moment? Well everything would be forgotten! Such innocence! Such weightlessness! Such buoyancy and most of all, no baggage!

Totally unaware of tricks and treachery, our childhood is a repository of pure joy. We could play with any companion and if beaten in a game would engage in innocent tricks to win in the second round. A game was just that, a game, innocent play. No scheming, no conniving! Remember this? Weren't we happy in both situations-be it a victory or loss? If tired, we could easily doze off, without a care. Our needs? Limited and few; fulfilled in no time and with little effort. No disparaging words, no unkind deeds. Happy in every situation! Recall anything to do with settling scores?



Absolutely not. The only calculations we had in mind pertained to books, which truly were our only world. No thought about honour or dishonour, no feelings about being insulted. Such is the state of nothingness. This is the state of nought, zero! A state where everyone and everything is equal! That's each human's true nature. That's where each one of us begins. Quite like water. Pure and clear. Moving with the tide. Taking the shape of the container. Water! Creating a place for itself yet accommodating everywhere and anywhere.

As is natural, gradually, we grow older. The thought of God disintegrates, vanishes. The space that God and His dreams occupied becomes a vacuum and is taken up by fanciful wishes which grow with time. Slowly, as they gain weight, our longings emerge from our dreams and take centre stage, only to take away our sleep. No longer do we meet God in our sleep; consequently, our conversations with Him cease.

Eyes are bereft of sleep though heavy and closing. What of the cackling, innocent laughter? Well, that's gone too, along with sleep! Doesn't it? One begins searching for reasons to laugh. What a dramatic turnaround. If one finds a reason to laugh, the place may be inappropriate; if the place suits us then, we may not have a playmate with whom we can share our laughter. Should we choose to laugh alone, people label us as 'Crazy' and this thought seeps deep within us, parking itself, making us supremely conscious of what



others might say or think. One does need to express emotions, so if laughter is subdued, then it finds an outlet in the form of anger. We begin to lose our temper at the smallest of matters. We become irritable and cantankerous. The innocence of childhood gets lost in this maze of negative emotions. In this melee, friends and relatives get left behind and we continue onward, by ourselves, alone, bearing another weight, that of loneliness. With absolutely no one to share the burden with! None remain, for each one has to carry and does carry his individual burden, dragging themselves ahead. Each one shoulders her/his own burden with no shoulder to lean on, in times of need. A burdensome, lonely life!

We do play but the stakes are so high that a loss is unpalatable and difficult to take into stride. A defeat affects us, defeats us. In the phase of losses and defeats it becomes a challenge to bear the weight of victory. The desire to be successful, emerge victorious at any cost makes us take the path of deceit. Innocence is long gone, buried beneath the weight. Contrarily, the weight of deception weighs down to such an extent that one begins to dislike oneself and one's ways. Now the additional weight of vexation becomes ours to carry.

We begin to feel bad about the smallest of issues. A joke cracked by someone hurts us and we begin to see it as an insult. We refuse to respond to cajoling or



coaxing. It becomes difficult to forgive and hence we feel the burden of this on our minds. Joy derived from the little things of life elude us. We tend to forget our relationships. We find it difficult to accept our mistakes and even if we do accept one or two, here and there, asking for forgiveness is next to impossible on account of our huge ego and pride. Gradually we begin to take joy in rebuking others, considering it our chance at victory and treat it as success. This feeling is hollow in itself, yet it creates its own burden.

We continue to take on many encumbrances, which is increased weight. How far can we possibly travel with so much weight? We tire. We are disappointed. We feel dejected. We feel depressed. We don't feel like talking to anyone. We become an island, segregated from everyone. Our heart aches, it cries but tears are lost in the abyss that our eyes become. They dry up never to emerge. We long to quit everything but are unable to for we lack the courage and conviction. Days turn dark. But in reality the tears haven't really dried; they are somewhere deep within and at this juncture, when everything seems to be falling apart, rise to our eyes. Blinded by these brimming tears, we trip. Stumbling, yet desperately seeking solace and looking for shelter, our hands find their way to Baba's feet. We fall down. He holds us. Steadies us. He picks up His children who come stumbling to Him and have fallen at His feet. Sai helps. We need to call out with our heart.



When we bow reverentially at his feet, expressing a desire to be freed of the darkness that surrounds us, Sai gently caresses us, places His hand on our head and whispers, *“Leave your burdens to me.”*

He takes our load, which we are happy to be relieved of. We begin to change. Tears that had dried fall in torrents releasing our pent up emotions, untangling the knots in our mind and with that lifts the weight off our burdened shoulders. Our worries melt away with His love quite like how warmth melts the snow on the mountain. We realise the mistakes we’ve made and are ready to seek forgiveness. It becomes so much easier to forgive what has transpired. Fully aware that any breath could be our last one we continue to lumber on through lives; but after surrendering to Sai, the changed us readily accepts and acknowledges the fact, understanding the eternal truth, that life is short and unpredictable. The reality of how barely any time is left hits us. Who wants to put up a fight with the world anymore? The advice that we doled out now becomes the path we ourselves begin to follow. The longing to be a kid once again, surges. Not immediately, but slowly and steadily the smile which had disappeared in the desert of unhappiness, reappears on our lips. The stage of innocence takes a second birth!

