

Sai Satcharitra

Sai Satcharitra - Chapter XXXIII

Greatness of Udi

Scorpion Sting and Plague Cases Cured - Jamner Miracle - Narayanarao's Sickness - Balabuva sutar - Appasaheb Kulkarni - Haribhau Karnik.

In the last Chapter we described the greatness of the Guru; now in this we will describe the greatness of Udi.

Preliminary

Let us bow now before the great saints. Their merciful glances will destroy mountains of sins and do away with all the evil taints of our character. Their casual talk gives us good teachings and confers on us imperishable happiness. Their minds do not know any difference such as 'This is ours and that is yours.' Such differentiation never arises in their minds. Their debts (obligations) will never be repaid by us in this birth as well as in many future births.

Udi

It is well-known that Baba took Dakshina from all, and out of the amount thus collected, He spent a lot on charity and purchased fuel with the balance left with Him. This fuel He threw in the Dhuni - the sacred fire, which he kept ever burning. The ash from this fire was called Udi and it was freely distributed to the devotees at the time of their departure from Shirdi.

What did Baba teach or hint by this Udi? Baba taught by His Udi that all the visible phenomena in the universe are as transient as the ash. Our bodies composed of wood or matter of the five elements, will fall down, after all their enjoyments are over, and be reduced to ashes. In order to remind the devotees of the fact that their bodies will be reduced to ashes, Baba distributed Udi to them.

Baba also taught by the Udi that the Brahman is the only Reality and the universe is ephemeral and that no one in this world, be he a son, father or wife, is really ours. We come here (in this world) alone and we have to go out alone. It was found and is even now found out, that the Udi cured many physical and mental maladies, but Baba wanted to din into the devotee's ears the principles of discrimination between the Unreal and the Real, non-attachment for the Unreal, by His Udi and Dakshina. The former (Udi) taught us discrimination and the latter (Dakshina) taught us non-attachment. Unless we have these two things, it is not possible for us to cross over the sea of the mundane existence. So Baba asked for and took Dakshina, and while the devotees took leave, He gave Udi as Prasad, besmeared some of it on the Bhaktas' foreheads and placed His boon-conferring hand on their heads. When Baba was in a cheerful mood, He used to sing merrily. One such song was about Udi. The burden of the Udi song was this, "Oh, playful Rama, come, come, and bring with you sacks of Udi." Baba used to sing in very clear and sweet tones.

So much about the spiritual implication of Udi. It had also its material significance. It conferred health, prosperity, freedom from anxiety, and many other worldly gains. So the Udi has helped us to gain both our ends - material as well as spiritual. We shall now begin with the stories about the Udi.

Scorpion-Sting

Narayan Motiram Jani of Nasik was a devotee of Baba. He was serving under another devotee of Baba, by name Ramachandra Vaman Modak. Once he went to Shirdi with his mother and saw Baba. Then Baba Himself told her that he (her son) should serve no more, but start independent business. Some days after, this prophecy turned true. Narayan Jani left service and started a boarding house 'Anandashram' which thrived well. Once a friend of this Narayanrao was stung by a scorpion and the pain caused by it, was severe and unbearable. Udi is most efficacious in such cases; it is to be applied on the seat of pain, and so Narayanrao searched for it, but found none. Then he stood before Baba's picture and invoked Baba's aid, chanted Baba's name and taking out a pinch of the ashes of the joss-stick burning in front of Baba's picture and thinking it to be Baba's Udi, applied it on the seat of pain and the sting.

As soon as he took out his fingers, the pain vanished and both the person were moved and felt delighted.

Bubonic Plague Case

Once a devotee in Bandra came to know that his daughter, who was staying in another place was down with bubonic plague. He had no Udi with him; so he sent word to Nanasaheb Chandorkar to send the same. Nanasaheb got this message on a road near the Thana Railway Station when he was travelling with his wife to Kalyan. He had no Udi with him at that time. He, therefore, took up some earth from the road, meditated upon Sai Baba, invoked His aid and applied it on the forehead of his wife. The devotee saw all this and when he went to his daughter's house he was very glad to learn that his daughter, who was suffering for three days, began to improve from the very moment Nanasaheb invoked Baba's aid near the Thana Railway Station.

