

Nagasai Dharshan

நாகசாயி தர்ஷன்

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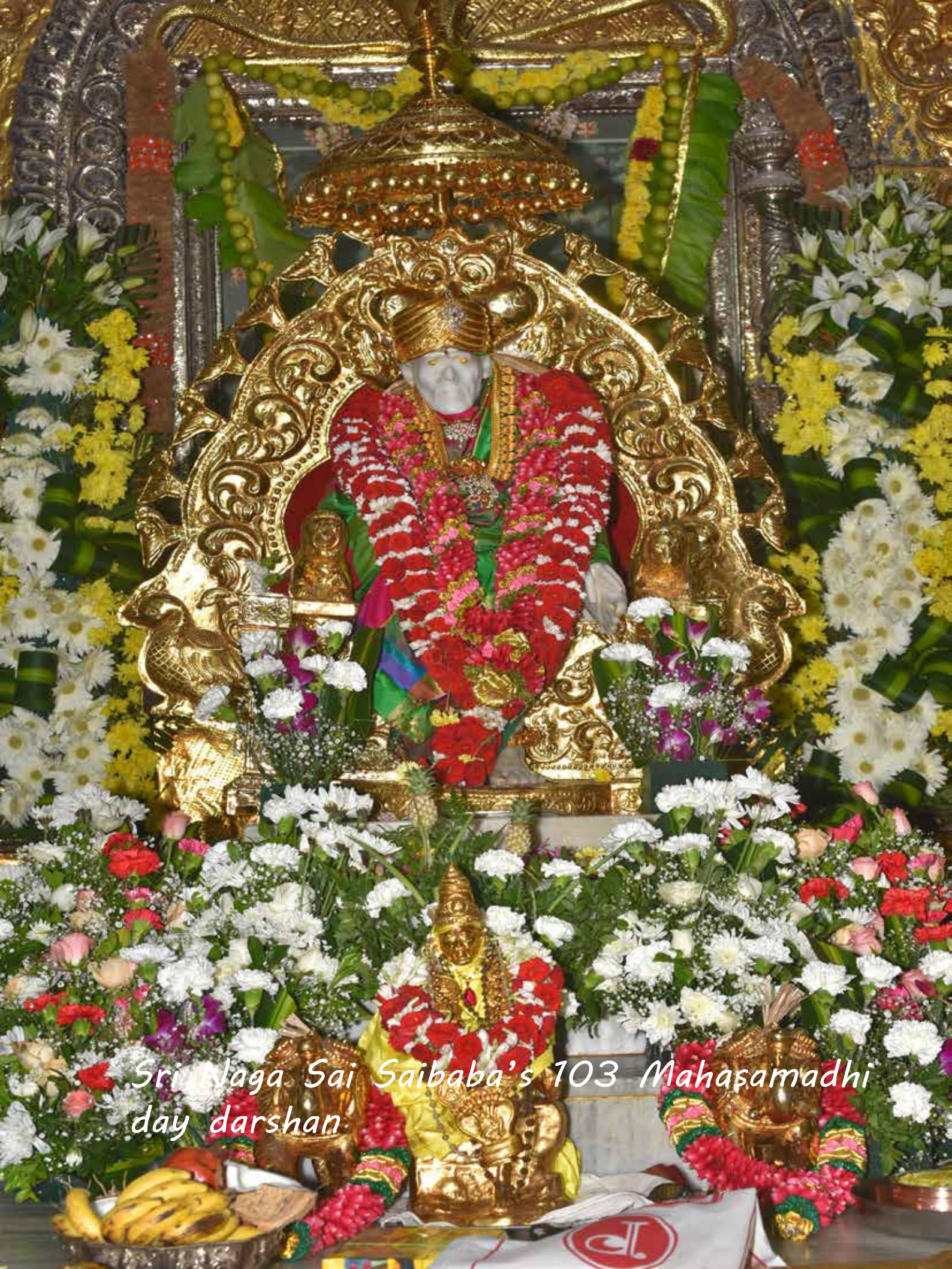
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*Sri Saibaba Darshan - Shirdi Samadhi
Mandir*





*Sri Naga Sai Saibaba's 103 Mahasamadhi
day darshan*

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Shirdi Saibaba's Samadhi Darshan

IS SAI BABA TO BE BROKEN?

By Sri Narasimha Swamiji

In the last issue of Sri Sai Sudha the question is raised and answered whether Sai Baba is builder or breaker, In that very issue a “devotee” in stating his experiences of Sai Baba narrates how he lost faith in Sai Baba and consequently broke BABA’s image and how some one else with more faith in Baba successfully used broken bits of that image for improving the patient’s health. This was perhaps a distant repercussion produced by the report in the Sudha of the similar conduct of another “devotee” leading to similar results. It is not improvable that this second solemn duty of those responsible for the journal at any cost to analyse the mentality of these “devotees” frankly, so as to prevent further repetition of iconoclastic frenzy.

Let us carefully dive into the minds and hearts of numerous devotees who proclaim their

devotion to Sai with complacency and pride. In most cases, the devotion will be found to be a bargain, - Sai to give so much temporal benefit and the devotee to offer his Namaskaram, Archanas, Naivedyams & c., in return. Most people frankly declares that (only) in case of the benefit being reaped, the devotion will be confirmed and the proposed Naivedyams & c., Offered. This may not be considered Bhakti at all and in any

case, not a Bhakti of a very estimable sort. But all the same, this is how devotion starts, is

made to start or can start in the vast majority of cases. No objection should be raised to deed if Bhakti should continue to be crude,

after the early days and stages are passed.