Innocence, too, doesn’t return with its full vigour, but as we move ahead on the chosen path we see honesty with its arms stretched, ready to embrace us. We who

would be irked by the tiniest of matters begin to think before we speak. Selfishness transforms to selflessness. The habit of rebuking and condemning others changes and we try to make amends for wrongs done. Such is Sai *leela!* On the other hand, should someone choose to censure us, we merely smile, taking no offence at all. It is as if the heart knows how to dodge the arrow-like, piercing words. Wobbly feet display a new zing. There's a radiant brightness in the eyes. And sleep returns, this time with no medicinal help. We feel relaxed and once again begin to dream about God. With recurrence of such divine meetings how can smile not return. The journey of nought begins again.

Shunya or Zero is the ultimate truth! Sai's assurance too, quite like the zero, is absolutely true, with no semblance to untruths! Sai's *Vachan*, the promised bliss!

 *Baba is taking care of our welfare...* 
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.



SAI BABA'S NINTH PROMISE
COME TAKE UTMOST HELP; WHAT
YOU WISH FOR ISN'T TOO FAR AND
IS ATTAINABLE





The Ninth assurance of Sai from amongst the eleven He has made to His devotees which states: Come take utmost help; what you wish for isn't too far and is attainable- is indicative and illustrative of Baba's magnanimity, His being similar to the Kalpatru (wish fulfilling tree). It is a well-known fact that Baba erased all the pains of the bhakts of His times and even today when He is not present physically amongst us, Sai continues to listen to our appeals and prayers, erasing our grief and pain. Even today He continues to fulfil our wishes; barely are we able to move our lips by way of requesting Him that He fulfils each genuine wish.

Occasionally, the thoughts of how is it even possible that these holy spirits whom we regard as God or saints or Almighty, are aware of each of our wishes, and are able to fulfil them even though we cannot see them in the physical form arise? When they are not present in flesh and blood then how is it possible for them to fulfil our wishes? Such queries do come to our minds. Contrarily, in times when our wishes are not fulfilled then we even begin to doubt their very existence. It is true that our brain is a seeker of importance. Our self-interest is served through our wishes and when we see this fulfilment we begin to give

even greater significance to the bodily requirements. Contrastingly, when our selfish motives remain unserved, we refuse to even look in that direction. Oh! The lengths that we can go to serve our own purpose!

Let us remind ourselves of the multiple timelines that are a part of our Universe.

There are several timelines that run parallelly in God's Creation. This is the principle of Physics. We feel that time is moving ahead. But the truth is that we are standing on the timeline which is constantly moving. The scenes keep changing quite like it happens on a moving train. Our companions change. Our circumstances change. We move on, pass away and then find ourselves standing somewhere else on another timeline. In a new environment, in a new setup, amidst new people, in a totally new form. It is new birth, another one, a rebirth! That alone is the truth.

It is on such a timeline itself that the pure souls who have given up their bodies, also float. In his human avatar Sai too is living on God's Timeline and has not gone so far away from us, human beings, that our voice takes time to reach Him. After all how long has it been since Sai took Samadhi? Barely a hundred years and a few days more! On God's Timeline this duration is not equivalent to even a single tiny particle. Sai is very close to us. He is so close that no sooner than we think of Him, He hears us! When we think of



Sai we generate emotions. Our feelings are also a sort of energy. When we wish to send this energy willingly to someone it creates vibrations and appears as these vibrations. These vibrations on the Timeline where Sai is currently, reach Him swiftly. It is these vibrations that shake Him, stir Him. He looks to us. We can sense Him looking at us. We become aware of His glance which is scouting us. We call out to Him and He hears our distress call. He turns around to help us. Feelings reach Him at great speed.

Now the question arises if each one of us needs to take His help, seek His benevolence? To understand this we need to understand a few things.

The earth is an innate but miniscule part of God's Kingdom, His Universe. Amidst the infinite, the earth might as well be a hundredth or a thousandth or a millionth part of the infinite Universe. God is the Creator of the entire Universe. We may have had the good fortune of seeing a very tiny part of His entire unsurpassed Creation. The one who claims to have seen the entire world, visited all places there are to visit, too has seen merely a particle of this entire Creation.

If we have seen pictures of the earth taken from the satellites we will realise that these images taken from thousands of miles above the earth make it seem like a small circular orb. It is within this small orb that all islands, continents, seas and oceans which too appear like a small dot, exist. They seem like mere



particles form that great distance, Now, amidst all this if we were to look for ourselves, we wouldn't even equal a miniscule dot made by the pin-head of a pencil. That's our true identity, the reality of our existence. It is a truth that with reference to that Supreme Power, God, we are so tiny that we may not even cause a blip.

However, ignoring this reality, on account of our arrogance we consider our individual selves as very powerful, which we will never be. We tend to forget that it is a matter of a single breath. A second in which the present, i.e. 'is' transforms to the past i.e. 'was'! Our true identities forgotten we tend to go further away from our own selves. Arrogance turns to ash within no time and is blown away, mud returns to mud, the soil! Lost in the infinite. On God's timeline we are a momentary presence. This alone is the eternal truth. Since we are miniscule and momentary our grandeur, wealth and riches, woes and miseries, family, everything is momentary. Till we are around, alive, we have the delusion of their existence and presence. Time is witness to the fact that either all these physicality's, our relationships, leave us behind or we would leave them, once we pass away. In this cycle of meeting and parting, to cope with it, every individual needs help. This is because one wish or another remains unfulfilled. This causes pain and grief. Those whom we banked on thus far, as a support system, no longer remain with us. At this new stage of the timeline, we are totally alone,



by ourselves. Having lost our support, our mainstay, we feel lonely. If we call out some can't hear us while others don't respond despite having heard our call for help! In this world each one of us, at some time, reaches such a stage when the one who can offer support is not around or within reach. There's Infinite darkness! So much so that one hand can't see the other. Everyone needs support at some time or the other.

