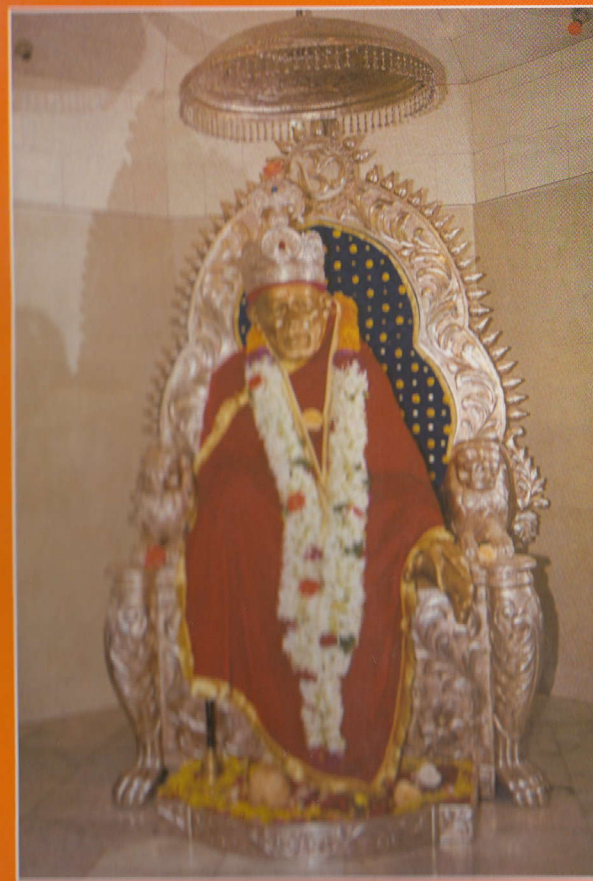


**SHRI SAI BABA
JANMASTHAN MANDIR, PATHRI
HAND BOOK OF INFORMATION**



COMPILED & EDITED BY
V. B. KHER

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PUBLISHER

D.V. Chaudhari,
Managing Trustee,
Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, Pathri
Pathri - 431 506
District Parabhani
Maharashtra.

PRINTED BY

Sundaram Art Printing Press,
12, Wadala Udyog Bhavan,
Naigaon X Road,
Wadala, Mumbai - 400 031.

First Edition :

Guru Purnima 2005
Second Impression : 2007

Rs. : 15/-

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FOREWORD

The name of Sai Baba is normally associated with only one place: Shirdi. Shirdi is where Sai Baba lived for the best part of his life and where his devotees went calling on him. Since his passing away, Shirdi has become a major pilgrim centre; thousands of devotees visit Shirdi throughout the year but few ever gave any thought as to where Sai Baba may have been born. Not that it was a great secret. The tale of Sai Baba's birth has been detailed in Swami Sai Sharan Anand's biography of the Saint. Sai Baba was born in a village called Pathri, in Marathwada. In medieval times it was known as Parthapur after Partha, or Arjuna, the third of the Pandava brothers, thanks to whom we have the Bhagavad Gita. Pathri is situated about 150 kms south east of Devagiri (Daulatabad) and about 3 kms south west from the confluence of Vidarbha (Mangala) and Godavari rivers. It was part of Vidarbha kingdom which was ruled by the Yadavas of Deogiri and was famous in its time as a seat of mathematical learning.

Very few ever gave much thought to Pathri. Vishwas B. Kher had heard of Pathri and decided one day to visit it. The year is 1975. Kher was primarily seeking authentic information about Sai Baba's early life and established links with a family in Pathri which was to result in major developments. This was the family of Dinkerrao Vasudeo Chaudhari. Dinkerrao was a scion of the well-known and distinguished Chaudhari family with a long history behind it. Dinkerrao himself was a lawyer and progressive farmer. He turned out to be the perfect host. He regarded Kher's mission as his own and rendered him all possible assistance.

Pathri is a town of about 10000 people but progress, it would seem, never touched it. Electricity came to it very recently. This is the town which was home to Sai Baba's own family and how Kher came to learn more about it is the subject of a long article written by Kher himself.

That article was first published in Sai Leela Magazine and drew considerable interest. Three years later Kher and Dinkerrao purchased the land where Sai Baba's ancestral home once stood, from one Prof. R. M. Bhusari, in the name of Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, Pathri. Two years later, the body was registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act 1950. And history was made.

Years passed. In May 1995, it was decided to do some digging and to everyone's joy discovered in the course of the excavation were several artifacts, like idols of Hanuman and Khandoba.