The

child soon throws away its teething ring, trundle hoop and spring toys, one after another.

So should a Bhakta soon recognize the absurdity of resorting to God (or God men. who

are the manifestations of God that men can easily reach to) merely to pull out one’s earthly chestnuts from the fire. God is not to be bargained with and God knows what is really good for a devotee better than the devotee. Regard for God beginning with gratitude for one or more extraordinary acts of help must turn into Love of a child to its mother touched into sublimity by dim perception of Infinite Power, Wisdom & c., in the

unseen Universal Mother. Failure to advance will be not mere stagnation but descent into lower levels.

Let us note the evil effect of continues looking to BABA for earthly benefits. Our longing

for earthly benefits gets strengthened i.e., Rajas and Tamas get more and more to predominate in our nature, clouding the Satwa and even temporarily banishing it from us.

The evils of Tamas and Rajas rise up at once. A bit of disappointment makes us angry with God and Saints that we have just worshiped for earthly objects alone and we break our idols and gods, fiercely trample upon them and gloat over our vandalism. If we but worshipped in the correct spirit, we would

ask for earthly benefits, not in a bargaining spirit, nor in terms of dictation but with humble submission, recognizing the possibility

that the All-wise Mother-God might deem it better to disappoint us and make us suffer in the Present, to wipe off old Karmic accounts, to develop the Satwic side of our nature and to fit us perhaps for the position decreed by Supreme Wisdom and Mercy. The

Omnipresent, Omniscient and Universal Mothers provides for the present and future of innumerable creatures with apparently conflicting interests and may make use of us as

her instruments or even as agents to carry out her high decrees. It is for us to submit prayers are found to be receptive. If we are in this proper mood, prayers are found to be needless assertions of Ego, not prompting but retarding our real progress.

These general observations have been made with a view to help people to approach Sai Baba, one of the most powerful manifestations of God of recent times, in the correct spirit. Let people go to him for earthly benefit if they want. But let them realize more and

more that it is God that they are really dealing with. Let the apparent distinction between

Baba and God that appears at first so patent be dissolved in the increased appreciation of the divine attributes of Sai Baba i.e., his wonderful and obviously limitless love and power, Wisdom and Mercy. Let us recognize that our notions of God are really abstractions and that it is before us in trying to clutch at abstractions that are so elusive. If we recognize Baba as God or divine amsa, can we ever try to break his image without descending to the level-of a Hiranya Kasipa

or Kamsa?

It is not unlikely that just a few people that read the above may feel hurt. No personal hit,

however against any particular person is intended, and the writer deprecates the assumption of any personal animus in him. But the intention of the article is deliberately to hit at certain traits and attitudes. People sticking to those traits and attitudes may feel aggrieved at the hit. The writer must only apologise and hope that his motive, i.e., desire

to benefit the soul by pruning off dead and dying matter will be ultimately appreciated when the soul's growth is prompted as a result of such pruning.





Sri Naga Sai Utsavamurti Darshan

Children: Love ye one another

By H. H. Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji

(H. H. Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji was the chief guest at the gathering of Contributors to SAI

LEELA magazine held on the 28th and 29th January 1979, held at Shirdi. Dr. S. D. Parchure,

an ardent devotee of Swamiji was then the Executive Editor of Sai Leela magazine and has recorded Swamiji's speech for posterity. We are presenting this inspiring speech to our

readers on the eve of Swamiji's Tenth Aradhana - EDITOR)

I thank the Shirdi Samsthan for having given me an opportunity to partake in this illustrious

gathering of the contributors to SAI LEELA magazine. It is indeed a great day for me to meet all sincere devotees on this holy soil of Shirdi. Lord Krishna gave an assurance in the 'Bhagavad-Gita' that He will be taking 'avatar' whenever there is some danger to religion. We find that Lord Krishna is fulfilling his promise

by appearing on this earth in the form of saints. Sai Baba is such an 'avatar' which has tried

for the uplift of all who came into his contact. The life of Sai Baba is like the fragrant 'agarbathi' which burns away all the time and which ultimately disappears, but when it is

burning it continues to give over fragrance all the time. Sai Baba's greatness as a 'Guru' is

beyond our expression.

Sai Baba fulfilled the desires of everyone. We call him as our father, mother, friend and we

offer all our learning and wealth to him. Sometimes a doubt arises in our mind as to how Sai

Baba can act as a mother. I will give you an example.

One lady got a child and she wanted that her child should be fed on her milk, but to her dismay her breasts were dry. She tried all remedies but they were not of any avail. The lady

conceived again and when she was in her 8th month of pregnancy she came to me along with

her husband, and requested me to pray to Sai Baba to give milk to her second child. I assured her that this time she will get milk in the breasts after her delivery, by the grace of Sai

Baba. I gave her Udhi and asked her to pray to Sai Baba with full devotion. The lady went away and in course of time gave birth to a child. Her husband came to me saying that her

breasts were dry totally and that he was afraid that his second child also may not get mother's milk. I asked the husband to go and pray to Sai Baba after giving him Udhi and directing him

to apply it to the lady's breasts. After the gentleman had gone I prayed to Sai Baba to fulfill

the wishes of the lady and lo, on the third day, this mother could feed her baby as the breasts

were full of milk. This is one example wherein Sai Baba acted as a mother, because this is one thing which only a mother can really understand.

