

Miracles of Sai Baba

The villagers of Shirdi and afar soon found out that this was no ordinary fakir but an avatar (incarnation) of a very high order. He demonstrated through his miracles and utterances, the purpose and intention for which he had come. He would often say, "My Leela is inscrutable". To each one he met, he imparted knowledge according to the capacity of the recipient to absorb it. Baba's Leela's (miracles) were plenty and varied, and we recount just a few which occurred during and after his lifetime.

Baba's Leelas (Miracles)

Lighting lamps with water

Long before Sai Baba's fame spread, he was fond of burning lights in his Masjid and other Temples. But for the oil needed in those little earthenware lights that he lit, he depended on the generosity of the grocers of Shirdi. He had made it a rule to light earthenware lamps in the masjid every evening and he would call on the grocers for small donations. But there came a time when the grocers got tired of giving oil free to Sai Baba and one day they bluntly refused to oblige him, saying they had no fresh stocks. Without a word of protest Sai Baba returned to the masjid. Into those earthenware lamps he poured water and lighted the wicks. The lamps continued to burn deep into the midnight. The matter came to the notice of the grocers who now came to Sai Baba with profuse apologies. Wouldn't Sai Baba kindly pardon them? Sai Baba pardoned them, but he warned them never to lie again. "You could have refused to give me the oil, but did you have to say that you didn't have fresh stocks?" he admonished them. But he had made his point.

Premonition of burning fields

Once, harvesting in Shirdi had been completed and the foodgrains of the entire village had been stored in a yard. The summer was on. The heat was intense as only those who have lived in Shirdi know. One afternoon Sai Baba summoned Kondaji Sutar and said to him: "Go, your field is on fire!" Frightened, Kondaji ran to his field and frantically looked around for any sign of fire. There wasn't any. He returned to the masjid and informed Sai Baba that he had looked everywhere but had found no trace of fire and why did Baba have to frighten him? Unfazed, Baba said: "You better turn back and look again." Baba was right after all. Kondaji noticed that a sheaf of corn was indeed on fire and smoke was billowing from it. A strong wind was fanning the fire and word had gone round to the villagers who now came running to the scene. "Sai Baba," the people shouted "help us, help us put the fire out!" Thereupon, Sai Baba walked casually towards the yard, sprinkled some water on a stack of sheaves and said: " There now! The fire will die down!" And so it happened.

Stopping the rain

There is the story of one Rao Bahadur Moreshwar Fradhan who had come to Shirdi to take Sai Baba's darshan along with his wife. As the couple were about to leave, it began to rain heavily. Thunder and lightning rent the air. As the Pradhan couple looked round in dismay, Sai Baba prayed. "Oh Allah!" he intoned, "let the rains cease. My children are going home. Let them go peacefully!" The storm thereupon ceased, the downpour reduced to slight drizzle and the Pradhans were able to reach their destination safely.

Raising the water level in well

When Sai Baba first came to Shirdi it had of no basic facilities. There was a well put only in name. It had no natural spring water and if ever there had been one, it must long ago have dried up. Water had to be fetched from a distance. When, therefore, Sai Baba gave his permission to the villagers to celebrate the Ram Navami Fair, (Baba's Birthday) the big problem facing the organizers was one of water supply. So What should they do but go to Sai Baba with their problem? "Oh yes," said Sai Baba, 'so you want plenty of water, do you? Here, take this and drop it in the well and wait and see.' "This," turned up to be a platter of flowers on which some prasada (blessed food) had been placed along with the remnants of alms Baba had received earlier in the day. The villagers had no qualms about doing as they were bid. Their faith in Sai Baba was total. No sooner had that platter of leaves been dropped in the well, it is said, water rose from the bottom as if by divine command and completely filled it. And great was the rejoicing of the people.

Saving a child from drowning

One report has it that word had spread that the 3-year old daughter of a poor man called Babu Kirwandikar had fallen into the well and had been drowned. When the villagers rushed to the well they saw the child suspended in mid-air as if some invisible hand was holding her up! She was quickly pulled out. Sai Baba was fond of that child who was often heard to say : I am Baba's sister!" After this incident, the villagers took her at her word. "it is all Baba's Leela", the people would say philosophically. They could offer no other explanation.