The biggest donation to the Trust came from Mr. K. V. Ramani, a Chennai industrialist engaged in software technology. Thanks to his munificence, a temple has now been built where once stood, the residence of Sai Baba's parents.

What this book seeks to do is to present the story of the founding of the Trust and what followed. It also includes biographical sketches of Swami Sai Sharan Anand and Shri Bulb Baba. How Kher met the latter, and what the latter prophesised itself makes fascinating reading. Pathri has now become better known and there can be no doubt that in the years to come it will attract as many Sai devotees as presently are attracted to Shirdi.

The public little knows about Pathri and that is why this gains significance as a guide. May those who have read this brief book be inspired to visit Pathri to gain Sai Baba's blessings.

Marathwada is proud of its noble and saintly sons among whom is Sai Baba. A visit to Pathri is like visiting the home of divinity; may the grace of Sai Baba descend on the visitors to his earthly birth place. May Pathri turn out to be another holy city where Sai Baba's grace prevails and a visit to which brings in its wake peace, happiness and contentment.

— M. V. Kamath

PREFACE

"Samarth Ramdas Swami has described in quite apt terms : It requires great merit to go to a place where you experience true repose'. Both, those with faith and sense of discrimination, experience the truth of this saying. However, you must have an eye for perceiving and appreciating it. I had such a unique experience by grace of Dattatreya. This information is significant from the point of view of the studious researcher, the faithful and seeker of knowledge.

"There is ample literature about the great incarnation known as Sai Baba, but upto now there was no authentic information about his family and place of birth. Many tales were being narrated about these. Mr. Vishwas Kher had been researching into his life for the past 25 years. He took great pains in pursuit of his object. He never tired of undertaking constant travel in this connection, meeting concerned people, and scanning and analysing available evidence. His efforts were finally crowned with success.

"Marathwada, a component of the former territory of Hyderabad State ruled by the Nizam is today a part of Maharashtra. Marathwada is known as the land of saints. It's history is in keeping with the rich tradition of this terrain. It is the sacred land on the banks of the holy river Godavari. Gunj, the place of pilgrimage where Yogananda Saraswati, the disciple of Vasudevanand Saraswati took his abode is symbolic of the grace of Dattatreya. In Parbhani district, there is a taluka town called Pathri. Pathri was referred to as Parthapur or Parthagram in medieval times. Sai Baba was born in this town of Pathri" in a Brahmin family with the surname of Bhusari. The name given to him at birth was Hari."¹

This place was acquired by Vishwas Kher and Dinkarrao Chaudhari in June 1978 in the name of a body constituted for the purpose, called Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, Pathri and the sale deed was registered in Sub-Registrar's office at Selu on 1st June 1978.

"On the ancient site of this birth-place, a temple of marble has been built according to the imaginative plan of Bombay based architect Subhash Dali. The exact spot which was once the delivery room for the ladies of the "house" stands transformed today into the sanctum sanctorum. The sanctum sanctorum is designed as a blooming lotus in octagonal shape with a suspended canopy in marble and at the centre thereof is the golden- coloured moorti of Sai Baba in bronze. The posterior wall thereof is built in granite of off-white colour.

"In the basement is a Dhyani Mandir (Meditation Hall) with marble flooring. To give the devotees an idea of the old home, a part of the foundation is preserved in its natural condition with old arches and connecting passages. Two querns, an idol each of Khandoba, and Hanuman and articles used in puja viz. pali-panchpatra made of copper, sahan, pantis etc found while digging the foundation are also displayed in the glass show-case separating the old part of the foundation from the Meditation Hall. The opposite wall of the Hall is adorned by a life - size painting of Sai Baba with portraits of Swami Sai Sharan Anand and Bulb Baba on either side.

"The construction of the whole shrine,- the lighting, the sound system and painting too have been most impressively executed."²

The information about Bhusari family which has come to light has been given in extenso in V.B. Kher's article entitled "A Search for the Birth-place of Sai Baba". Similarly, the landmarks during the construction of Sai Janmasthan Mandir have been detailed in a separate article. Moreover, short biographical sketches of Swami Sai Sharan Anand and Bulb Baba with whose blessings Pathri Sai Janmasthan Mandir became a reality are included in this Hand Book of Information. Swami Sai Sharan Anand was a great Sai devotee, who enjoyed close proximity to Him for eight years, while Bulb Baba had foreseen the coming up of this Mandir with his clairvoyance, seventeen years before the event.

