

## In Sai's Proximity

– Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

### APPA KULKARNI

In the same year, like Nanasaheb, Baba also brought Shri Narayan Krishna Pendse and his devout wife through Appa Kulkarni to His *Darbar*.

Pendse's wife was very pious. Everyone called her '*Mai*'. Hearing about Baba's reputation, she was anxious to take His *Darshan*. But, Pendse himself never believed in such matters. He said to her, "There is no saint in Shirdi that you talk of. However, in a *Masjid* there, a mad and pretentious Muslim *Fakir* sits. The villagers are crazy after him. According to the information that I have received, this beggar from the *Masjid* goes from door to door, collects alms and survives."

However, his wife was restless. Considering her anxiety, Baba managed a coincidence. Pendse was required to go to Shirdi for some Govt. work. His wife accompanied him and when he proceeded for his work, she came to the *Masjid* and took Baba's *Darshan*. On returning home, she narrated the incident to Pendse and said, "He is really a saint. Do not criticize Him or blame Him. Take His *Darshan* and enjoy the bliss!"

Then Pendse came to the *Masjid*. When he came near to the steps, Baba roared, "I am warning you. Do not come forward. I am pretentious and mad Muslim. You are high caste *Brahmin*. Then why do you come to take my *Darshan*?"

Pendse was stunned to hear his exact words coming out of Baba's mouth. He became restless to have Baba's *Darshan*. He caught hold of Appa Kulkarni and with his influence availed Baba's *Darshan*.

Once, Appa was sitting with Baba in the *Masjid* as per his usual practice. While chitchatting, Baba said to him, "You see Appa, thieves are going to visit our village today. They are not going to commit dacoity; but they are concentrating on the main wealth. They commit their act so fast and with such expertise that even if you are alert, you get cheated. Go and see, what precautions you can take. Because, today they are going to raid you!"

At that time, there were signs that an epidemic of cholera was likely to break-out. But, nobody could see it coming. Taking Baba's words literally, Appa started making preparations. He put guards to protect his property.

It was night time and Appa started having vomiting and loose motions. His hands and legs became cold and turned stiff like wood. His pulse slowed down. Seeing that his end is near, his wife panicked. She was sure that soon she would become a widow.

She rushed to Baba and pleaded to save her husband. She asked for *Udi*. But, Baba consoled her that "One day every living being has to face death. But, the soul lives forever. Take courage and face the reality."

Hearing these words, the lady took control of herself. She went home and after some time Appa went to his heavenly abode.

Next day, 2-3 more people took ill. The villagers rushed to Baba. He said, "Totally seven persons will die and then the disease will leave this village." Accordingly, seven persons passed away and the epidemic disappeared.

Appa was fortunate to have the love and affection of his *Sadguru*.

Keshav Anant alias Appa Kulkarni, a resident of Shirdi village, was a devotee of Baba for a long time. He was a staunch proponent of truth; but he was very egoistic. He had deep faith in Baba; but he was a harassed man - as if the sins of his earlier birth were after him. He was accused of misappropriation in some government matter. The news spread very fast in the village and without verification of the truth, a rumor - that Appa Kulkarni was a cheat and has swindled money - started circulating. There was a talk that a case would be filed against him.

The then district collector officer sent a word to Appa and called him to give his statement. Appa got scared and started saying that - "Now, I cannot return home."

Before under taking the journey, as per usual practice, he went to bow before Baba. He prostrated before Baba and pleaded, "Baba, You are my father and you are my mother. You know, whether the accusation is true or false. If something happens to me, it will be You Who will be blamed. Please, save me from this peril!"

Hearing the utterances of Appa, Baba took pity on him. He said, "Appa, do not fear. Presently, the district officer is at village Nevase - the same place where Sant Dnyaneshwar wrote his treatise Dnyaneshwari - First there, take Darshan of Mohiniraja and bow down before him! Then go to the Saheb! The Mohiniraja will protect you."

Appa did exactly what he was told. After bowing down before Mohiniraja, he went to the Saheb's office and wrote down his statement. After going through it, the Saheb said, "I am convinced that you have not defalcated money. Therefore, I am releasing you."

Appa danced with joy. Next day he returned to Shirdi, held on tightly to Baba's feet and said, "Baba, You saved my reputation. I am ever grateful to you." Baba replied, "who am I? This was done by the Parameshwar. He turns impossible into possible, Appa!"

Baba also brought other devotees closer through Appa. Amongst such devotees, prominent was Nanasaheb Chandorkar - a highly learned and high ranking govt. official.

Around 1892, Nanasaheb - who was then residing at Kalyan – was appointed as secretary to the collector of Ahmednagar. Baba called Appa and told him, "Go, and tell that Nana that I have called him!" Appa delivered Baba's message to Nanasaheb.

Who could believe this? He said, "Why Baba is calling me? Tell me clearly what you want!"

Then Appa narrated the incident in detail to Nanasaheb and convinced him that it was really Baba Who had sent the message.

– Translated from original Marathi into English by [Sudhir](#)