Why do we need support? We are aware that we are subservient to our accumulated actions of the past. These wanted-unwanted actions done knowingly or unknowingly, control us, our life. The account of these past actions determine our destiny. Our pending and growing account of deeds pushes us in a set direction, on a path which we ourselves do not know anything about nor do we understand our presence on it. Walking along this path, oblivious to the reasons yet suffering the consequence of our actions, when we find ourselves in such circumstances that we cannot see either a way out or forward, then we stop dead in our tracks. We are stuck. Our overdue account of deeds creates such a scenario that we cannot think clearly, and we know not what to do. There is so much in this world that lies way beyond our mind and ability to comprehend. Once we are in a tight situation our mind stops working, the brain can't think clearly nor does our will power work well. The veil that obscures our thinking makes the path ahead seem dark and



formidable. Such circumstances are like quagmire. The more we struggle to emerge from this swampy mess, the more we get entangled in it. Our constant flapping of hands and legs makes us breathless. Our limbs feel heavier; they weigh us down. We feel like cutting them off with the hope that the obstruction they offer in their wake might cease so that we come out of the bog. But these limbs- our hands and legs- are nothing but our desires and longings and to be rid of them is nearly impossible for us. Helpless, we begin to drift. Our ego left way behind, our pride shattered beyond repair, head bowed in meek submission. We drift, feeling hopeless, waiting for the swamp to swallow us so that our miseries end once we drown in it. But even that doesn't happen. When the bog pulls us down we struggle to stay afloat to keep our heads above it so we can breathe. The ray of hope prevents us from dying. It is in such disturbing moments that we think of Sai. When no one responds, no one offers assistance, our Sai comes. He hears our appeal, our call, from where He is on the timeline. He feels the vibrations of our emotions. He turns and comes to stand near the swamp where we are. He sees us with His merciful eyes as if enquiring why we have made our plight such. The waterfall of kindness that flows forth from His loving eyes helps us pull out all answers to our predicament from within ourselves. And from our eyes pour the answers like waterfall. The two waterfalls meet to



make a flowing river. During this time a transference of compassion and mercy takes place. Caught in the slushy bog we are unable to even feel this change, sense the moments when we begin to swim in the pure, clear waters of Sai's compassion.

But when we understand and experience this change, we realise the futility of our approaching the swamp at all. We contemplate why we did not seek His help, when subservient to our actions and deeds we were walking the path of falsehood and trickery. We wonder why we did not call out His name at that time. And why we were continually attracted to things of little value and worth to become attached to them. At that time, did we not have an alternative? No one to guide us? We want to know why we chased pride and illusion, donning its glittering cape, without realising its transitory nature. Then we ourselves ask if Sai wasn't close by in those moments, to stop us, prevent us from taking the self-destructive path. He was there; exactly at the same spot where He is today! But it is we ourselves who ignored His presence. We did not hear Him, what He had to say to us! It is us and us alone who had regarded Him as a means of fulfilling our wishes. He gave us exactly that which we asked Him for. Who knew, at that time, that all we considered a source of happiness was actually the seed for sadness and pain. What we considered joyous was actually a worthless, unimportant mantle. The truth remains that riding the



blind and blinkered horse of lust and greed we blindfold our judgement, our prudence. Sai's Kingdom is open to all. When we asked Him, we received exactly what we wanted. We never ever tried to ask for His wish, what He wanted to give us. If we had heard Him out, had looked to Him for guidance and support, then our feet would never have taken the path which leads to the swamp. We do not let Him take the lead. If we had left it to Him, then wouldn't we have received something? He is waiting to flood us with gifts, to bestow us with the oceans but we merely asked for a fistful of water. He wanted to gift us a peaceful sleep while we asked his for a bed of wealth that would keep us awake all night. We continued looking for him in temples, mosques and Gurudwaras but He was right there, right before our eyes. We were not our true selves!

It is still not too late. He extends His hand towards us. In return we too can extend our hand towards him and while swimming in the sacred waters of His bhakti, devotion we can say to Him that enough of what we wanted! Now you walk us through life as per your wish. On Sai's path there are no errors, no subterfuge. When Sai begins to give, ask for His help. What we actually need but cannot understand is available all the time in Sai's vast treasury. He is forever helpful. If we had listened to Him we would have never been alone, made mistakes or suffered. We wished to lead an independent life; however His hands always held ours. It is us who

broke free from Him and ran away. When he begins to shower us with blessings then spontaneously, we begin to say, “*What is it that we kept asking for and what Sai has actually given us.*” What he has given is his help which is never too far from us. All we need to do is to leave things to him and there will be wonders!

The greatest significance and speciality of the ninth Assurance of Sai is that it apprises us of His helpful stance. It brings us closer to this kindly trait. Sai may or may not fulfil our greed but when we call out to him for help He always responds. Not only does he hear our distress call but also provides us with fearlessness. This assurance also apprises of Baba’s omnipresence. It tells us that whenever we need his guidance, Sai will never make us wait too long or even disappoint us by ignoring our call. This raises another question. Has a mother ever remained distant from her children? Can she ignore her children? Sai, too, is our mother.