Missing Boy Returns

Once, a gentleman came to me and informed that his son had run away and his whereabouts were not known for 2-3 days. I told him to pray to Sai Baba and by His grace, his son would return. On the fifth day he got a telegram from Calcutta that his son was safe and he would reach Madras in a day or two. After the boy returned to Madras, he was brought to me by his father. When I enquired with the boy about the reason for his running away, he told me that his parents were angry with him and therefore he ran away from the house. The boy said that when he was at Calcutta, Sai Baba appeared in his dream and told him to go to the station. There he met a person who enquired about him and gave a telegram to Madras and arranged to send the boy back to Madras. On further enquiries with the boy, he said that Sai Baba was seen by him with the tin-pot in his hand as he was proceeding to beg for alms. Here again, we find the motherly behavior of Sai Baba. His ways are unique and inimitable. When we come to Shirdi, we forget all our differences and become one. If our entire nation brings into practice the teachings of Sai Baba, national unity is not a far off possibility. The desires of various people are fulfilled in various ways by Sai Baba. Somebody needing money for his daughter's marriage is given money while those needing service get the service

by the grace of Sai Baba.

In order to meet Sai Baba, you have to enter Dwarakamayee after crossing three steps. What

are these three steps you have to cross in order to be successful in life? Out of the six enemies of man, lust, anger and greed are the foremost, which you have to conquer before you are blessed by Sai Baba. The three 'Gunas' - Satva, Rajas, and Tamas are also indicated

by these three steps and the 'prakriti' and 'purush' are attached to each other by the Gunas.

I see the image of Sai Baba on the face of everyone sitting here. Sai Baba has assured us that as soon as we call Him, He would rush to our help. So keep faith in Him and invoke His

favor. He never fails His devotees.

I wish happiness to everybody. Any sort of sorrow let nobody suffer from.



Sri Naga Sai Utsavamurti Darshan

Mahalsapati

By Dr. Vinny Chitluri

Mahalsaptis' full name was Mahalsapati Chimnaji Nagare. He was a poor goldsmith known as the sonar community of Shirdi. His family were residents of Shirdi for several generations. The sonar community styled themselves as Brahmins and sometimes wore the sacred thread. Mahalsapati worshipped his hereditary deity Khandoba (also known as Mahalsapati) and the Khandoba Purana was his Ramayana or Bible; he conducted a daily study of these scriptures.

Every year he went on a pilgrimage of about 150 miles to the distant Jejoori carrying a Kavadi or palki along with a band (orchestra) to worship at the great temple of that deity. The full fruition of Malasa Bhakti resulted in his getting into a trance and in that state he made oracular utterances. He was Khandoba; perfectly pure, straightforward, righteous and truthful, for only such a guileless person can be favoured by God coming on in his body (Avesa). He was fairly detached from worldly desires.

The family had a scanty income from the voluntary offerings at their temple which went towards the temple maintenance; and all that he owned was a mud house in the village for residence, yielding no income, and 7-1/2 acres of land (evidently barren) without water supply, which also yielded practically nothing. The very old building outside the village, the Mahalsapati (Khandoba) temple, a poor mud structure, was dedicated to the public or to God. To eke out his living therefore he had the hereditary profession of a goldsmith. But in a poor village with very few houses and very few visitors, even this brought very little income. Mahalsapati

was not much perturbed about it, being absorbed in his religious ideas and practices.

Though conservative he was not fanatical; he had no hatred of Muslims or men of other faiths. On the other hand, he and other friends of his own temperament – Kasiram Simpi and Appa Bhil, used to receive and help not only Hindu Saints such as Devidas, Janakidas, etc., but also fakirs when they visited the village or stayed there. Kasiram and Appa had some means, but poor Mahalsapati offered his services and zeal, and these three worked together.

‘Aao Sai’

It was Mahalsapati's good fortune, due to Rinanubandha, that he had very close contact with Sai Baba for a very long period of time (nearly 50 years). It was in about 1872 that Sai Baba entered Shirdi village along with a 'baraat' (a bridegroom's party of Muslims headed by Chand Bhai, Patel of the Dhupkeda (in the Nizam State). Then, Sai Baba separated from the marriage party close to the Khandoba Temple at the outskirts of Shirdi and reached the threshold of the Temple. Mahalsapati, who was inside worshipping Khandoba, noticed Baba's presence and, with usual civility and regard, invited him to sit. Mahalsapati saw Him and he spontaneously uttered 'Aao Sai' as if addressing Him by a name to the nameless.

When asked about it he fumbled and just said, 'I do not know. It is as if Khandoba made me utter these words through cosmic inspiration.' After a few minutes, the fakir

Baba remarked, “how secluded and quiet a place is the Khandoba temple, best fitted for a Fakir to be in”. It was then that Mahalsapati hesitated and protested against the proposal of a Muslim fakir residing inside the Khandoba Temple, which to him was unthinkable. Finding Mahalsapati’s objection to be natural, Baba said, ‘God is one for Hindus, Muslime and everyone else, but, as you object to my entry, I shall go’. So saying Baba went away and in due course started living in a dilapidated old Mosque.