Pathri is now accessible by rail and/or road transport from places like Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, Solapur, Akkalkot, Shirdi,

Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded and Hyderabad etc. On the railroute Manmad-Nanded one may alight either at Selu or Manwat road station. Pathri is 23 kms. from Selu and 16 kms. from Manwat Road. S.T. buses ply between these two stations and Pathri at regular intervals. Behind the S.T. bus stand at Pathri is located Sai Lodge on Sant Sai Baba Marg which provides accommodation at reasonable rates.

We are happy to add that boarding and lodging facilities are also available on the premises of the Mandir, where, dormitory type accommodation for about 35 to 40 persons, and meals at two hours' notice are available.

1. Dr. Bhimashankar Deshpande, "Shri Sai Janmabhoomi, Parthapur (Marathi), Bhaktisangam, March 2000.

2. Ibid.

A Search for the Birthplace of Sai Baba

"Sai Baba was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but above both." Thus spoke S. B. Dhumal, an ardent devotee of Sai Baba and a leading lawyer of Nasik, in reply to a question of a District Magistrate.¹ This reply is undoubtedly wise and replete with meaning. A man of God, whatever be his caste or colour, is worthy of our respect. A popular Marathi saying discourages the search for the origin of a river and the birth of a sage, for the fear that the researcher may be disappointed with their humble beginnings. Whatever might have been the truth of this adage, the dictum is no longer valid. In this age of fast advancing technology, when all values are in a melting pot, even "every formula of every religion has to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent."² The extended truth is applicable also to holy personages who have left their footprints on the sands of time. Those who have read Prof. Erik H. Erikson's Gandhi's Truth which describes "a Westerner's and a psychoanalyst's search for the historical presence of Mahatma Gandhi and for the meaning of what he called "Truth",³ will grasp the full implication of this statement. Researching into the questions as to the place of Sai Baba's birth, the family in which he was born, etc. may give us a historical hindsight into the later events in Sai Baba's life. In this belief my wife and I made a pilgrimage to the "birthplace" of Sai Baba in Marathwada in June 1975 and the outcome of our research is stated in this research paper.

Before I do so, let me record briefly the information available about the appearance of Sai Baba, his dress, his food habits, his surroundings in Shirdi and the theories put forward about his place of birth and his family.

Sai Baba was well-built and had arms which reached up to his knees. He was of medium height and had a fair, yellowish complexion. But "one's first impression about him was derived from his eyes." There was such power and penetration in them that none could continue to look at him without feeling that Sai Baba was reading him through and through.⁴ His ears were pierced⁵ and he was not circumcised,⁶ indicating that he must have been a Hindu. But he dressed like a fakir and lived in an old tumble-down mosque which was strangely called by him as Dwarkamai. Dhuni or a sacred fire was constantly burning in the mosque and the devotees were allowed to worship him with fanfare including blowing of conches and ringing of bells.

In the courtyard outside the mosque was a Tulsi Brindaban. Ramanavami was celebrated by his Hindu devotees in the courtyard, in which Sai Baba joyfully participated. At the same time, he had no objection to the local Muslims taking out a sandal procession on the same day. He was catholic in his food habits, and is said to have partaken of meat and fish in the company of fellow fakirs. The name of "Allah Malik" was constantly on the tip of his tongue. Yet, he appeared in the garb or Rama, Krishana, Ganesh, Shiva, Hanuman, Dattatreya or the Guru of devotee concerned. He had intimate knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita as his exposition to Nanasahab Chandorkar demonstrated. But he also recited the first chapter of the Quran in the company of Muslims. He was known to be fluent in many languages, but none knew how and when he acquired such mastery. All in all, he was a phenomenon and all that one can truly say of him was that he was cast in the mould of renowned yogis of yore, with deep influence of Sufism on him. It is significant to note in this connection that in examination on commission issued by a court, Sai Baba stated in reply to one of the questions that his "creed" or "religion" was Kabir.⁷

Hari Sitaram Dikshit, a solicitor and former member of the Bombay Legislative Council, and the most selfless devotee of Sai Baba, sacrificing his all in the cause of his Sadguru, says in his foreword to Shri Sai Satcharita⁸ as follows : "There is no reliable information as to where he was born and who were his parents. But it can be stated authoritatively that he must have had links with the Nizam's State (later called Hyderabad State which, under the Scheme of Recorganisation of States in 1956, was divided on linguistic lines and merged with Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra). In his conversation there were often references to places like Selu, Jalna, Manavat, Pathri, Parabhani, Aurangabad, Bhir and Bedar. Once a visitor from Pathri came to Shirdi for Sai Baba's darshan. Sai Baba, gathering information about conditions in Pathri, enquired with him about many leading citizens of Pathri. This suggests that he had special knowledge of Pathri but it cannot be said with certainty that he was born in Pathri. It cannot be said also definitely whether Sai Baba was a Brahmin or Muslim by birth."⁹