*Baba is taking care of our welfare...
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.*

SAI BABA'S TENTH PROMISE
THE ONE WHO IS ABSORBED IN ME
WITH MIND, BODY AND SOUL, TO
HIM I REMAIN FOREVER INDEBTED





The one who is absorbed in me with mind, body and soul, to him I remain forever indebted- is exemplary of Sai's simplicity and his easy accessibility and attainability. We may revere Sai as our God, as Almighty or Sadguru as per our belief and faith. But Sai has always called himself the servant of God. Sai frequently referred to himself as *Dosanjh* or *Yade e Haq* (one who remembers God all the time). *Allah Malik* constantly adorned His lips. Sai never considered himself a great man who could perform miracles or for that matter never regarded himself as an highly accomplished man. Humility and simplicity were his hallmark. If he asked a person for *dakshina* (donation) it was because the person owed a debt to Dwarkamayee and that he was asking so that the debt could be repaid. Sai never considered himself apart from his devotees. Nor did he ever adopt any ways which would indicate that he belonged to a different world and was thus distinct from his bhakts.

In fact, Sai helped bhakts take the course of spirituality guiding them in a manner they could associate with. Constable *Ganpat Rai Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe* who wrote and enjoyed watching Marathi plays with double entendre, changed

dramatically after coming to Sai's refuge. Having transformed as per Sai's will, due to his influence and command, Sai asked Ganu to leave the police force. The gentleman who at first was unwilling to do so, gradually realised where his merit rested, and it is then that he assumed the name of *Das Ganu* given to him by Sai himself. *Das Ganu* compiled Ovi's (eight line poems), verses, couplets which he had himself written in praise of Sai and other well-known saints and began singing them. When *Das Ganu* initiated bhajans on Sai Baba, Sai told him that He (Sai) was the servant of the servant (*Das Ganu*). Why did Baba say that? It was because *Das Ganu* sang praising God and Baba regarded Himself as servant of God. What simplicity! So much humility! Isn't such a behaviour where Sai regards himself as a servant of a servant not absolute humility and courteousness? Will we ever be able to imbibe such politeness in our manners and attitude? No sooner than we receive a slight adulation we tend to swell up in pride, over-reaching ourselves! We are intoxicated with pride. We do want to attach ourselves to the feet of saints but find it impossible to adopt and emulate their holy way and mode of life. To adopt their ways we need to become one with them in mind, deeds and words. We will need to blend with, sync with Sai's temperament.

To be able to do so we need to understand a few basic principles of life and living. This world is the

Creation of God which works on the principles made by Him. The constitution of these rules is called Nature and we can never really go against Nature without causing harm to ourselves. Our actions create a boomerang effect. Each time we flout or insult the laws of Nature, we cause turbulence in Nature and even harm it. As a consequence we have to make amends, that is bear the fruit of our actions. It is with God's will that this very same Nature, which nurtures, then begins to test us manifesting itself as *maya* (temptations) which is known to be alluring. We must know that Nature is constant and permanent while *maya* temporary, momentary. If Nature is Truth, *maya* is pseudo, it's a falsehood; charming yet delusive. We can attain Nature but *maya* teases in its obscurity! It eludes and deceives. Nature soothes us, makes us calm while *maya* with its enticement, makes us restless. Nature can be attained effortlessly, but one needs to work very hard to get a hold over the illusive *maya*. No sooner than we acquire *maya*, it vanishes. Hence the emotions associated with it are different. One experiences immense joy on attaining Nature but with *maya* it is the opposite, we experience pain after being involved with *maya*. Nature or prakriti is infinite, without an end but *maya*, it is playful and transitory, it keeps changing forms. Nature takes us closer to God and helps us become one with Him, eventually. But *maya*, with its chimera, makes us restless and distraught. Whenever the power of

discretion reduces, or is lost, then we perceive Nature in the form of *maya*. Contrarily, when we regain our wisdom, the ability to discriminate, then alone we are able to distinguish between Nature and *maya*.

To be in the constant company of Nature, man needs to control and keep a balance of his mind, body and words. This is absolutely essential. While walking on this narrow path if this delicate balance is disturbed or the co-ordination between these three is affected then our track changes. We begin to head in the direction of *maya*. So, to be able to understand the tenth assurance of Sai Baba it is important to understand our mind, body and thoughts. Till the time we are unable to understand these three aspects of ourselves or identify the reason they have been granted to us or how they will turn us in the direction of Sai and help us reach Him, attain Him, we will be far removed from understanding Sai Baba's tenth promise. To understand His assurance we need to explore our mind, understand the various aspects of our body and the words that come to us.

In common parlance, *vachan* or words is that direct or indirect action which make us steadfast towards a particular goal. The goal that we accomplish through our actions. When we are determined to achieve something it is as if we take an oath towards it. Hence we are committed and bound to fulfil or meet that goal. Speaking or uttering this assurance transforms it



to direct action. But when such a commitment is kept to oneself, nurtured in the heart, yet pursued then it becomes indirect action. We may consider this promise as a sort of pledge. An assurance may be made to oneself or someone else. It is like making a resolution. Till the resolution remains, there can never be an achievement. Without making a promise in life it is difficult to attain anything. God has granted us the gift of being able to take oaths which in turn are subservient to our minds. It is this oath taking ability that controls our words and helps us progress on the path of action. Absolute and complete faith in the goal brings fruition of our words. Straightforwardness of the promise makes our words pure. If our thoughts and words are not clean then our actions can never be pure. Neither will they bear the expected fruit. Selfishness and deceit make our thoughts impure. But if our words and thoughts are about the good of others then we are on the path of moksha or nirvana. Selflessness makes our thoughts and words pure; they make the goal clearer and the path to it gentler, milder. The purity of our thoughts converts the element of evilness into prayers. It is this that takes us towards Sai. It opens the path which leads us to meet Sai. Clean and pure thoughts make Sai attainable. In the actionable form words are actually the mind at work.