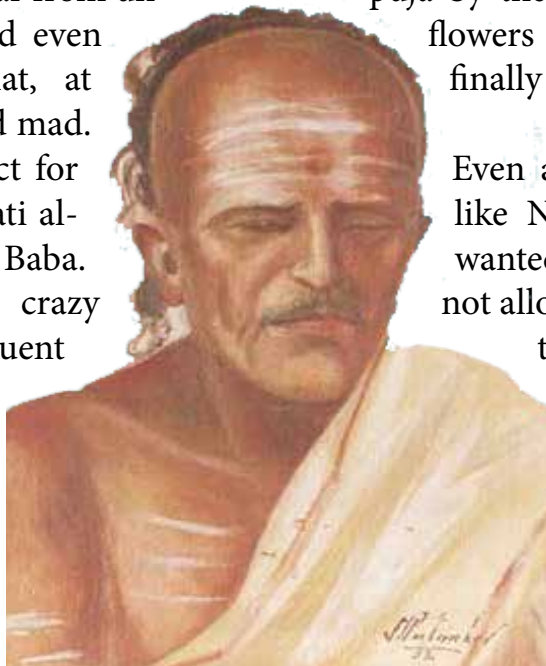
The early days:

Baba, in His early days was far from understood by the villages and even Mahalsapati considered that, at times, he behaved like a mad mad. But, while others lost respect for Baba due to that, Mahalsapati always had a high regard for Baba. Anyhow, the occasionally crazy conduct was not very frequent and not great enough to prevent the esteem which the general conduct of Baba evoked in serious and thoughtful minds. Baba was an astute, ‘Vairagya Purusha’ (dispassionate incarnate) and never cared for wealth or women.

Mahalsapati, was himself highly detached and he could easily appreciate Baba’s virtues of purity and nonattachment and was drawn to Baba from His early days itself. Other people began to worship Baba only when they saw His psychic powers, for example, when he turned water into oil to light His lamps. But, Mahalsapati esteemed Baba

for His virtues and compared Him to Devidas and Janakidas and other Saints of Shirdi whose company Baba kept. Among them, Baba shone brilliantly and even those Saints regarded Baba highly.

So, Mahalsapati and his friends considered Baba to be a Guru for themselves and Mahalsapati was the first in the group to worship Baba. He went to Baba’s mosque and placed flowers and Sandal on Baba’s feet or neck and then worshipped Baba and offered Him milk. Baba would not allow others to do even this; only Mahalsapati was allowed to do it. This developed later into a regular puja by the use of sandal paste and flowers on Baba’s feet, neck, and finally on his forehead also.



Even after that, local magnates like Nana Saheb Dengle, who wanted to do Baba’s puja, were not allowed to do so. Baba would tell them, “there is the pillar in this Dwarakamayee (Mosque). Do puja to the pillar”. That of course, they did not care to do. Nana Saheb Dengle later requested the intercession of Dagdubhai, a constant

companion of Baba and, encouraged by his words, did puja and became Baba’s second worshipper, Baba gradually allowed others to do his puja, and then Baba’s puja became a regular practice. Few realised the part played by Mahalsapati as the pioneer of Sai puja and the Sai movement.

Mahalsapati’s family life and his spiritual path:



*Sri Naga Sai Mandir Dhuni Mandapam
Saibaba Darshan*

Mahalsapati's contact with Baba was on very close terms. He lost his only son in the 1880's and had four daughters – Janakibai, Seetabai, Rakhumabai and Vithabai. Their grooms were from Asangaon, Dochale, Dorchale and Sei and he was disgusted with life. His land and his profession (that of a goldsmith), yielded nothing. So, he was ready for the orders of his own Ishta Devata, Khandoba and at times would get possessed and Khandoba would give him visions.

In the first vision, he was told that he was to take Khandoba (i.e. movable images) from the Khandoba temple to his own house, and worship him there with concentration. In another vision, Khandoba appeared as an old Brahmin and said to him, "What? Can you not get your bread without your profession (goldsmith)?" Then Mahalsapati answered the vision. 'Yes. I shall give up'. Then the vision said, 'touch my feet, and hold my feet. This meant evidently, 'hereafter, regard your subsistence as being dependent purely upon your holding to my feet and not upon your doing goldsmith's work.

From then onwards, he gave up his goldsmith's profession in perfect trust (Nishtha and Shradha) and lived by begging, that is, he became a Sanyasi (monk) or Bhikshaikari, though living with a family of a wife and four daughters. Being disgusted with life, he did not care to sleep at home. He enjoyed Baba's company day and night and was greatly benefitted by it. Baba would sleep in the Mosque and Chavadi every alternate night and Mahalsapati also accompanied Him. Mahalsapati was always with Baba and he never failed at it. But, on one occasion, early in his life (in about 1896), Baba said, "Arre,

Bhagat, listen to this Fakir, you are coming and sleeping here and not at home. But, you only have daughters and daughters are like a tamarind fruit, whereas a son is like the mango fruit. You go and sleep at home and then you will beget a son."

In spite of Baba's pressure, Mahalsapati refused to go home. His friend, Kasiram Simpi compelled him to do so and took him home. Therefore he began sleeping at home and in 1897 a son was born to him. Baba's words were true and never false. Having begotten a son, he resumed his old vow of staying with Baba. Mahalsapati would spread his own cloth and both he and Baba would lie on that (when Baba was not on the plank).

Baba also gave his Bhagat (as Mahalsapati was lovingly called), hard duties which others could not undertake. Baba would tell him, "you had better sit up, do not sleep. Place your hand on my heart. I will go on with the remembrance of Allah (naam smaran – a half conscious trance) and during that you can hear my heartbeat taking the name of the Lord. If that suddenly goes away and sleep overtakes Me, wake me up." The heart beat during natural sleep would be evidently different from the heart beat of a contemplative trance.

Thus, neither Baba nor Mahalsapati, would sleep at night. Both would keep awake, Baba for directly communing with God, and by that means doing service to numerous devotees in various places, and Mahalsapati for sharing the merit (punya) by keeping vigil with Baba and benefiting himself morally and spiritually by his pious service. His tapa was practically the same as Baba, that is vigil for holy purposes. He also had a great con-

trol over his senses (Indriyas) and not merely the sex urge but also hunger and other cravings, though at times he was unable to overcome sleep.