Mhalsapati, one of the earliest devotees of Sai Baba, has stated that Sai Baba had told him that he (Sai Baba) was born in a Brahmin family at Pathri and his parents had handed him over to a fakir in his childhood. Soon after Sai Baba had given him this information, a person from Pathri, who had come on business to a nearby village called Korhala, had visited Shirdi when Sai Baba had asked him about several residents of Pathri by their names.¹⁰ Mhalsapati Bhagat was a man of truth and integrity and was held in high esteem even by Sai Baba because of his Vairagya (renunciation). His testimony is therefore important and can be said to be indisputable."¹¹

Sai Baba discouraged any question about his parentage and said that Purush was his father and Maya his mother. A lifelong researcher and biographer observes that Sai Baba's birth remains a mystery and he had not met any individual who had direct knowledge about it.¹²

Another person whose testimony is weighty is Vaman Prangovind Patel, a solicitor who, since he donned the robes of a sanyasi in 1953, is known as Swami Sai Sharan Anand. The new name itself indicates the extent of his reverence or devotion to Sai Baba.

We must examine his credentials further in detail, if we are to accept what he says on the subject matter, in his biography of Sai Baba written in Gujarati.

Vaman Patel was born on 5 April 1889, and is still living.¹³ He graduated with philosophy from Elphinstone College, Bombay, in 1910 and passed his LLB in 1912. Like Swami Vivekananda, he wanted to see God face to face. He met many Sadhus but none could satisfy his desire. Finally, his father suggested that he should visit Sai Baba. So in December 1911, he travelled from Bombay to Kopargaon by train and reached Shirdi by tonga. When the tonga reached the border of Shirdi, the tongawala pointed out to him Sai Baba who was just ahead of them. Vaman alighted and prostrated before Sai Baba. Imagine his wonder when Sai Baba exclaimed to him, "God is. Why do you say He is not?" Swamiji (Vaman Patel) personally narrated to the writer an account of his first encounter with Sai Baba in the fateful year of 1911, which was to change the whole life of young Vaman. All his doubts were silenced and he felt that he was in the presence of a Master whom he could accept as his Sadguru. In 1913 when Vaman visited Shirdi during the summer vacation, Sai Baba detained him at Shirdi for eleven months, and one day without being asked, was given permission to leave Shirdi. During his long stay, Vaman was sent on begging rounds by Sai Baba, and he came into close and intimate contact with Sai Baba. Sai Baba affectionately nicknamed him "Babu".¹⁴

In course of time, Vaman Patel became a solicitor and practised, but his real interest lay in matters moral and spiritual. He is a savant and has written extensively for Sastu Sahitya Vardhak Karyalaya. He has also rendered

Shri Sai Satcharita into chaste but simple Gujarati verse. His biography of Sai Baba and his tenets in Gujarati is a must for every serious student of Sai Baba.¹⁵

With these prefatory remarks about Swami Sai Sharan Anand let us now turn to his narration of Sai Baba. He says that it is indisputable that Sai Baba considered himself a Brahmin and got annoyed with anyone who suggested that he was not a Brahmin! In 1912, Vaman's father was suffering from dropsy and there was no hope of cure. In December of that year Vaman visited Shirdi. Reading his thoughts, Sai Baba asked him to get his father to Shirdi. But the thought crossed his mind, would his conservative father come to one who was considered by his family to be a Muslim? Immediately Baba intercepted with the remark, "Am I not a Brahmin?" Swamiji also records that the oldest devotee of Sai Baba, Mhalsapati, had been told by Baba himself that he was born in a Yajurvedi Deshastha Brahmin family at Pathri and he was handed over to a fakir as a child.¹⁶ He further states that Sai Baba had once told him in a conversation that he had left his parents at the age of eight and arrived on the banks of Godavari.¹⁷

The tale of Sai Baba's birth is also described in an article by Suman Sundar¹⁸ as said to have been narrated to him by the noted saint Madhavnath, a summary of which appears at page 16 of Swami Sai Sharan Anand's biography of Sai Baba. The story goes that there was a Yajurvedi Deshastha Brahmin in Pathri who had three sons. Sai Baba was the eldest. When Sai Baba was five years old, a fakir came to the Brahmin and said, "Give me my own." The Brahmin replied, "Everything I have is yours." Thereupon the fakir asked for the eldest son and took him away. He reappeared after four years, and with the consent of the Brahmin, again took away the boy for three more years. From the age of twelve to eighteen, Sai Baba remained incognito and was seen at Shirdi under the neem tree when he was nineteen.