Mind plays a major role in our life and life goals. Mind is that aspect of our brain which controls our



wisdom, our ability to make judgements and thereby changes the course of actions and deeds. It is mind alone that monitors and manages our ability to think, to rationalise, to remember, to make decisions, to emote and thereby our behaviour and mannerisms. Mind helps us to acquire knowledge. It is entrusted with task of thinking and comprehending. Mind is the power of the brain as well as the axis on which the brain moves. The centre where all actions take birth and are conducted too is called the mind. It is the mind that gives our life a direction. Our thoughts determine the course of the path. Within the same mind exist contrary emotions of love and hatred. It is the mind itself that makes us love and it is mind alone that makes us go inimical. The very same mind causes anger and rage simultaneously becoming the soil that gives birth to pride and arrogance. And that's not all, at all! Ironically the very same mind helps in appreciating the world around as also makes us excited about things we see therein. Such are the goings on of our effervescent mind.

Within the mind resides a tiny segment which we call conscience. When the mind makes us restless, the voice of the conscience opens the path to tranquillity. When the mind wanders and wavers, it is the conscience which helps us meet Sai. If the mind makes us unhappy, our internal conscience puts all the woes and miseries to eternal sleep, ending them. If the mind distracts us,



that tiny segment of inner mind indicates the right path that we are expected to take i.e. the path of truth! It is the conscience which provokes consciousness, kindles the *Chetna* (awakening) within us. It is the source of energy, invigorating the mind constantly, continually. While the mind makes us worldly, the voice of conscience opens before us the path of spirituality. It is natural that mind tends to get affected by joys and sorrows, household responsibilities and family, and what transpires in the community, country and the world. Absorbing all this and more the mind becomes woebegone. However, cutting through this chatter of the mind, when we surge forward confidently, having placed our hand in Sai's, we begin the journey of our inner mind, our conscience and thus begins the end of all miseries and sorrows. What we experience at such a time is pure bliss and extreme peace. To live well, avoid connecting life and living to the mind; connect it with the conscience which is the true destination of an everlasting journey. Once we are able to make this connect, we gain wisdom. Wisdom is an exquisite jewel of our mind. This inner voice of conscience which makes us tranquil, making us wiser, is the one we call God. Hearing it, becoming peaceful is that unattainable peak, the stage, which we search and continue to look for life after life, wandering from one life into another.

Mind has a mind of its own! It is an amazing creation of Sai. We cannot see the mind, it being



invisible, intangible. Yet interestingly, all the strings of our life are held and controlled by this invisible entity, the mind. It is as quick as a flash of lightning, can ignite in a fraction of a second, can see the unseen, hear the inaudible and is sensitive, so it can feel, too. When it swells up and is full of itself, the mind is about honour and prestige, it becomes synonymous with pride. These traits may become deeply entrenched in the mind. When out of control and unregulated, the mind becomes a demon. It goes berserk. Contrastingly, if it becomes subtle and mild, then the mind attains sentience. Sometimes the mind revels in repressing others. It becomes oppressive and ruthless. Wandering the earth, the mind becomes a wanderer, aimless and purposeless. But if the mind focuses on God, meanders unto Him it is filled with adoration and love. At such a time our mind is the God of love, saturated with this tender emotion ready to shower it on his maker. What if the mind were to attain peace, the state everyone yearns for? Then the mind transcends to a state of harmony; and when it has a blend of love and peace it spreads and diffuses its fragrance amongst others, like blossoming flowers. The very same mind continues to ascend on the path of bliss, becoming one with God, is at peace and then remains absorbed in loving surrender, bowing reverentially to the will of the Almighty. All these are some inherent secrets of the mind, embedded deep within. How can they be known



to anyone other than Sai or the mind itself? Such a benevolent space, our mind is actually the temple of Sai. Sai resides in this temple-like mind.

When mind goes into exile its entire focus is our body. It is this body which makes us distant from Sai on one hand and on the other unites us with Him, depending upon how it is put to use. Paradoxically, it is the same body which is both the means of meeting Sai as well as an obstruction thus making us grow apart from Him. More often than not we relate the term body with our physical self, the gross being that we can see, which is tangible. But we have another body, the astral one, which houses the reality of the mind. The astral one, well, it is invisible, yet it controls our physical self. While our visible body is perishable, the astral is eternal, it cannot be obliterated. Our physical self remains inert, silly, focuses on all that is worldly. This animate self attains consciousness with the help of the astral. Flesh and bones constitute the physical aspect while the astral is a part of the Almighty. The astral is evident and identified through the physical. The world and people therein recognise and relate to the physical self. However, at God's door, our identity is based only on our spiritual self, the astral body, the physical having perished and left behind on earth. This spiritual self is our soul!

