

Shri Shirdi Sai Baba

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

Dussehra Message

October 2006

When Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi was in His human embodiment at Shirdi, thousands of people of different regions, religions, languages and categories used to visit Him. The young and the old, married and unmarried, worldly people and spiritual seekers and many others representing the cross-section of society used to approach the Master, to get his help and blessings to satisfy their material needs and spiritual aspirations. In Shri Sai Satcharitra, one finds mention about these characters although there were many more about whom there is no record.

Sadgurus like Shri Shirdi Sai Baba, operate simultaneously at two levels of consciousness. Some of their activities are manifested and some are non-manifested in nature. Some examples of the manifested activities are: feeding the poor and the devotees, curing their physical and mental diseases, rendering temporal assistance in all their material needs and religious pursuits etc. The manner in which He gave relief was sometimes miraculous. Hundreds of families of Shirdi and outside used to depend on Him for relief and sustenance in their worldly existence. Sai Baba never refused to help any one who came to Him. He laboured day in and day out to solve the complex problems of His devotees. Once He told a devotee that He (Baba) could not sleep during the previous night thinking about that devotee. "What would happen to my people, if I constantly do not keep an eye on them" He used to say. This was the role of a Provider and Protector.

However, the other role of Shri Sai was subtle and secret in nature, which created a permanent value in the lives of the people that approached Him. Shri Shirdi Sai Baba was a Perfect Master or a Sadguru. Being a Sadguru His divine charter of duties was to train the devotees with a view to evolve their mental and emotional qualities and ultimately to lead them towards emancipation. Such a process of evolution, when left to the disciple himself, is very slow and may take a number of lives to achieve. As ordained by the law of nature, every human being evolves during each life cycle while on the earth plane by experiencing an un-calculable number of events generating pleasure or pain. Without, the help of a Master or Sadguru who has traveled along and experienced the path of spiritual evolution, the seeker goes through a process of trials and errors and in the process his evolution slows down. However, if one accepts a Sadguru as his mentor, and strictly abides by His advice, his evolution becomes easier and faster. The Sadguru with His divine powers and qualities has immense capabilities to hasten the process of evolution of all beings that come in contact with Him. Therefore, He is called a Samarth (capable of giving God realisation) Sadguru. However, notwithstanding the ceaseless effort of the Masters all devotees do not progress spiritually at an equal pace. The pace of evolution of a devotee

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depends on a few Prime factors, like, acceptance of the Master-both intellectually and emotionally, as the sole guide and Protector in spiritual journey, complete faith in and adherence to the advice and commands of the Master and finally a lot of perseverance under all trying circumstances and over long periods of time to follow the Master's prescriptions in its true spirit.

Usually Masters like Baba do not force disciples to follow their advice. They suggest the prescriptions directly (through words, actions and direct experiences etc.) and/or indirectly (through dreams, anecdotes, hints and mediums etc.) to each disciple or some times to a group of disciples. Baba at times used to speak cryptic or broken sentences or utter a certain un-intelligible language. The devotees could understand its meaning only after a protracted mental deliberation over the issue. Baba could have given a direct solution but His method was to lead the devotee through a self-finding mental process. Many a times He would enquire from some devotees as to what they were talking about when they were together. He would then advise them on how to handle the compulsive negative thoughts of mind and to inculcate a habit of generating positive thoughts. The omniscient Sadguru used to keep a watch on the negative and positive thoughts of His disciples and there are hundreds of such examples. Baba used to create thought waves in the minds of devotees by His subtle powers thereby leading them to find a solution to their own problems. To many, He used to give direction in dreams as well. He used to render such help with a view to create a clearer and purer state of mind in the devotees, which is essentially required to tread along the path of spiritual evolution as per His (the Masters) scheme. The Sadgurus do not wish to keep Their disciples dependent on Them for all times to come with a view to get their service. What they desire is to evolve the disciples to the state of perfect human beings (Satpurush), with perfect noble qualities so that they can further carry on certain subtle and difficult tasks on this earth or elsewhere in accordance with the Divine Plan. The Sadgurus not only give emancipation to the human-souls under Their care but also create a few spiritual workers from among the evolved devotees to assist Them in Their universal and subtle activities. The basic principle They follow is to light a number of candles from a single candle and They expect the process to continue for all times to come.