Flow of Godavari (river) from Baba's feet

These were instances of things they had seen with their own eyes. It was not secondhand information they had gathered. Sai Baba was to them as real as their homes and their fields and their cattle and the distant hills. Das Ganu once had an unforgettable experience. On a festive occasion, he sought Baba's permission to go to a place called Singba on the banks of the Godavari to have a bath in the holy waters. "No," Baba replied resolutely, "where is the need to go all the way when the Godavari is here right at my feet?" Das Ganu was vexed. He was willing to concede that Ganga the holy river (Baba frequently referred to Godavari as Ganga) rose from the feet of Sri Narayana (one among the Hindu trinity of Gods) himself, but his faith was not deep enough to believe that the waters of the Godavari could spring from the feet of his master, Sri Sai Baba who was reading Das Ganu's mind decided that this was the time to strengthen Das Ganu's faith. He told his devotee: "come closer to me and hold the hollow of your palms at my feet!". As soon as he did so water flowed freely out of the toes of the master's feet and filled the hollow of Das Ganu's palms in no time. His joy knew no limits. He sprinkled the water on his head and his body and distributed some more among the assembled devotees as tirtha (holy water).

Other miracles

There was that other occasion when many thought that the masjid which housed Sai Baba himself would be consumed by fire from the flames which leapt up from the dhuni. All that Baba did was to take some swipes at a wooden pillar in front of him. With every blow the flames subsided and the fire died down. "Miraculous," said his devotees. Often they would notice him stirring some hot concoction over the kitchen fire, not with a ladle but with his bare hands. There never was a time when his hand was scalded. What supernatural powers did he have? On yet another occasion, Sai Baba was partaking of food with three of his devotees in the masjid when, without any cause for provocation, he exclaimed- "Stop!" Then, as if nothing had happened, the four continued with their meal. Lunch over and the dishes cleared, they stepped out of the masjid, when large chunks of the ceiling fell on the very spot where they had been seated only a few minutes earlier. Did Sai Baba's powers extend even to inanimate matter, the devotees wondered. Instances have been quoted by his devotees as to how Sai Baba commanded the rains to stop and the winds to cease.

Understanding Sai Baba

Baba always maintained the "Dhuni" or the perpetual fire. The realisation that all the



phenomenons of the nature are perishable and unworthy of our craving, is signified by "Udi" which Sal Baba distributed to all. Baba never left Shirdi. He talked to people who came to see Him. Sal Baba would often speak in symbols and parables leaving his devotees to work out the answer - such as, "A man had a beautiful horse, but no matter what he did, it would not run in harness. An expert suggested that it should be taken back to the place from where it had come. This was done and it become tracable and useful". The explanation of this story is that the horse is the Ego. As commander of the physical and mental powers of man, it is useful but self-willed and therefore cause endless trouble. Taking it back to its source is re-absorbing it in the spirit source which it arises. It is the return to the source which purifies and enlightens. From there the ego issues forth again, no longer an ego, but a conscious agent of the spirit. **Baba would ask for Dakshina (money offered with respect to the Guru) from some of those who came to see Him. This was not because he needed their money. This was one of Baba's methods for testing out the devotee's attachment to worldly things and willingness to surrender his ego. Once one has surrendered himself totally to Him, Baba takes care of all His spiritual and temporal needs.** Baba regarded money like everything else, in a symbolical manner. He once said, " I ask only from those who the fakir (God) points out and in exchange I give them ten times as much". By the end of the day, all the money Baba had earned was distributed to the destitute, poor, sick and the needy. Baba used to feed the fakirs and devotees and even cook for them. For those who were accustomed to meat, he cooked meat and for the others vegetarian fare.

The Dwarakamayee of Sai Baba was open to all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Among those who came to see him and got his darshan (establishing spiritual contact with the Guru) and blessings were ministers, government officials, business people and village folk. He was the common man's God. He Stayed with them, hejoked with them, He slept and ate with them, he smoked a chillum (pipe) with them, he sang and danced with them, having no pretensions of a God. But all of them Knew that He protected them. Even today, though He has left his gross body, they feel his presence and realise his worth all the more. Baba would also refer to the sounding of the drum of the beginning of eternity within the soul. This "anahat" sound emerged from Baba's heart from every limb, every bone and pore of his body. It was permeated with divine essence and Baba claimed that though one day his physical body will not exist, his remains will communicate with from the grave. Therefore, **the most important place in Shirdi is Baba's temple - the Samadhi Mandir is his grave**, which literally millions have visited and still continues to draw many more.