So our body serves as our mind's exile, yet fascinatingly, it also keeps our soul tied to us. It is but



natural that this raises a question. If the body itself is perishable how can it keep the soul tied? How can something transitory hold on to something everlasting? Let us understand this a little better. The soul is eternal and immortal. Our body is that container which works as the outer covering for our soul. When the body dies, the soul takes on a new body and as per destiny initiates its new worldly relations and deeds. We think that our entity is related to our physical presence, that which is visible but actually our true self is the one which is not visible, the spiritual one. This unseen self can and must obviously be recognised only by us. No one else can be aware of it. And for us too recognising this unseen entity isn't easy. Many lifetimes elapse in order to understand this invisible self. To meet the Almighty we travel to temples, masjids, gurudwara and such but fail to understand that God does not rest in stone structures and idols. No matter how strongly we feel about these structures which we ourselves build. To reach the Almighty, we have to pass through our own real self, the spiritual. We need to merge with him, be absorbed in Him. Engage our physical self in His service. We need to be as unified with God as a bag of salt which when it falls into a river, mixes with the water to lose its own identity to such an extent that it is impossible to separate the salt from the river water. We ought to be as driven and focussed on God as that water-bearer who carries the pot of water on her



head, all the while chitchatting with her other mates yet riveted in the thought that the water shouldn't spill from the pot, making her labour a waste. In the same fashion one can be engaged in worldly tasks and deeds but while doing so can remember Sai, let His name adorn our lips, constantly and consistently. The duality that 'I' and God are different should cease to exist. Such an intermingling is essential to attain that supreme divine state.

What exactly is the state of being totally engrossed?

Consider the following scenarios. An individual, one who at every moment, every second experiences the presence of Sai. The one who sees Sai in every object and being. The one who behaves with everyone else as he would do with Sai Himself. The one who surrenders every breath of his being to Sai and offers every drawback and deficiency to Sai. The one who can feel Sai within himself and the one who looks for the entire Creation in Sai in a manner as if he is looking for Sai in the world. The one whose past, present and future itself is Sai. One who does not leave the side of Sai even in a state of sleep. And also the one who considers himself a seeker, regards Sai as attainable and the body as a means to reach him. So also the one who keeps Sai awake and alive within himself every living moment. Know that, such a one is totally absorbed in Sai. Such an individual is one with Sai, merged in him



Now for the next question. How does one attain the state of becoming absorbed in Sai?

Before getting engrossed in Sai it is essential to understand our physical self, if that at all is our true self in contrast to our spiritual one. We ought to understand this and know it well. Actually the 'I' (physical aspect) that we can see, which is visible isn't the real 'me', ever, it wasn't 'me' either and will never be 'me'. That is, 'I' is a misnomer! The real self existed before 'me' and shall continue to exist after 'me'. That is exists all the time, never dies. The real "I" will not perish. 'I' am immortal. Nobody can cause any harm to 'me'. 'I' am eternal. Then, considering this physical self to be the gift of Sai we should dedicate it to Him. Everything and the self should then be offered at Sai's feet, unconditionally. This will end all fears and make us fearless. Every action should be done for Sai and dedicated to him and him alone. This will eradicate any greed for outcomes, fruit of labour. Whatever possessions we have, should never be considered ours, no ownership at all, since it doesn't belong to us. Moreover, we should be aware that whatever we have will not remain with us eternally. It is important to understand a simple yet significant truth-someday I will have to abandon all that I possess, or it will leave me. This and this alone is the truth. Doing so will remove the difference between happiness and sadness. Both will assume insignificance for us. Sadness will





come our way, but it will not affect us. We will begin to think that pain and misery is like elixir which washes away all sins. Happiness will also come to us but will not go to our head. We will be able to strike a balance and maintain it. The same applies to relationships as well. All our relationships are perishable, have a limited life span since we too are perishable. On our passing, these relationships cease to exist. When such and similar feelings arise in our mind then we should understand that we are becoming engrossed in Sai! Every moment will become like a hymn, every place the abode of God, every object will become a gift of God, *prasad*, every shelter will become Sai.

Bow your head and sit peacefully. Begin to know that the doer is someone else. We are a mere means. Work is done by him, but the name attached to the deed is ours. Do whatever has been given to you, with complete surrender, quietly, humbly. You will forget to make demands of life. The mind will stop being turbulent and won't cause disturbances either. When you begin to feel that all wishes will be fulfilled then suddenly you will feel that there is no wish that needs to be fulfilled. Neither will exist- misery nor attachments. Everything will seem meaningless. The difference between Sai and us will end.

This is exactly what Sai wants from us. When we become engrossed in Sai with our mind, body and



words, then it is Sai who aches for us more than we want to reach him. Burdened by the weight of his obligations on us, we make him indebted to us by dedicating ourselves in entirety- body mind and deeds to him. A devotee can rid God's debts by becoming absorbed in him, but God remains eternally indebted to those devotees who surrender to Him in completion. If you want to make Sai indebted to you then consider His presence in every object. This is the actual path to attain Sai and to reach Him as well.

 *Baba is taking care of our welfare...* 
This is offered to Shree Sadguru Sainath.
May there be auspiciousness.



SAI BABA'S ELEVENTH PROMISE
TWICE BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO
TAKES REFUGE AT MY FEET





Sai Baba's eleventh promise *Twice blessed is the one who takes refuge at my feet-* gives greater credence to the fact that an Avatar too depends on bhakts to be acknowledged and recognised. God is known on account of his devotees. Although an inherent part of the Omnipotent Almighty, a devotee thus becomes a medium of God's acknowledgment and renown. A devotee in that manner of speaking, becomes an extension of God. Godly qualities and traits are mirrored in the devotee. The quality that makes a bhakt become one with his Sai, unite with his God, the sacred and holy entity, is Exclusivity. Focussing on one God elevates bhakts.

