

Baba's Leelas before 1918 – Bhishma's Letter

The following excerpts are from a letter sent on 11-7-1921 by Vedshastri Krishnashastri Bhishma, the writer of most of the verses from Sri Sadguru Sainath Sagunopasana.

My experiences with Maharaj are well-known to those around me. So, there is nothing special in this letter. If devotees already know or have read these experiences, please do not publish them.

Sainath Maharaj had an extra sensory perception. Though I am writing this in the past tense, it is only with reference to the mortal body. For me, Sainath is immortal and will always be, since Maharaj is constantly giving me visions and is guiding me to do things He wishes, what I say cannot be false.

One evening we were sitting with Sainath and also did the last Aarati, the Shejarati. But, when we went to visit Him the next day, Sai said, "Yesterday evening I had gone for a walk." We could not believe this as He was with us all evening till the Shejarati. But, a few minutes later a man from a village south of Shirdi came and mentioned, "Yesterday evening Sai Maharaj was in our village." We then understood that Sai had extra sensory powers and so could be in both places at the same time.

Once, when all the people in Balwantrao Khaparde's house were asleep, Sai came in his dream, dined with him, ate a paan sitting on the swing and then left. At that moment Balwantrao woke up. When he narrated this dream to me in the morning, I said, "without telling this dream to anyone go to Sainath Maharaj. If Sai has given you this vision, He will give you some indication. If it is an ordinary dream, Sai won't say a word." Balwantrao went to meet Sai and was amazed when Sai said, "you gave me

dinner yesterday; but you did not give any Dakshina.” Balwantrao was stunned; but he immediately asked, how much he should give and back came the reply, “Rs. 25/-”.

All these are the facets of extra sensory perception at play. Some may think, these stories are false; but in his book ‘Srimadbhagwatarth Darshan’ Mr. Yeshwant Vyankatesh Kolhatkar, B. A., L.L. B., proves that the Atma or soul is immortal and can perform many miracles. Then, how could it be impossible for Baba to give Darshan while awake or in a dream? “Jaagat Rama, Sovat Rama, Sapnon mein dekho Rama hi Rama,” said Sant Eknath and accordingly Sainath gives Darshan whenever He wills. In Chapter VIII, Vol. III, Verse 4, from the Chhandogya Upanishad it is said that “Sometimes this blissful soul leaves the body and attains self-realization and oneness with the Supreme Light; but the soul does not need to leave the body unconscious.” Maharaj was in complete control of His senses and desires and remained perpetually calm.

While going from His sleeping area towards the Masjid with His staff in hand, Baba used to hurl abuses. At such a time nobody had the courage to face Him. But, whenever He uttered these expletives at the top of His voice, people could hear the softly uttered words “Allah tera bhala karega”. Which man could give blessings while in a fit of rage? That is why, in my opinion Baba’s anger was just a show, but His conscience was kind and calm.

In verse 4274 of Tukaram’s Gatha it is said that God Himself bears the troubles of His devotees and is always close to them. One day, all of us were seated next to Maharaj, when it was time for the noon Aarati. According to the custom in those days Bapusaheb prepared the Aarati. But, suddenly, without any provocation, Maharaj donned the Narsimha Avatar. He threw away the Aarati and the Prasad, drove all the people out by hitting at them with His staff. He Himself left His seat and sat down in

the Veranda. The Aarati could not take place. By 3 p.m. all the devotees were hungry. Some suggested that the Aarati should be done to the throne. But, Dadasaheb Khaparde did not agree and said that the Aarati should be done to Baba only, but at the hands of Vaghya and not Bapusaheb. Accordingly the Aarati was given to Vaghya. But, suddenly Baba returned to His throne and the Aarati was done. But, nobody understood the reason for Baba's anger.

The next day a lawyer from Kopargaon arrived. He said, "there was a criminal case against one of Baba's devotee. The court had sentenced him when I reached there. I took the case and appealed. Surprisingly the court inquired me about the defendant's conduct. When I vouched for his good behavior and his being innocent, the court acquitted him. To ask Baba, how this miracle took place, I came to Shirdi for Baba's Darshan. That devotee told me about the eminent Sai and said he was acquitted due to Baba's blessings." As said in Sant Dnyaneshwar's Aarati it is an open secret that the universe is Brahma. Sai behaved accordingly.

There was a well-worn piece of sack-cloth which Baba used as a seat and loved it immensely. Once, when Baba was away, a devotee threw the sack-cloth away and kept a silk cushion in its place. When Baba returned He started fuming and abusing as soon as He saw the new cushion. He threw it and scattered the Dhuni. He calmed down only when His old torn piece of sacking was restored.

One day people asked me to replace the old sacking with a new one; but I waited till everybody stood for Aarati and then asked Baba in sign language if I could change the sack-cloth. He signaled in agreement. I immediately told Dadasaheb and bought a new sack and replaced the old one, which was discarded. After the Aarati, Baba sat down quietly. Devotees served Him. Then He gave His 'Chillum' to me and asked for five

Laddoos which I promised. I kept worrying as to how I would be able to make Laddoos without anybody's help in this unfamiliar place. If I took somebody's help Baba would immediately know. Why did He ask specifically for five Laddoos and not just Laddoos? I spent the day mulling over it and went to sleep with the same thought in mind. But, soon I woke up with an inspiration to write a verse which I immediately penned. In the morning, when I was writing the next stanza, Mr. Dixit, who was on his way to Baba, stopped by and saw my poem. Later I took my bath and went for Darshan. As soon as He saw me Baba asked for the Laddoos. I did not say anything; but Dixit said, "The Laddoos are getting ready". Baba was pacified. The next day I finished writing five stanzas and offered them to Baba. (I had tried to write more than five; but try as I may, I could not write beyond the five already written and so left it at that.) When Baba saw them, He asked me to read them out and while I was reading, blessed me by putting His hand on my head. It is impossible to narrate my state of bliss at that time. After that I read to Him every poem I wrote and this collection ultimately became the book 'Sainath Sagunopasana' which I offered at His feet. The proceeds of the book were given for the protection of cows. The copies of this book must still be there.

"Dhiro na shochati," says the Kathopanishad. Self-realized brave people never grieve and even if they feel sad, they do not need other people's advice to restore their good cheer; they themselves get rid of it.

Megha, a Gujarati was Maharaj's loving devotee. He slogged to serve Baba. He was serving Baba at his master's instance; but one day it crossed his mind 'Why should I bathe a Muslim?' And so one day he left Shirdi for his native place, where he fell ill. When he recovered, he went to visit the Shiva temple; but instead of a Shivalingam he saw Sai Maharaj. He promptly returned to Shirdi. To remove the evil thoughts from his

body he was asked to chant the Gayatri Mantra a certain number of times. On completion Baba blessed him. When Megha passed away, Baba Himself came and touching his entire body with His hands, cried bitterly for five minutes. Then consoling Himself, 'How much will you cry?' He calmed down (as per the teaching of the Kathopanishad – “Dhiro na shochati”) and gave permission for the final rites.

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