

Shri Shirdi Sai Baba

Guruji Shri C. B. Satpathy Message on the occasion of

DUSSEHRA
October 1999

For his devotees Baba has set two cardinal principles in the path of devotion. The first one is “*Shraddha*”, which means devotional faith and the other one is “*Saburi*”, which means tolerance with patience. In almost all the literature on Sai these two words find pre-eminent mention. People understand the meaning of these two words according to their mental ability and inner perception emanating out of their experience with Baba. Some people believe that their “*Shraddha*” (faith) in Baba is complete; others, even when they have some amount of faith in Baba, are not sure of themselves; some have faith in Baba and also many other deities in the Hindu pantheon. Thus, the word “*Shraddha*” is the most confused and difficult concept to understand, and still more difficult to explain to others. Nevertheless, I am trying to explain the way I feel it to be.

Shraddha or devotional faith is the most difficult state of mind to achieve. If one has absolute faith in his Guru then sooner or later he will even look like the Guru with all His attributes. However, the seed of faith takes a lot of time to generate and to grow. It may take years or even a few lives. Full faith in Baba does not come, as quickly as one desires it to be like *Shravan*, *Kirtan*, *Poojan*, *Dhyana*, etc. The *Navadha Bhakti* i.e. the multifold type of *bhakti* is not *bhakti* per se. They are either methods of *bhakti* or reflections of *bhakti* or both. Further, externality of devotion may not necessarily indicate the internality of devotion.

Some people, at times say that only if Baba desires then *bhakti* will grow in their hearts. By saying so they make Baba responsible for generating *bhakti* in them. In the ultimate analysis it is true that Baba generates *bhakti* in a devotee’s heart. But, if the person so desiring conducts himself in a manner that Baba desires, then the type of *bhakti* he seeks will certainly be generated by Him. If one starts praying to Baba for *bhakti* and yet continues to conduct himself in an unethical manner forbidden by Baba, then how do we expect Baba to generate *bhakti* in his mind? To this some people say that even bad conducts are created by God and unless He desires they can’t be controlled. This time also the burden is squarely on Baba or God and the devotee does not want to take any responsibility even for his own conduct. Even under these circumstances Baba can control his conduct and generate *bhakti* in him, provided he

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leaves all other aspects of his life on Him and awaits patiently for Him to guide his destiny. Faith or surrender means leaving everything on Baba__body, mind and soul.

But partial surrender will lead to partial *bhakti*, and its partial results only. If one is sincere enough and is fully surrendered to Baba then He will control his desires and conduct. Under these circumstances neither he should work nor seek anything himself but leave everything to Baba in totality. Then, if he is prepared to bear the consequence of this state of utter inaction then Baba will certainly control his conduct and give him the type of *Shraddha* he seeks. There are many examples of many devotees in Shirdi, at the time of Baba, who had left everything on Sai including all their material and spiritual needs, and Baba did provide these to them. If one cannot come to this state of utter inaction then, he should go by the normal path of *Navadha Bhakti* and should be responsible for his own conduct to start with. God has given enough intelligence to human beings in comparison to animals, to discriminate between good and evil. Such practice will slowly but definitely grow devotion in him imperceptibly.

However, this slow growth means waiting patiently under all circumstances on the mercy of Baba which is nothing but *Saburi*. *Saburi* is, therefore, an essential factor for the generation, sustenance and growth of devotion. Both faith and patience are complementary to each other. Faith without patience will bring loss of faith at frequent intervals of time and will not allow its growth. Similarly, only patience without actual faith is an exercise in futility. A balance in both will bring about even growth of both in a person.

Faith again means trying to do what has been asked us to do by Baba and resist from doing what has been forbidden by Him. Even if we fail a number of times it does not matter, the main point is whether one is using our God given faculties to their maximum limits. When we want to use our faculties, time and energy for getting close to Baba we have to cutdown on many other activities. Therefore, the person who wants closeness with Baba should always try to reduce the non-productive, capricious and nonessential activities like late night parties, addiction of any type, uncontrolled thought, speech or action, etc. Such improvements will not only gradually control the mind but will also save time and energy for more purposive and creative activities, like study on Sri Sainath, meditation on Baba and His worship in any form. The devotees should always try to improve their inner qualities of patience, faith, tolerance,

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egolessness, and gradually, his closeness with Baba will increase. But, the most important two qualities which are fundamental, as often said by Baba, are

Om Shri Sai

C. B. Satpathy