Sometimes, he went without food for a fortnight and so would his family. Mahapsapathy would refuse offers of food and money and this is a very important point about him. His store of merit was heightened by lasting vigils, and reading sacred literature and if he accepted gifts (dana), he believed that his merit would be lost. Therefore, he strongly opposed accepting any gifts even though he and his family would be starving.

Baba himself would get a large income (from 1880-1918) and he would daily shower Rs 30 on some, Rs 15 on other and Rs 10 on some...and so on. Baba himself told Mahalsapati several times, "take this Rs 3 and keep taking it," but he refused. Baba even added, 'go on receiving Rs. 3. I will make you well-to-do, and other people will come to you and depend on you and look to your favour; make your life comfortable.'

Mahalsapati invariably replied: 'I do not want all that. I want only to worship your feet.' He counted his avoidance of gifts and was content with his lot. He would not sleep on cots. He would not care to have comforts of any other sort, even though these were available or offered to him. Baba had to offer inducements of "Abhaya" and support, etc. to various people to raise them to high spiritual effort. But in the case of Mahalsapati, no inducements and assurances were required, as Mahalsapati had already achieved the high water mark of purity, virtue, austerity (tapas) and wisdom (Jnana), so far as that was possible in his circumstances.

His service to Baba:

A very important event connected to Mahalsapati's life and that of Baba was the latter trying to leave His body in 1886. Baba made Mahalsapati the guardian of His body and told him, "Arre Bhagat, look after this body for three days. I am going to Allah. If I do not return, then get it buried in due course at that place, (that is, near the sacred gode neem tree)".

Mahalsapati supported Baba's body on his own knee and when officers, including the village headman held an inquest and declared it dead, he strongly opposed it. Thus, he rendered a valuable service in 1886, after which Baba did return to His body in three days and lived for 32 years to create a huge Sai movement. If Mahalsapati had failed in this duty and Baba had been buried, the course of history would have been different, perhaps.

Another incident worth mentioning is how he served Baba and carried out His pious orders. As usual, he had spread his cloth and Baba was lying on one half of that cloth, and he was lying on the other. Then Baba told him, 'I say, come on. Today we shall be on the watch. The rude Rohilla (death from plague) is wanting to take away the wife of the Nigoj Patil. I am praying to Allah to prevent that by nama smaran. You had better see that no one comes and disturbs me in my nama smaran.' Accordingly, Mahalsapati kept awake to try and see that no disturbance took place.

But, unfortunately, in the middle of the night the Nivas Mamlatdar came with his entou-

rage. They took a fancy to Baba's darshan and at midnight stated that they wanted to take darshan and udhi. Mahalsapati tried to prevent it but who could prevent official hauty? Mahalsapati was trying to oblige the peon by getting down the steps to give him some udhi, but the noise made disturbed Baba's trance (contemplation), and Baba sat up, and hurled foul curses and told Mahalsapati, 'Arre Bhagat, you are a man with a family! And don't you know what is taking place at Nigoj? This disturbance has caused a failure in my efforts. That Patil's wife is dead. Let that go. What has happened is for the best'. In his anger, Baba threw away Mahalsapati's cloth on him, telling him that he should not allow disturbance like that to Baba's holy work of contemplation and prayer.

Baba's watchful eye on Mahalsapati and his family:

For about 40 years, Mahalsapati benefitted in innumerable ways from Baba's physical presence. He was an example of great devotion, surrender and detachment. Baba kept a watch over him whether he was near or far and gave him warnings and afforded relief where necessary. Baba's eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love Him. Baba's watch over Mahalsapati saved him and his family from starvation. Then Baba suddenly made the devotee relax his vow.

On one such occasion, H. S. Dixit was somehow made aware of the danger. He wished to send a ten rupee note to Mahalsapati. To make sure that it was not rejected, he enclosed it in an envelope and took it to Baba and without any other words asked Baba, "shall I send this"? Baba said, "yes". He sent it, and it was accepted. Baba had his Antar-

gyan of the gift and had told Mahalsapa's wife sometime earlier, "tell your husband, Baba is coming to the house, and he should not reject Baba." So when the envelope with the 10 rupee note came, Mahalsapati was sure that Baba's message referred to the envelope and he accepted it.

The snake infested Shirdi was full of danger to its inhabitants. One evening as Mahalsapati was leaving Baba's Mosque, Baba told him that he was likely to meet two thieves (snakes) on the way, and accordingly Mahalsapati found one at his doorsteps and the other at the neighbouring house. Once Baba told him, 'when you return, come with a lamp, for you will find a thief at the gate'. Accordingly, Mahalsapati came with a lamp in his hand, and found a snake at the gate, and cried out 'snake, snake'. The neighbours gathered and killed it.

Baba once warned him, "don't put your back against the earth'. Not remembering this advice, Mahalsapati, having consumed too much of Burfi got giddy, sat on the floor, and lost his consciousness and glided down. He then was with his bare back on the ground. He was dreaming or delirious and talking in his dream, keeping his legs stretched on the bare earth all the time. When he returned to consciousness and sat awake, he found he could not bend his leg. His daughters had to massage his knees and legs, and thereafter he was able to walk upto Baba. When he arrived there, Baba told him, 'did I not tell you not to put your back against the earth?'

