

Did Sri Saibaba sacrifice his life to save Tatya's life?

The people believed that Baba had sacrificed his own life to save Tatya's. Hemadpant brings this out in the 42nd chapter of Sri Sai Satcharitra. "It seemed that they both (Baba and Tatya) exchanged a life for a life and a death for a death. The people believed that Baba had sacrificed his life for the sake of Tatya. Baba alone knows whether this is true or not. In this manner Baba had stated Tatya's name but indicated his own mahasamadhi." It was not surprising that the people believed thus seeing that Baba had loved Tatya more than his own life itself. But this is just a blind belief on their part and in fact has no foundation. This is because Baba has clearly stated that he had first arranged for two swings (carriages), one for himself and the other for Tatya. But he had changed his mind and sent one swing back and that only he will be going away. He did not say that he had got only one swing ready for Tatya and that he would be going in that instead of Tatya. Tatya also only requested Baba to send him first but not to send him instead of Baba.

Further; Sri Saibaba is an incarnation of god whose birth, growth and death is tied with the karma and salvation of many devotees. Baba had saved many devotees from death and indeed had even brought back alive many who were dead too. To save Tatya from death was an easy task for him, it was not necessary for him to sacrifice his own life to save Tatya's. As Hemadpant stated, he may have, in his natural cryptic style, indicated his death in advance and said Tatya's name instead of his own. The feeling of the people that he had sacrificed his life to save Tatya mirrors their belief that he had indeed loved Tatya more than his own life.

Please go through the article from Saipatham July – August 2001 for more details:

Sri Ramachandra Kote Patil fell seriously ill in 1916. All types of medication were tried but were found to be futile. Everyone thought that his early death was inevitable. He too was resigned to his death and waited with dread for the day. One night Baba presented him with his divine vision and said, "Do not fear. I have stopped your death. You will get well soon. I am only worried about Tatya. He will die in 1918 on Vijayadasami day, but do not reveal this to anyone, especially Tatya. If you tell him this, it will only serve to terrorize him before his death." Amazingly Ramachandra Patil started to recover his health from the very next day and attained his former good health in a few days. He was an intimate friend of Tatya and knew that Baba's words were unalterable and had to come true. He realized that Tatya had only two more years left in this world and was engulfed in sorrow. He could not keep this burning anguish within himself for long and shared the secret divulged by Baba with his friend Bala Shimpi alone.

As Ramachandra Patil and Bala Shimpi feared, Tatya fell seriously ill as the Vijayadasami of 1918 approached. Baba too fell ill around the same time. Tatya's condition worsened day-by-day and turned critical one or two days before Vijayadasami. He could not even come to the mosque for the darshan of Sri Saibaba. One day Baba sent word to him to come to the mosque and have his meal there, but as Tatya could not summon enough strength to even rise from his bed, some devotees helped him to go to the mosque where Baba fed him with semolina pudding with his own hands despite his ill health. Tatya could only swallow a couple of mouthfuls with great difficulty. Baba told him, "Tatya, I have arranged for two swings (carriages) for us initially. But I have changed my mind. I alone will go on now presently. Now you may go home." Tatya understood the import of Baba's words and started sobbing. He said, "Baba, why do you not send me first?" Baba replied, "I am a fakir, there is no one to cry for me when I go away. But all your people will grieve if you go." Tatya heard the tone of finality in Baba's words and his sorrow intensified and he started weeping piteously. He said, "Baba, if I go, it is only my relatives who will grieve. But if you go, you will make many people of this world orphans. If you live on many people will attain salvation by your mere darshan. What of me? My life is a burden to me and to my relatives too." Baba would not brook any further talk in this vein from Tatya. He scolded him lovingly, "Alright, no more talk from you. Go home." He put udi on Tatya's forehead and sent him home, watching him with a heavy heart until he was out of sight.

The day of Vijayadasami dawned and Baba entered mahasamadhi. Tatya's health astonishingly started improving a few hours after Baba's mahasamadhi and fully recovered in a couple of days.

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