Yet another version is contained in the biography of Sathya Sai Baba, who claims to be a reincarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi. Swami Sai Sharan Anand refers to this story at pages 13 and 27-28 in his biography of Sai Baba of Shirdi. It appears that Sai Baba's parents were residents of Pathri. His father was Gangabhava, and Devagiriamma was his mother. They were a pious couple and were devotees of Lord Shankara. As they had no issue they were sad. However, through the practice of penance they obtained a boon from Shankara- Pravati and as a result, Shankara took birth in their family as Sai Baba. Gradually, Gangabhava became more and more absorbed in his tapas, and he decided to renounce the world.

Devagiriamma insisted on accompanying him. So both of them retired to a forest abandoning Sai Baba under a tree. A fakir and his spouse were passing by. They saw the child, and regarding it as a gift from Allah adopted it and brought it up until Sai was twelve. Later, the fakir was pressurised by local Muslims to turn him out as he was fond of playing with a Shiva Linga which he won in a game he played with the son of a local zamindar. So began his wanderings along the banks of Godavari, in the course of which he came to Aurangabad. There he encountered Chand Patil of Dhupkhed, who recovered his lost mare through the grace of Sai. The later part of his story is known to all.

And so Pathri was our destination ! Yet we knew so little about Pathri, when we planned to visit it. The history of Pathri which is recorded below in some detail was gathered only after our return from Pathri from personal discussions with a learned friend, who is a noted authority on the history of the mediaeval Deccan, and reference books.

Pathri, which was in early mediaeval times known as Parthapur after Partha or Arjuna, the hero of Mahabharata and the third of the Pandavas, is situated

about 150 kms. South-east of Devagiri (Daulatabad) and about 3 kms. South-west from the confluence of Vidarbha (Mangala) and Godavari rivers. It was a part of Vidarbha kingdom which was ruled by Yadavas of Deogiri and was a seat of mathematical learning.¹⁹

As Pathri was a part of Yadava kingdom, its history is a part of the history of Deogiri or Daulatabad. It was the village, the Kulkarni vatan of which was held by a family which rose to great eminence in the days of Bahamanis. Timma Bhat, the son of Bhairon or Bhairav Kulkarni of this family, had probably migrated in his youth to Vijayanagar to escape the persecution to which he was subjected by the Muslims and entered the service of that Kingdom.²⁰ He was captured by Sultan Shah Bahamani in one of his campaigns against Vijayanagar in about 1440 and brought to Bidar, the capital to which the Bahamani rulers had shifted in 1432 from the earlier capital of Gulbarga.²¹ Timma Bhat was converted to Islam, received the name of Hussan and brought up as one of the regal slaves. The Sultan was so struck by his abilities that he made him over to his eldest son, Prince Mahomed, as a kind of companion with whom he was educated and attained eminence in Persian and Arabic literature. From his father's name Bhairon he was called Mullick Bheiro, but the Prince, being unable to pronounce the name correctly, he obtained the appellation Bheiry. When Prince Mahomed ascended the throne he raised his favourite to the rank of a noble of thousand horses.²²

Mullick Hassan's inborn qualities enabled him in course of time to rise to the position of a Mansabdar of 20,000 horses with the title of Mir-i-Shikar, and the privilege of keeping kettle drums, Mahi-Maratab and other emblems of distinction. He was subsequently appointed to the post of Qush - Beg. In 1471, he showed exemplary courage against Mangal Rai, defeating him and reinstating Hamvira on the throne of Orissa, and in conquering Rajahmundry and occupying some forts of Kondavidu.

For these achievements he was honoured with the title of Ashraf-i-Humayun Nizam -ul-Mulk and was appointed as Sarlashkar of Tilangana. He made rapid conquests in Tilangana, subjected that whole country and completed preparations for attacking the Carnatic. In November, 1480, he established his hold over Kondavidu for which he was again honoured with the titles of Masnad-i-Ali and Ulugh-i-Azam and was appointed Governor of Rajahmundry. Thereafter, he accompanied the Sultan in his campaign against Vijayanagar and helped him in reducing the fort of Kanchi. While at Kodapalli on the return march, Malik Hussan Successfully brought about the murder of Mahmud Gawan the Dewan of Bahamani Kingdom on 5 April, 1481. The removal of Gawan from the political scene left the direction in the hands of Malik Hussan. He managed the affairs of the state for some years. However, the murder of Mahmud Gawan released disruptive forces. In this atmosphere of tension and hostility, the Provincial Governors won over the local population and began to assert their position. Mullick Hussan found it difficult to control them, and in the end, one of his own proteges murdered him in 1486.