On another occasion, Baba warned him again that something wrong would happen at Khandoba's and that he need not be afraid as Baba would do the needful. Then very



*Sri Naga Sai New Year Day 2022
Darshan*

soon, his wife and daughter fell ill and soon after, the other members of his family also fell ill. This was after 1908, when the number of visitors to Shirdi had increased and included many doctors. Meanwhile Baba told Mahalsapati, 'let the sick people keep to bed,' and walking round his Mosque with a short stick in hand Baba was waving his short stick and muttering threatening words, 'come, whatever may be your power, let us see! I shall show you what I can do with my chota stick, if you come out and face me'.

This was Baba's treatment for the disease. However, amongst the numerous visitors, there were doctors who gave medicines to Mahalsapati to be given to his sick family. Mahalsapati consulted Baba regarding the medicines, but Baba dissuaded him from administering the medicines to the sick at home. In due time, all got well without medicine. Baba's way of fighting disease is not the modern way of medicine, but it was unmistakably effective.

On another occasion, Mahalsapati's wife had gone to her mother's house in a distant village. When she was there, she developed a painful tumor near her neck, but she did not inform her husband. But, Baba's watchful supervision which rests on those who rely on Him with loving trust, noted this fact. He told Mahalsapati at Shirdi, "your wife has a tumour in the throat. None can cure it except Myself, and I shall cure it'. Mahalsapati knew nothing about his wife's health simply said, 'yes, Baba'. Later he received a letter mentioning the painful tumour, and adding that it had been cured.

Baba used His knowledge to view upcoming events and revealed them to Bhagat

when necessary. He was a poor man, whose daughters were married to people at various villages. His Sambandis (i.e. daughters' in-laws) had no regard for him. On one occasion, one of the Sambandis at a distant village invited him to dine with them, and Mahalsapati went to take Baba's leave.

While granting leave, Baba said, "you are going to be insulted there'. Mahalsapati went along with his friend, but when he went to his Sambandi's house, he found the Sambandi's relations had already finished their meals and were washing their hands without caring to wait for the arrival of their poor relation Mahalsapati. This was an obvious insult and he returned refusing to take his meal. He returned to Baba and related all the facts.

On another occasion, a sai Baba bhakta, Ram Bhav Harde, invited Mahalsapati to his village, Astinagram (about 10 miles away from Shirdi). Mahalsapati was to read the Khandoba Purana followed by dinner. Mahalsapati went to take leave of Baba. Baba said, 'do not go. There will be a fight there'. Yet having been invited, he could not avoid going, and he went to that village.

He sat and read Mahalsapati puranam there, and while that was going on the host's graceless, sturdy and rowdy boys sat for their meals and began to exchange hot words with some other boys. From words they quickly came to blows with sticks, and on account of the free use of the cudgels, the audience that was present for the Purana reading fled in fright and Mahalsapati also had to pack up his purana and follow their wise example. He returned to Shirdi and told Baba, 'Your words have proved true to the letter'.

Baba knew the future of this devotee, but only gave him hints. When Mahalsapati got a son in 1897, he took him to Baba for nama-karana (naming ceremony). Baba, evidently to prevent his being too attached to the son, told him “look after the child for 25 years and that would be sufficient”. The father’s business is only to look after this new arrival in a detached spirit, knowing that the connection is only for a fixed time. Mahalsa did not understand all this, or that the 25 year period indicated the length of his life which was to end in 1922; but with true humility and submission he told Baba that “looking after” the child was not in his power but only in Baba’s power.

Baba’s reply was still more significant. “Be thou, the Nimitta” i.e. the apparent instrument, said Baba, reminding us of Sri Krishna’s direction to Arjuna to fight the Mahabharata battles as a mere instrument in His hands “Nimittamatram Bhava Savyasachin”. Mahalsapati, though, a surrendered soul could not have banished his ego and risen then to the full height indicated above i.e. to treat all acts done by his body as the acts of the Supreme. Baba was leading him on to that path through this event.

Baba used to keep a watch over him night and day. When Mahalsapati often took leave of Baba to go for his night meal, Baba used to say, ‘Go. I am with you.’ No harm then befell Mahalsapati. Though Baba did not physically accompany Mahalsapati, his invisible guardianship was evident.

Baba’s watch over Mahalsapati was also for his moral benefit. Though Mahalsapati was generally of a pious disposition, sometimes

he committed mistakes. Every night he used to feed a crippled bitch, and one day, having fed it, he said, ‘Go’, but the creature did not stir. He took a stick and gave it a beating, and then it howled with pain and ran away. That right when Mahalsapati went to the Mosque and shampooed Baba’s legs, Bapu Saheb, Dada Kelkar and others were with him. Baba said, ‘Arre, there is a bitch, sickly like me, in the village. Everybody is beating it’. Then at once Mahalsapati, remembering his behaviour repented his mistake. This is not trivial, as we shall see further on.

Baba’s watch over the pilgrimages of Mahalsapati and his other movements shows Baba’s great and mysterious power and His wonderful love and guardianship of His bhaktas. These are well illustrated in many instances of which a few more may be mentioned. On one occasion when Mahalsapati and party reached Jejuri, 150 miles from Shirdi, plague was raging there, and Mahalsapati sat down dejected leaning against his palki (Kavadi), not knowing what to do. Suddenly he saw Baba behind him; and Baba vanished. Then he got emboldened and told his companions, ‘Baba is with us and we need not worry’. Accordingly the pilgrimage was satisfactorily over, and there was no loss of life. When he returned to Shirdi, Baba told him, ‘I found you leaning against the Palki at Jejuri’. Mahalsapati was convinced that his eyes did not deceive him at Jejuri and that Baba was everywhere guarding his bhaktas.