The Jamner Miracle

About 1904-05 Nanasaheb Chandorkar was Mamlatdar at Jamner, in the Khandesh District, which is more than 100 miles distant from Shirdi. His daughter Mainatai was pregnant and was about to deliver. Her case was very serious and she was suffering from labour pains for the last two or three days. Nanasaheb tried all remedies but they proved in vain; he then remembered Baba and invoked His aid. There in Shirdi, one Ramgirbuva, whom Baba called Bapugirbuva, wanted at this time to go to his native place in Khandesh. Baba called him and told him to take a little rest and stop at Jamner on his way home and give the Udi and Arati to Nanasaheb. Ramgirbuva said that he had only two rupees with him and that amount was barely sufficient for the railway fare upto Jalgaon and it was not possible for him to go from Jalgaon to Jamner, a distance of about 30 miles. Baba assured him that he need not worry, as everything would be provided for him. Then Baba asked Shama to write the well-known Arati composed by Madhav Adkar (a translation of this is given at the end of this work) and give a copy of it with Udi to Ramgirbuva to be delivered to Nanasaheb. Then relying on Baba's words, Ramgirbuva left Shirdi and reached Jalgaon at about 2-45 a.m. He had only two annas left with him and was in a hard plight. To his great relief he heard somebody calling out "Who is Bapugirbuva of Shirdi?" He went to him and told him that he was the person Bapugirbuva. Then the peon, professing to be sent by Nanasaheb, took him out to an excellent tanga with a good pair of horses. They both drove in it. The tanga ran fast and early in the morning they came to a brooklet.

The drive took the horses for watering them and the peon asked Ramgirbuva to partake of some eatables. On seeing the beard, moustache and the livery of the peon, Rangirbuva suspected him to be a Moslem and was unwilling to take any refreshments from him, but the peon satisfied him by saying that he was a Hindu, a Kshatriya of Garhwal and that Nanasaheb had sent these refreshments and that there should be no difficulty, nor any doubt about acceptance. Then both of them took the refreshments and started again. They reached Jamner at dawn. Ramgirbuva alighted to attend a call of nature (passing urine) and returned within a few minutes, but found that there was no tanga, no driver and no peon. He was dumbfounded. Then he went to the neighbouring Katcheri and making enquiries, learnt that the Mamlatdar was at home. He went to Nanasaheb's house, and announced himself and gave to Nanasaheb, Baba's Udi and Arati. At this time, Mainatai's case was most serious and all were in deep anxiety about her. Nanasaheb called out his wife and asked her to give the Udi, mixed with water, to their daughter to drink, and sing Baba's Arati. He thought that Baba's help was most opportune. In a few minutes came the news that the delivery was safe and that the crisis had passed away. When Ramgirbuva thanked Nanasaheb for the peon, tanga and the refreshments etc. the latter was greatly surprised as he had sent none to the station, and was not aware of any person coming from Shirdi.

Mr. B.V. Deo of Thana, Retired Mamlatdar, made enquiries about this matter with Bapurao Chandorkar, son of Nanasaheb and Ramgirbuva of Shirdi and after satisfying himself wrote an elaborate article - part prose and part poetry - in Shri Sai Leela magazine (Vol. 13 Nos. 11, 12 and 13). Brother B.V. Narsimhswami has also taken down the statements of (1) Mainatai (No. V page 14) and (2) Bapusaheb Chandorkar (No. XX page 50) and (3) Ramgirbuva (No. XXVII, Page 83) dated 1st June 1936, 16th September 1936 and 1st December 1936 respectively and published them in his "Devotees' Experiences, Part III." The following is quoted from Ramgirbuva's statement.

"One day Baba called me to him and gave me a packet of Udi and a copy of Baba's Arati. I had to go to Khandesh at the time. Baba directed me to go to Jamner and told me to deliver the Arati and Udi to Nanasaheb Chandorkar, at Jamner. I said to Baba that all I had was Rs. 2, and asked Him how that could take me by train from Kopergaon to Jalgaon and next by cart from Jalgaon to Jamner. Baba said, "God will give." That was Friday and I started at once. I reached Manmad at 7-30 p.m. and Jalgaon at 2-45 a.m. At that time plague regulations were enforced and I had much trouble.

I was to discover what I should do to get to Jamner. At about 3 a.m. a peon in boots, turban and well equipped with other details of good dress came to me and took me to a tanga and drove me on. I was in terror. On the way at Bhaghoor, I took refreshments. We reached Jamner early in the morning and by the time I attended my call of nature the tanga and its driver had disappeared (page 83)."

Narayanarao

Bhakta Narayanrao (father's name and surname are not given) had the good fortune to see Baba twice during the Latter's lifetime. Three years after the passing away of Baba in 1918, he wanted to come to Shirdi, but he could not come. Within a year of Baba's Mahasamadhi he fell sick and suffered much. All ordinary remedies gave him no relief. So he meditated on Baba day and night. One night he had a vision in his dream. Baba coming to him through a cellar, comforted him saying, "Don't be anxious, you will be improving from tommorrow, and within a week you will be on your legs." Narayanrao got perfectly well within the time mentioned in the vision. Now the point for consideration is this:- Was Baba living because he had the body, and was He dead because He left it? No, Baba is ever alive, for He transcends both life and death. He who loved Him once whole-heartedly gets response from Him at any time and at any place. He is always by our side and will take any form and appear before the devout Bhakta and satisfy him.