These developments inspired Mullick Hussan's son Ahmed, to push forward his design of carving out an independent principality. He broke into an open rebellion and made up his mind to give a decisive blow to the fast declining political structure. On reaching Junnar he styled himself as Bahri Nizamul-Mulk, opened offensive against his father's enemies and established the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmednagar.²³

In 1518, Burhan Nizam Shah I of Ahmednagar demanded of Alauddin Imad, Shah of Berar, cession of town and district of Pathri, then included in Berar kingdom, in exchange for another district on the ground that Pathri was the home of his ancestors and that many of his relatives lived there. On Alauddin's refusal to cede the district Burhan Nizam Shah I made war on him and annexed it.²⁴

Finally, the Mughal forces in Deccan established their domain over the territory of Daulatabad, including Pathri, and ever since Pathri has been a taluka place in Parabhani district. Up to 1853 Parabhani district was a part of Berar. When Berar was ceded to the British it was attached to Marathwada.

Pathri is about 16 kms. From Manvat Road Railway Station on the Manmad-Secunderabad line. When we decided in 1975 summer to camp at Pathri for a few days to get authentic information about Sai Baba's early life, Manvat had come into prominence because of a series of murders which showed diabolical pre-planning. By June we had established links with a family at Pathri who were to be our hosts. Our host was none other then Dinkarrao Vasudeo Chaudhari, a scion of the famous Chaudhari family of Pathri, with a long history behind them. Dinkarrao Chaudhari is a progressive farmer and lawyer. He was a perfect host. He regarded us and our mission as his own and rendered us all assistance.

There are a number of branches of Chaudhari family at Pathri but most of them live in the fortress which dates back to about the fourteenth century. Dinkarrao Chaudhari has now constructed a house just outside the fortress where he lives. It was our abode during our halt in Pathri. On 21 June evening, when we sat in the open verandah overlooking the fortress, in an informal conversation. Dinkarrao made a point which caught my attention. He said that years ago, his late father Vasudeorao had pointed to one Bhau Bhusari in Pathri and remarked at the sad plight of the family descendant of Sai Baba!²⁵ The next day, some Muslim clients of Dinkarro, who had come for consultation, stated that according to their information Sai Baba was born in a Brahmin family of Pathri, but was taken away by a Wali when a child, and what happened later was not known. This also furnished another clue. So we promptly commenced with the task of making a complete list of all Brahmin families of Pathri.

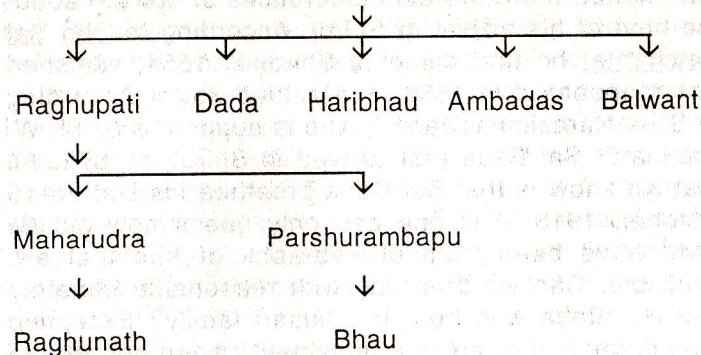
Brahmins in Pathri are all Deshastha Brahmins, either Rigvedi or Yajurvedi. There are no Brahmins of any other sect or sub-caste. This list was made while we made the rounds of Pathri going from door to door, interviewing all old residents, Brahmins or otherwise. In discussions it came to light that the family deity of most of the Brahmin families in Pathri is either Goddess Renuka of Mahur or Yogeshvari of Ambejogai. There was only one exception. That is Bhusari family. Incidentally, Bhusaris are Shukla Yajurvedi Deshastha Brahmins of the Madhyadin branch and their gotra is Kaushik. Their family deity is Hanuman of Kumbharbavdi on the outskirts of Pathri. So our minds began working frantically. We recalled the great devotion and respect Sai Baba had for Rama and Hanuman, and mused, , "Could it be that our search had at last borne fruit!" With alacrity we made our way to Vaishnav Lane, where we examined with reverence the ruins of Bhusari House (House No.4-438-61) for it is no longer standing, and proceeded silently to pay our respects to Hanuman of Kumbharbavdi. There is also a "Lendi" stream skirting Pathri and we were reminded of "Lendi Baug" at Shirdi. The association between the two is obvious. Similarity between the Marathi spoken by Sai Baba and the language spoken in Marathwada, generally, was also noticeable. We were most impressed by the fact that the language spoken by all the strata of society, from the lowest to the highest, is uniform, and there is no difference even in the speech of the elite.