On another occasion when Mahalsapati and his group had gone for an annual Jejuri pilgrimage, they were returning followed by another group, Malam Bhagat Palki. Then they met thieves who were armed with axes and who wore masks or were covering

their faces with thick blankets. As they approached the Palki to rob it, Mahalsapthy courageously took out a handful of Bhandar, i.e. coloured rice and sandal and threw it at them as prasad. Then they quietly retreated to an adjoining forest.

Then Mahalsapati and his friends went on followed by Malam Bhagat palki, and they noted that there was no image in their own palki. All the party looked into it (i.e., Mahalsapati's palki) to see whether all their images were there. They found none. Then someone said, 'are we to carry an empty palki to Shirdi? That day was a Sunday, which is Khandoba's day. At the very outset. Mahalsapati said, 'No pilgrimage on Sunday. But the others had disagreed, and now Mahalsapati told the others, 'This is the evil of doing pilgrimage on Sunday.

Suddenly Mahalsapthy got into a trance, and Khandoba talking through him said, 'Arre, what day is this? Is it not my day? Why are you carrying palki? Today I am busy hunting out on a hill. After hunting is over, I will come to Shirdi. You had better go now. Then he woke up from trance, and the palki went on and came to Kandoba's temple at Shirdi. People at Shirdi, for instance, Shakaram Kandukar and others came to the palki to take Darshan. Shakaram looked into the palki and found all the images there. 'What is the talk of all the images missing?' he asked the people. He showed them, and said 'here are all the images'.

Baba's prediction about the future of Shirdi and Baba's passing away:

Long before Narayan Govind Chandorkar (Nanasaheb Chandorkar) and others arrived,

Baba spoke of the future of Shirdi (towards the end of the 1800's). Baba told Bhagat and others, "In this place (Shirdi) there will be huge storeyed buildings rising, big fairs will be held, and big men, Subedars, and others will come. My Brahmins will gather and elephants, horses and Shankar Nana will also come.'Guns will be fired (Dhadanga Dishe Udenga)'.

People hearing this began to smile. They thought, 'what, all this for this worthless nook of an insignificant hamlet'. But some decades later, every one of Baba's statements came true, and that nook of an insignificant village has already become a small town with big storeyed buildings, sugar factories with machinery, annual fairs, festivals, etc., and the daily puja of Baba attracts thousands including ladies and gentlemen of the highest positions from all parts of India.

Baba's company kept Mahalsapati very high up the spiritual ladder. He bore great love for Baba. When Baba passed away in 1918, he, on account of his attachment, declined all food and fasted for 13 days. Probably to prevent a shock, Baba had given him hints of His (Baba's) impending final departure. It was Mahalsapati's custom to spend all his time with Baba except when he went for his meals. Later, Baba would send someone or the other to fetch him from his house. Then he would light up chilim (i.e. smoking pipe), do odd jobs for Baba, and prepare Baba's bed, which was a very peculiar arrangement.

Baba always kept his head on an old brick (which is believed to be the brick given to him by Venkusa with a torn cloth). Madhav Fasle, a servant of Baba used to hand over that brick to Mahalsapati every night and

along with it, a tattered cloth (believed to be Venkusa's gift) to be placed over it and 10-12 pieces of cloth to be spread on the ground as a bed for Baba. Mahalsapati would first place the brick and then the tattered cloth, and then spread the other clothes. Ten or twelve days before Dassara in 1918, Madhav False, while handing over the brick, let it slip to the ground and it broke into two. Then the broken pieces were placed as pillows for Baba. Baba asked, 'who broke the brick?'

Mahalsapati mentioned that Madhav False broke the brick. Baba got very angry with Madhav and placed his hands on his own head and felt extremely sad. Baba said 'Sopat tutali' i.e., the companion is broken. Next day, Kaka (Hari Sitaram Dixit) came and said there was no need to deplore the breaking, as he would join the pieces with silver joints. Baba said, "even if you join them with gold, what is the use? This brick is my Sobatya (companion) (evidently from his Selu days) and its breakage betokens evil."

From then onwards Baba was dispirited. At least Mahalsapati thought so. Baba, even before this, had given Mahalsapati a hint. He told him once when he (Mahalsapati) was preparing to light a lamp and fill up Baba's pipe, (Arre Bhagat, in a few days from this, I will be going somewhere. After that, you come at night for 2 or 4 years; this was not understood by Mahalsapati. But Baba's spirit passed beyond our ken into Avyukta on 15th October 1918, and Mahalsapati was able to do his nightly usual puja to Baba only for 2 or 4 years, for he passed away on 12th September 1922.

Mahalsapati's life after Baba and his passing away:

Mahalsapati's case is an excellent instance of Baba's method of unifying religions and creeds successfully. Mahalsapati was only an ordinary, conservative, orthodox worshipper of Khandoba. Sai Baba, he considered a Muslim and even objected to his entry into Khandoba's temple when Sai Baba came to Shirdi with Chand Bhai Patel's party. This same man became Baba's ardent devotee and worshipped him.

In fact, not only was he the first amongst the worshippers, but he was also the foremost in excellence. Mahalsapati felt that Baba was God. Whatever may be the difference in name and form, Shanker, Shani, Ganapati and Khandoba are all one, and Baba with divine power was the same. Mahalsapati also went to Pandharpur to worship Vittal (a form of Maha Vishnu and had no sectarian i.e. (Siva Vishnu) prejudices. He and his group honoured all saints, Hindu and Muslim, and they applied Tukaram's famous saying 'Jo Sant, Toch Dev! o Dev, Toch Sant', meaning 'God is the same as the Saint and the Saint is the same as God' to fakirs as well as Hindu saints.