Appasaheb Kulkarni

In 1917 the chance of one Appasaheb Kulkarni came. He was transferred to Thana and began to worship Baba's picture presented to him by Balasaheb Bhate. In real earnest he did the worship. He offered flowers, sandal-paste, and naivedya daily to Baba in the picture and longed intently to see Him. In this connection it may be remarked that seeing Baba's picture earnestly is equivalent to seeing Him in person. The following story illustrates this statement.

Balabuva Sutar

A Saint of Bombay named Balabuva Sutar, who on account of his piety, devotion and bhajan, was called "Modern Tukaram", came to Shirdi for the first time in 1917. When he bowed before Baba, the latter said "I know this man since four years". Balabuva wondered and thought, how could that be, as that was his first trip to Shirdi. But thinking about it seriously he recollected that he had prostrated himself four years ago before Baba's portrait at Bombay and was convinced about the significance of Baba's words.

He said to himself, "How omniscient and all-pervading are the Saints and how kind are they to their Bhaktas! I merely bowed to His photo, this fact was noticed by Baba and in due time He made me realize that seeing His photo is equivalent to seeing Him in person!"

Appasaheb Kulkarni

To return to Appasaheb's story. While he was in Thana, he had to go on tour to Bhivandi and was not expected to return within a week. In his absence, the following wonderful thing took place on the third day. At noon a fakir turned up at Appasaheb's house. His features resembled exactly those of Baba's photo. Mrs. Kulkarni and the children all asked him whether he was Sai Baba of Shirdi. He said 'No', but that he was an obedient servant of His and came there at His order to enquire after the health of the family. Then he asked for Dakshina. The lady gave him a rupee. He gave her a small packet of Udi, and asked her to keep this in the shrine along with the photo for worship. Then he left the house and went away. Now hear the wonderful Leela of Sai.

Appasaheb could not proceed with his tour as his horse fell sick at Bhivandi. He returned home that afternoon and learnt from his wife about fakir's visit. He smarted in his mind as he did not get the darshan of the fakir and he did not like that only one rupee was paid as Dakshina. He said that had he been present, he would have offered not less than rupees ten. Then he immediately started in quest of the fakir and searched for him in the Masjid and other places, without taking any food. His search was in vain. He then returned home and took his food. The reader may remember here Baba's dictum in Chapter 32 that God's quest should not be made on an empty belly. Appasaheb got a lesson, here about this. Then after meals he went out for a walk with a friend Mr. Chitre. Going some distance they saw a man approaching them rapidly. Appasaheb thought that he must be the fakir that came to his house at noon, as his features tallied with those of baba in the photo. The fakir immediately put forth his hand and asked for Dakshina. Appasaheb gave him a rupee. He demanded again and again and so Appasaheb gave him two more. Still he was not satisfied. Then he borrowed Rs. three from Mr. Chitre and gave them to him. He wanted still more. Appasaheb asked him to accompany him to his home. Then they all returned home and Appasaheb then gave him again three rupees, in all nine. He looked unsatisfied and demanded again. Then he told him that he had a currency of Rs. ten. The fakir asked for the same and took it and returned the nine rupees in cash and went away.

Appasaheb had said that he would pay Rs. ten and that sum was taken from him and nine rupees, consecrated by Baba's touch, were returned to him. The figure 9 is significant. It denotes the nine types of devotion (vide Chapter 21). It may also be noted here that Baba gave Rs. nine to one Laxmibai Shinde at His last moment.

Appasaheb examined the Udi-packet and found that it contained some flower-petals and Akshata. Then some time afterwards he got hair from Baba when he saw Him at Shirdi. He put the Udi-packet and the hair in a talisman and always wore it on his arm. Appasaheb realized the power of the Udi. Though he was very clever he got Rs. 40/- as pay in the beginning, but after he secured Baba's photo and His Udi, he got many times forty rupees per month and also got much power and influence; and along with these temporal benefits, his spiritual progress was also rapid. So those who are fortunate enough to get Baba's Udi should, after bath, apply it on the forehead and take some little of it mixed with water in the mouth as holy Tirth.

Haribhau Karnik

In 1917 Haribhau Karnik of Dahanu (Thana District) came to Shirdi on the Guru-pournima day (in the month of Ashadha) and worshipped Baba with all formality. He offered clothes and Dakshina, and after taking Baba's leave through Sharma, got down the steps of the Masjid. Then he thought that he should offer one more rupee to Baba and was just turning to get up when Shama informed him by signs that as he had got Baba's leave, he should go and not return. So he started home. On his way, when he went into the temple of Kala Rama at Nasik for darshan, the Saint Narsing Maharaj who used to sit just inside the big door of the temple, left his Bhaktas there came to Haribhau, caught his wrist and said, "Give me my one rupee". Karnik was surprised. He paid the rupee most willingly and thought that Sai Baba recovered the rupee, which he intended in his mind to give, through saint Narsing Maharaj. This shows how the saints work in unison.

This story illustrates the fact that all saints are one and shows how they work in unison.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all