If we analyze the different methods that Shri Sai adopted while dealing with different devotees, one of his prescriptions stands out prominently i.e. the qualitative evolution of mind. In whatever He did towards the training of His devotees, the moot idea of Baba was to evolve not only the mental qualities but also the thought process itself. For example, when Nana Saheb Chandorkar sitting near Baba at Dwarakamayee Masjid was attracted by the beauty of a woman, Baba never advised him not to look at

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women. What He advised was that while looking at any beautiful woman or beautiful object, one should think of 'beauty' as an aspect of God's creation. He further emphasized on the internal beauty of the soul and not on the external beauty of the body. The lesson that Baba gave was that when the mind is attracted to anything, it is better to attach a higher value to the thought itself rather than to struggle with mind to avoid the object of attraction. No one can struggle with his own mind, as it is the most powerful force in human beings as ordained by nature. The moment one tries to struggle with mind in order to erase an evil thought or enforce a good thought sheerly by one's will, it is bound to create certain reactions and such reactions lead to further problems. This is the most difficult task for any human being to perform, living as he does in a complex world. Therefore, Baba used to keep a constant watch on the thoughts arising in the minds of His devotees and guide them promptly.

For example He asked Kaka Saheb Dixit to stay quietly (Uge-muge) in Dixit-Wada at Shirdi and not to mix with others. He told Dixit that he should be wary of thieves in the Wada lest they would take away everything, meaning thereby loss of his positive quality of mind and peace. Similarly Upasani Baba was asked to stay at Khandoba temple and not to meet any one. He was not even allowed to meet Baba sitting a few hundred yards away for a long time. By separating the genuine seekers from the rest of the world, Baba wanted them to maintain a purer and positive state of mind and not to get contaminated by the negative thoughts of others as usually happens in social interactions. Baba used to render advice in the same or similar line to different devotees e. g. to keep one's promise always, to make adequate payment for the services received from any person, to tolerate and not to quarrel even if provoked, to avoid speaking ill of others, to avoid differentiating among human beings on the grounds of material or social differentiation etc. and finally to visualise the presence of God in every object, every thought and every feeling.

All religious rituals including Poojas, Aartis and Parayanas, etc. are methods of human evolution at the first stage. Evolution of the thought process of mind in itself is the inter-mediary stage and emancipation of the soul through realization of God is the third and final stage in the spiritual journey of the soul. Since the omniscient Baba could easily read through the thoughts of all His devotees, He could prescribe the methods of thought control and spiritual evolution to each devotee, specific to him.

History shows that it is the positive forces of human minds that had created mighty civilizations and it is the negative forces of human minds that had brought about the total destruction of their own civilization as had happened in Rome, Egypt, Peru etc. We see the world as our mind visualises it and our

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visualisation is limited and often distorted. We see the world with a fixed Kaleidoscope from a certain angle. If the Kaleidoscope is rotated, then different forms and patterns of life would appear. Since each individual sees life from a certain fixed angle, each experiences a specific pattern, the pattern of life experienced by him seems to be the only truth. Let alone the people with a predominantly evil nature, even people with the best of qualities suffer from this limitation of mental fixity. It is seen that at times the best qualities of an individual, become the greatest block in his evolution in certain situations. For example, there was a kind person who used to help every one. He had the expectation, as is usually the case with human beings that others would be equally kind to him and reciprocate, in his bad times. But when he was in distress every one did not render the required help in the manner and to the extent he had rendered to them. As a result, he started questioning the very plinth of kindness and decided not to help others as he used to do earlier. Now his proactive kindness turned to reactive narrow-mindedness. His evolved quality of natural benevolence was blocked and the evolution process of mind slowed down. No doubt as a worldly-wise person he went a step forward but in his spiritual evolution he had gone a step backward. If he had the flexibility of mind to accept the imperfection in others without passing value judgement over the imperfect conduct of others, he would have been happier and more evolved. The lesson to learn is that howsoever perfect one claims to be, the universal nature (containing both so called perfect and imperfect aspects), does not give a license to any one condemn others, howsoever, imperfect. Therefore, the wise ones have proclaimed that one may hate sin but not the sinner. Baba unequivocally declared that when any one condemned any one else, his feelings were hurt.

Some psycho-analysts hold the view that inflexible perfectionists suffer psychological stress the most as they find it difficult to adjust with the imperfect traits in the character of others with whom they interact. Such persons are sometimes, highly creative because of their sense of perfection but nevertheless they suffer the most due to social maladjustment. This problem of human beings is not limited to this category alone. It is more or less with every one to some extent. The fundamental problem with the magnificent human being is that each person considers himself to be the centre of the Universe – the little Universe he has created for himself. Therefore, he desires that every thing around him should fall in line with the requirements of that little Universe. They are not prepared to visualise themselves as an infinitesimally small particle in the vast Universe with millions and millions of ever changing patterns. These millions of little Universes juxtaposed in the social fabric of our complex world try to clash with each other and to pull each other apart by the gravitational force of their atomic individualism or ego. The Sadgurus have always tried to give simple solutions to this complex problem.

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If we follow the prescriptions of Baba, as contained in Shri Sai Satcharitra our thought process can go through a qualitative change and we can have a clearer picture of the world around us. It will not only do good to us but also to others around us. Therefore, when reading Shri Sai Satcharitra or other literature on Baba, our thought should always be focused on this aspect of conscious mental evolution that Baba repeatedly taught and exemplified through his own conduct.

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