A devotee is one whose worship and dedication does not dither or change despite the circumstances. Ardent, devoted worship alone is the true identification of a real bhakt. It is a well-known fact that when a devotee takes to the path of devotion, she/he is bound to face many tests and hurdles along the way. Some exams are taken by the one whom he worships, that is God, and some he undergoes on account of his own past karmas or *Prarabhd*. We often come across several devotees whose focussed worship changes direction the variable factor being the difficulty level of these

examinations, together with the fulfilment/lack of fulfilment of their individual needs and requirements. Praying to Lord Shiva on Mondays whilst offering prayers to the representative of divine power or energy (Shakti) on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the same devotee begins to worship Ganpati while he reveres his Guru on Thursdays. He worships Goddess Lakshmi on Fridays and on Saturdays he pays obeisance at the feet of Lord Shani. And on Sunday? Well, he finds another God. Since his mind remains inconstant, he takes the path of the body, the one that his body dictates. Anything amiss here? There is no problem with any of this. One may do exactly as one pleases, provided one adheres to a single condition - the mind should remain tranquil and focussed, unidirectional.

The path that leads to Sai does not inspire to separate from any Avatar or God. On the contrary this path encourages us to believe in all/any Gods and Avatars. However, we should direct our belief at any one of them only. Devotion is not about wandering. It's quite the opposite. It is a proof of becoming constant and stable. Bhakti calms the mind, provides a foundation for the wandering mind, placing it on the path of pure happiness and joy. Devotion makes us fearless. As soon as we stabilise our faith, no matter what transpires, irrespective of the hardships, we seek shelter in that one God in whom we repose faith. We



believe He will uplift us. When our belief becomes focussed, we concentrate, and our thoughts stabilise. Then, we are no longer afraid of any trial or tribulations that come our way. It is fear that destabilises the mind. With the removal of this anxiety, fearlessness dawns.

When our devotion becomes focussed on Sai, then we begin to see Sai in every Avatar, in every form. Sai becomes our very foundation. The fountain of his love erupts, soaking us. Not only does this love fountain quench our thirst but Sai's light erases the darkness which has thus far enveloped our restless mind. Every test becomes easy, since the mind accepts and believes that we are not the doers of any action, absolutely none. If the test comes from Sai, then he is the giver and he alone is the one who would appear in this test. Sai himself is the one assessing and the one who would declare the results. When the giver and acceptor of the test is Sai, when the one who announces the result is Sai then shouldn't we be relieved of the anxiety of what the result would be like? It is Sai himself who will bear the consequences of this result on our behalf. This strong belief in Sai is named Devotion. This belief itself is the introduction to devotion and its definition as well. Under no circumstances should the mind dither. When faced with sadness the mind does not become woebegone, when facing joys too if the mind does not embrace pride then such a state becomes the very foundation of devotion. The devotee in whom such a



state is reached is the one who has truly matured in his devotion to the Almighty.

In the 11th Assurance, Sai Baba bows to the piety of a devotee who surrenders to him in entirety with the unique feeling of singleness, does not prefer or even feel the need to go to an alternative refuge, and who is not at ease till he attains Sai. It is such a devotee whom Sai blesses. These blessed devotees are very dear to Baba and He begins to weaken the impact and effects of their karmas. In fact, Sai even shows them the way of reaching him and merging in him.

Let us consider some conditions attached to devotion which give it the state of exclusivity. These conditions are inevitably an essential pre-requisite. The first such requirement is that a devotee should be innocent. The devotee should not harbour any feelings of treachery or selfish intent towards the God whom he adores. He should be continuously in sync with the flow of devotion. He should not nurture any expectations from this religious zeal. To reach such a state, his piety should be flawless. In return for the service offered to His Guru or God, the bhakt should not secretly nurture any specific hope, favour, or desire. There should be a single desire only, that of getting closer to his God. When devotion expects something in return, such a service creates speed-breakers/obstacles on its own path. Nurturing expectations as a reciprocation of devotion implies that the bhakt does not repose absolute faith



in the one whom he worships. In the absence of trust, the sentiment that *God does not even know what I need* tends to arise in the devotee. However, when devotion is absolute, flawless, then a strong determination forms in the mind that God is fully aware of every need and desire. My Sai knows what I need and when I would need it as well as where. Hence, I needn't worry myself about this ever is the thought that embeds in the mind. When we offer ourselves to Sai then we tend to become His responsibility. Quite like how the things or people dependent on us become our responsibility. We consider ourselves accountable for them. When such a feeling arises in the mind then despite our wish being fulfilled or not there is no bitterness in us. Our inner conscience knows and is assured that Sai will certainly give us what we need at the opportune time, when we are ready for it. Sai alone knows the correct time and He alone knows the right quantities of what ought to be given too. When this sentiment stabilises then the mind does not become unnecessarily restless or agitated. And when the mind is no longer agitated or restless, then the reason for its needless wandering ceases to exist.

A devotee tends to become drenched in worship over time. Gently and steadily. Quite like how the urn of water that remains suspended above a Shivalinga. A trickle of water slowly yet progressively wets the Shivalinga, so should a devotee remain absorbed in



the bhakti of his God. Love is selfless, always. Where there is love, self-centredness cannot co-exist and where there is selfish intent, love cannot exist; what does exist as emotion, however, is lust. Love never exerts rights; lust always demands. Love never asks for anything; it continually gives. Lust never gives anything; it continues to place unending demands. Love is complete, self-sufficient, satiated. Not lust. No. Lust always ends in pain and suffering while love attains joy and through this happiness attains a sense of fulfilment and completion. Lust makes us travel from the path of misery to regret while love achieves a sense of fullness through immense commitment. In the throes of lust two persons continue to remain two independent entities. However, in love two unite to become one. Advait devotion. Singleness. While worshipping, the more a bhakt becomes wet (absorbed) in devoutness to his Lord, the more his distance from the worshipped decreases and a day arrives when this gap is completely eradicated. That is God and devotee come together, to become One. The bhakt does not even realise when he becomes God and God becomes a part of him, the two thus become one. This is that exact state of being, the supremely blessed, which every true devotee wishes to attain. We should attain Sai in such a manner that both our entity and Sai, each of which tend to stand between the two of us, the devotee and the Guru, dissolve or rather unite.