The population of Pathri is about ten thousand. In its appearance, Pathri is as it must have been centuries ago. Progress has hardly touched it.²⁶ Only during the last few years electricity has been brought to its doorstep, and link established with the other parts through the State Transport Service. But otherwise life is placid, as it must have been, in the olden days.²⁶ My mind was carried back to the time when Sai Baba was

born. No exact date or year of his birth is known. For that matter, there are also differences of opinion about the time of his arrival in Shirdi. According to Shri Sai Satcharita, he first came to Shirdi in 1854, vanished and reappeared in 1858, and settled down. According to B. V. Narasimhaswami²⁷ who is supported by M. W. Pradhan²⁸ Sai Baba first arrived in Shirdi in 1872. All that we know is that Sai Baba breathed his last on 15 October, 1918. And one can only guess how old he must have been from photographs of him that are available. Can we then say with reasonable certainty that Sai Baba was born in Bhusari family? Excepting the information given by a prominent citizen of Pathri to his son on the subject, is there any circumstantial evidence? To collect this, if possible, I decided to pursue that matter further. I opened correspondence with Prof. Raghunath Maharudra Bhusari who owns the house of Bhusaris at Pathri. He was Professor of Marathi and also taught Sanskrit at Osmania University, and later served as the Principal of a Government College, from which post he retired in about 1959 and settled down in Hyderabad. He was born in Pathri and had his early education there. When he was eight he lost his father. At the age of twelve he left Pathri and went to Parabhani, a district town, for further education. After matriculating he moved to Hyderabad from where he graduated in Arts, standing third in the University. This won him a scholarship for MA at the Calcutta University, which he completed successfully in 1926 with Sanskrit and Archaeology. There he studied under Dr. Devadatta Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, Ancient Indian History and Civilization. Thereafter, he also passed with credit the MA exam with Marathi from Nagpur University.

Prof. Bhusari states that Konerdada was their first known ancestor. No information is available about the next two generations, but the family tree of three later generations is known which is reproduced below :

Parshuram



Prof. Bhusari further states that he had learnt from his grandmother, when he was a child, that Haribhau, Ambadas and Balwant had all left Pathri for good. While Haribhau might have gone in search of God, the latter two had gone to seek their fortune. In the next generation, Parshurambapu had also taken sanyas in Manjartha (in Bhir District) which is situated at the confluence of the Godavari and the Sindhufena. He passed away in about 1972. His son Bhau, who was not much educated and died in poverty, was the person about whose condition Vasudeorao Chaudhari had an occasion to speak to his son Dinkarrao. This is sufficient evidence to confirm that the Bhusari family of Pathri has produced persons of higher urges and impulses. Could it not be that Haribhau Bhusari was Sai Baba? I wonder.

The theory advanced above is probable. I discussed it jointly with an experienced lawyer and a reputed historian, and both of them agreed that it could be so. I do not wish to add anything further. I leave the matter to the readers to judge for themselves. Since I decided to pen this article, I have learnt that residents of Pathri are keen to erect a fitting memorial to the sacred memory of Sai Baba. May their efforts be crowned with success.

Note and References

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2. M. K. Gandhi, *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. I Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1961, p. 148
3. Erik H. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., New York, 1969, p 9
4. B. V. Narasimhaswami, op. cit. p. 92.
5. G. R. Dabholkar, *Shri Sai Satcharita* (Marathi), Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi, 8th Edn., 1972 Chap. VII p. 13
6. Swami Sai Sharan Anand, *Shri Sai Baba* (Gujarati) 1966, 6th Edn. P. 17 (English) Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi 1997, p. 13 & statement of R.B. Purandare in Devotees Experiences of Shri Sai Baba, Part - I p. 104 at p.114.
7. B. V. Narasimhaswami, op. cit. Part -II p. 46
8. G.R. Dabholakar op. cit.(Marathi)
9. Ibid p. 1
10. *Shri Sai Leela Miscellaneous Topics* April 1925, p . 179.
11. B. V. Narasimhaswami, *Life of Sai Baba*, Vol.I All India Sai Samaj, Madras, 1955, pp. 13-14
12. Ibid., p.12.
13. Swami Sai Sharan Anand attained *nirvana* at Ahmedabad at twenty minutes past midnight on Wednesday 25 August 1982. His body was interred and a samadhi erected over it at 14/15 Prakritikunj Society, New Sharada Mandir Road, Ahmedabad - 380 015.

