

## 26<sup>th</sup> July 1936

BALAKRISHNA GOVIND UPASANI SASTRI, S/O Govind Gopal Upasani Sastri, Brahmin, aged about 69, retired Professor of Sanskrit, Saniwarpeth, Poona, says:

When plague was raging at Poona, my college was closed for many long months, and then I went on pilgrimage with my mother and wife. When I went from Haridwar and Rishikesh to Tapovan, there I met a sadhu who glared at me - at least he was persistently looking at me. I bowed to him and he still looked at me, and asked me 'Are you not from Satana?' 'Yes', I answered, for Satana is my ancestral village. Then, I, in my turn inquired of him, who he was. 'Come here again tomorrow at this time - (afternoon) and I will tell you, he said. I then went to my quarters and informed my mother. She thought that this might be our (family) Mutt Founder, Sri Uddhava of Mulhare (Mayurapura). Next day, she wanted to come to see the saint and she accompanied me to the appointed place at the time fixed. After 15 minutes of wandering up and down, she thought it was a wild goose chase to find a wandering saint and went away. Almost immediately after she left, that saint appeared before me and said, with a grave countenance, 'Do not act in this manner again'.

I: In what manner?

He: Only those directed to come should come. There is always difference between one individual and another alike in physical and other peculiarities. No two are exactly the same. So only the bidden person should come.

I agreed to abide by that rule.

Then as I wanted to know his identity, he informed me that I had a saligram among the Gods that I worshipped at home and he gave me an exact description of it. I said that I had that *saligram*. Then, he added, that he was the person who gave it to Uddhava Maharaj from whose grandson, my grandfather had got it. It has been a heirloom with us and I am still worshipping it.

Still as his identity was not clear, he thus replied to me – talking this time in Hindustani. Till then, he was talking in Marathi. He waved his hand so as to attract my attention and said ‘Lo, there was a tree. Two persons went up that tree. One came down; the other went up’. He wound up with the remark ‘you will come to know’ and then he disappeared. He looked like a man of 50 or 60 years, rather bulky and stout and he wore only a *coupina* and no other article of dress.

Many years later, say about 1910-11, I was trying to utilize my Christmas Holidays for a trip from Dhulia southward to see if any trace could be found of my younger brother Kasinath (i.e Upasani Baba). He had contacted some strange disease in the course of his efforts at Pranayama. He could not lie down lest breathing should stop. He had no sleep, nor good digestion. So he left home and we had no trace of his whereabouts. As I was in the train from Manmad going south, it stopped at Kopergaon for a few minutes and the local *mamlatdar*, Mr. Bhat, a friend of mine who was on the platform made me alight and spend a pleasant day with him. He told me that Sal Baba was a saint living 6 miles off (i.e) at Shirdi and worth a visit. He sent me in his *tonga* to that village.

I went to the mosque and found Sai Baba at the *dhuni* in the mosque. He was standing close to the fire and occasionally turning round Himself. He saw me and invited me inside. I went and prostrated myself before him. Gazing at me, he told me to go to Khandoba's temple. I thought he recommended that visit to see the image of that God and I said that all Gods were there with Him, and was quite content to see Him. He repeated the words 'Go to Khandoba's. I inferred that He wanted me to get away and not to stay there. So I went to an adjoining house and there they told me (after I mentioned Baba's order) that there was one Upasani Sastri at Khandoba's. I then went to Khandoba's and found my brother there. He said that he was remaining there by Sai Baba's order and that he saw very little of Sai Baba. I then gave him or

rather one Dada Kelkar on his account some Rs.4 for his food expenses and went back to the Masjid. I stayed at Shirdi for one or two days at that time.

On the first day, He asked all generally for *dakshina kukshana*, some gave. He extended His palms towards me and asked for *dakshnia kukshan*. I said I had nothing and made *pranams*.

On the occasion, Sai Baba said to me the same words as the sadhu at Tapovan. 'Lo there was a tree. Two persons went up that tree. One came down; the other went up, in Hindustani. I was at once reminded of the Tapovan saint whose person closely resembled Sai Baba's, though the dress was different. Sai Baba mentioned some autobiographical reminiscences of His own. He said He had been at the battle in which the Rani of Jhansi took part. He was then in the army.

On the second day He asked me again for *dakshina*. I excused myself on the ground that I had barely the railway fare for my Journey with me. Then He pointed to a silver watch I had in my pocket and asked for it as *dakshina*. I gave it - but not without a momentary regret and hesitation. He received it and handed it over to some fakir by His side. Then looking at me and evidently to meet my momentary regret at losing the watch, Baba said to me "You are not going to be worse off (on this account)". I said, 'Of course, it was nothing I had given. Then I started back, and via Kopergaon came to Poona. There I went to a friend's (Mr. Natu's) house. I was talking of my Shirdi watch incident and inquired what it would cost to get a similar watch. Just then my friend's brother sent down his gold watch worth about Rs. 60 and wanted me to accept it as a present and I accepted it. So, I was not worse off for parting with my watch to Sai Baba.

I visited Shirdi on one or two occasions. I composed then Sanskrit poems on Sai Baba.