A devotee should also be spiritual. Without feelings, a devotee does not progress much on the spiritual path. Till such time as he begins to enjoy prayers or does not feel the element of joy in worship, his progress will remain limited. One comes across many sources of distraction on the path of devotion which tend to make us deviate from this path. Household responsibilities, compulsions attached to a job or business, the power of pride, the feelings of unpleasantness, the tendency to be greedy, jealous temperament, the desire to acquire the voluptuous, have a tendency to create obstacles on the spiritual path. Till such time as a devotee does not strengthen devotional quotient in his mind, he cannot reach his worshipped God. Till such time as the devotee, devotion and the revered are not aligned in a straight line, the worshipper cannot become emotion centric. Only when emotions sustain within us and we do not deviate from the path of worship, can the right emotions continually grow and evolve within us. Household responsibilities may remain but if we include Sai in these responsibilities then we will no longer find them burdensome. If Sai becomes a part of action, then all the tasks are accomplished with much ease and remain obstruction free. Likewise, in a business if we work without making merely earning money as the primary objective; instead, we take up a job or business as one whose owner is Sai, and regard



Sai as its customer as well, then the tasks will no longer remain onerous and tedious. They will actually become pleasant. In such a scenario, we may nurture pride but only to surrender at Sai's feet. If we were to dedicate every success to Sai and attribute the success to Sai's grace, then our pride would automatically be offered at Sai's holy feet. And will no longer remain our own biggest obstacle in the spiritual progress. This might be quite difficult, but practise will make us become better with time. We may nurture feelings of enmity but only towards the mental weaknesses within us. In every situation where we feel we are being distanced from Sai or we are unable to keep absolute faith in him, we should begin to dislike such situations, feel inimical towards them, and in doing so defeat our lack of faith. We may permit greed but only for Sai darshan, for a glance of his feet reducing holy feet. Even if we are unable to see him with our own eyes, we may seek His darshan with our inner eyes. We may feel envious, but only of our earlier, older, lower level of devotion to which we would not like to descend again. Forever, continually, we must seek onward progress on the devotional path. If we entertain longings and wishes, they must be about reaching Sai and finding an abode at His holy feet. So, sentiments remain the same, as they were before, but they switch sides, and cross over to the positive one, only on account of enhanced dedication and its constant companionship.



When our feelings are awakened and become brighter, Shirdi sparkles and gleams within us. Sai is seen standing close by as if to introduce the new us. Time passes by in a relaxed manner. When speech is not required, when the feet become automatically drawn towards Sai, when the entire world appears in a manner that it belongs to none other than Sai, then we should understand that sentiments and feelings have blended with our devotion. We need to decorate every path of the mind with devotional flowers. We need to shake ourselves awake only then does the internalisation of devotion begins. The one whom we are looking for, in search of, becomes identifiable. How so? His face becomes evident in the reflection of our face. This transition occurs when determined faith/firm reverence is kindled. Depths of devotion increase, and worship becomes soaked with emotions.

The predominance of sentiments adds so much strength to devotion that even closed doors begin to open. With the enhancement of sentiments, rivers of emotion begin to flow from the devotee's eyes. Ordinary words take the shape of hymns. Regular food becomes Prasad (sacrament). Water becomes Charanamrit (ambrosia/Elixir). The deathbed becomes the Sanjeevani (immortality). At this improved stage, the difference between responsibility and rights ceases to exist. The twilight of thoughts and anxieties

disappears. Paths become luminescent. Sai holds the hands of those who stumble. The stone along this road gains much value/worth. The lamp which is flickering and about to be extinguished regains life, it is ascribed a name and life is zealously committed to its goal. Such is the power and strength of sincere devotion, which helps attain all these qualities. At this stage, questions themselves become answers.

The inclusion of Sai in every task enriches life soaking it with Him. Such is not possible overnight. But if this emotion becomes stronger, slowly, and steadily the very essence and spirit of Sai enters our lives. At this juncture, the way Sai appears to us is way different from the Sai whom we knew and understood prior to this transition. This Sai will be closer to us. There won't be any need to ask him for anything. That's because the mind has come to believe and accept that we shouldn't ask Sai for anything. Instead we should ask for Sai himself. Then Sai will become one with us. He will become an integral part of us. Once this happens Sai becomes inherent in every vibration, heartbeat, and breath. He becomes the focus and very foundation of our life. He enters our being. This is his speciality. Hence, it becomes his responsibility to look after the devotee at every step because Sai has become integral to her/him. Life tends to become very relaxed. Fear dissipates and ebbs. Life is filled with pure joy and

bliss since Sai himself begins to bless us. This blessing is the biggest truth of life. To attain this truth, one may have to spend not only one lifetime but several more, maybe each one of them.

 *Baba is taking care of our welfare.* 
*Auspiciousness and good fortune come with
Sai's incessant presence in our life.*