He was the first to do puja to Baba and even apply sandal to him. Baba's objection to his being worshipped in that fashion melted away under the keen sense of Mahalsapati's love and devotion. As Mahalsapati made no difference between Khandoba and Baba, and as all thoughts of men were known to Baba, Baba could not object to any of the ways adopted for worship at the Khandoba temple being applied to him.

Baba's divine heart of love responded to the outpourings of Mahalsapati's love; and so,

Mahalsapthy became Baba's Mahabhakta. Baba said (if not expressly at least by unmistakable utterance and conduct), 'He is mine'. The Aarti song says "Jo Sanduchya ankita Jiva Jhala, Tyacha Ase Bhara niranjanala" – This means, the devotee who is stamped as mine by a Sadhu, has no more burden or responsibility to bear, as all his burdens and responsibilities rest on the Saint (or the Guru God).

When the bhakta had no son, and yet refused to go and live with his family, it was Baba's repeated assurance that he would beget a male child that induced him to go and sleep at home and thus get a son. This son is named Martand who also followed his fathers' footsteps and worshipped at his father's tomb. This is considered important, as dying without a son will take a man to hell (Put Naraka).

Mahalsapati's response to Baba's love was evidenced by Mahalsapati's dedication of himself to Baba's service. Mahalsapati not only shared his cloth bed with Baba every night at the Mosque and chavadi, but also shared his night vigil. Mahalsapati's help to rouse Baba when the vigil stopped and gave way to natural sleep was a special help to Baba, and through Baba to everybody.

Mahalsapati's effort to keep Baba's body for three days in 1886 against the mischance of being buried on the compulsion of the officers was a signal service not only to Baba but to the entire Sai bhaktas and the public at large. Baba's recognition of this attachment closely resembling Hanuman's attachment to Rama was expressed by Baba's calling him Bhagat i.e. Bhakta. B.V.Dev called Mahalsapati as "Mahalasapathy is a Bhakta Manikya

and a Mahatma" in his preface to Mahalsapati's reminiscences. Both epithets are apt and just.

The end of such a soul when life passes away must necessarily be a good end, (Sadgati). Baba made this assurance doubly sure and granted him the merit of dying on an Ekadasi day (with God in his mind and on his lips) just as He did this for several other bhaktas of His. Dying on an Ekadasi day is conducive to departure in a holy mood from this life (through the bright and smokeless path). The Bhagavad Gita Chapter 8, Shloka 6 says: "Yam yam vapi Smaran Bhavam, Tyajati ante kalebaram. Tam tam eva eti kounteya Sada tad bhava bhavitah" meaning: 'Whatever a person thinks of (being in constant touch with it) at the time of death he reaches'.

When Mahalsapati's death was approaching, he retained full consciousness and control of his mind. That was on 11th September 1922, Monday (in the month of Badrapada, Bahula Shashti, Somavara, sacred to Shiva and Khandoba). Having finished all his puja, he said to his family, 'today is my father's Shraddha day. Finish cooking soon. Today I close my earthly life and go to Heaven'. So, Laxman, the Brahmin, came and finished the Shraddha at once and finished the gift of balis to crows, cows, etc, and guests were fed. Then the family meals were finished. Mahalsapati took betel and nuts after his meal.

After chewing a bit, he put on a kufni. Having near him, Bala Gurav, Ramachandra Kote Patil, etc., he told them "all do the Ramachandra japa". Japa went on. His son was there, and he gave him his stick. Mahalsapati said to his son, 'spend time piously in Uttama Bhakti Marga i.e. in holy devotion. All

that I told you will happen.” Then Mahalsapati uttered the word ‘Ram’ and breathed his last. Thus he passed away in calm faith and cheerfulness on the 12th September 1922. This death was a fitting termination to a pure, lofty and dedicated life—a life of love, faith and total surrender— a death that may be envied by many who may not be prepared to adopt the rigorous course that led up to it and ensured it. His remains are interred in a tomb at his ancestral house in Shirdi which is still worshipped by many.

Mahalsapati’s house:

Mahalsapati’s house is situated in a narrow lane leading from the Chavadi to Tajim Khan’s Darga. At the Darga, it one turns left and walks a few yards, the house is to the right in a narrow lane. Baba gave him Sadgati on 12th September 1922, i.e., Monday of Bhadrapada Bahula Shashti and his Samadhi was made in his house itself. The following sacred articles were given by Baba to Mahalsapati.

- . Baba’s kafni
- . Baba’s danda
- . Baba’s udi
- . Three silver rupee coins
- . Baba’s padukas

This house is a place of pilgrimage because of the sacred articles given by Baba and also because of the presence of Mahalsapati’s Samadhi. Mahalsapati was really a true devotee of Baba and although he was really very poor he did not deviate from his spiritual path. He adhered to Baba’s advice of not accepting money or gifts from anyone. Sai Devotees should be very grateful to Mahalsapati for guarding Baba’s body when he took “72 Hours Samadhi” during the Margashirsha Masa (refer Sai Satcharitra Chapters 43 and 44). His descendants have preserved and displayed these articles very nicely and the devotees visiting Shirdi can have darshan of the same.





Sri Naga Sai Utsavamurti Darshan

SRI NAGA SAI MANDIR EVENTS

Saibaba's 103 Mahasamadhi utsav

Oct 14, 2021









Sri Naga Sai New Year Day Darshan

Jan 01, 2022













Sri Naga Sai Mandir

(Saibaba Kovil, Coimbatore)

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