14. *Shri Sai Leela*, September 1975 p. 4 at p.6
15. Swami Sai Sharan Anand, op. cit. (Gujarati) 1966 (English) 1997
16. Ibid. (Gujarati), pp. 14-15 (English) pp. 10-11
17. Ibid. (Gujarati) p. 6 (English) p. 5.
18. *Shri Sai Leela* July -September, 1942, pp. 359-372.
19. S. B. Dikshit, *Bharatiya Jyotish Shastracha Itihas* (Marathi), Aryabhushan Press, Pune, 2nd Edn., 1931, pp. 267, 269 & 278
20. Lt. Col. Sir Wolseley Haig. *The History of the Nizamshahi Kings of Ahmednagar*, British India Press, Bombay 1923, p. 7 (footnote)
21. Prof. H. K. Sherwani & Dr. P. M. Joshi, *History of Mediaeval Deccan (1295-1724)*, Vol. I Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1975. Pp. 225-228
22. Lt. Col. John Brigg. *History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India till A. D. 1612*, Vol. III Longman Rees, Orme, Brown & Green 1829, pp. 189 -90
23. Prof. H. K. Sherwani & Dr. P. M. Joshi op. cit., pp. 225 -228
24. Lt. Col. Sir Wolseley Haig op. cit., p.7 (footnote)
25. See the family tree of Bhusaris in this Research Paper.
26. When the writer visited Pathri in 1993, after thirteen years, he found the face of Pathri considerably transformed. It had lost its rustic appearance and life had been urbanised without any pre-planning. A highway now passes through the town and a sugar factory has come into being, the population has multiplied threefold but development has not kept pace with it.

27. B. V. Narasimhaswami, op. cit., Vol I p. 13.
28. M. V. Pradhan, *Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi*, Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi, 7th Edn., 1973, p.25
29. The place of Shirdi Sai Baba's birth in Pathri was purchased by V. B. Kher and Dinkarrao Chaudhari in the name of Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, Pathri, which has been registered as a public trust at P. T. R. No.E -43 (Parabhani) under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950. A shrine of Shirdi Sai Baba was inaugurated on Tuesday, 19 October 1999, Vijayadashami (Dashera) day, by Shri K. V. Ramani, the Founder and Managing Trustee of Shirdi Sai Trust, Chennai, without whose munificent donation the construction of the shrine in its present exquisite form would not have been possible for the Samiti. The shrine comprises a sanctum sanctorum with a 5 ½ foot bronze icon of Shri Sai Baba with his Padukas for the purpose of worship, opening into a spacious sabha-mandap. A Dhyan Mandir (Meditation Hall) is located in the basement of the shrine with a full-size lifelike oil painting of Baba and portraits of Swami Sai Sharan Anand and Bulb Baba on either side. Marble has been extensively used in the construction of the shrine aesthetically.

Founding of Pathri Sai Janmasthan Mandir - Some Landmarks.

- 1) June 1975 - Visit to Pathri of Mr. And Mrs. V. B. Kher.
- 2) January 1976 - The article of Mr. V. B Kher captioned "A Search for the Birthplace of Sai Baba" featured in Sai Leela Magazine.
- 3) 1st June 1978 - Mr. V. B. Kher and Dinkarrao Chaudhari purchased the land of Sai Baba's birth place from Prof. R. M. Bhusari in the name of "Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, Pathri" a body constituted for the purpose.
- 4) 31st December 1980 - Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, Pathri was registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950 at P. T. R. No. E- 43 (Parbhani)
- 5) March 1981 - Architect Subhash Dali prepared a blue - print of Sai Janmasthan Mandir, and indicated the place of "Delivery Room for the ladies of the House" thereon.
- 6) September 1982 - Mr. And Mrs. V. B. Kher visited Dhupkhed near Aurangabad. Thereafter they called on Wali "Bulb Baba". He accepted the dakshina of Rs. 20/- from the Kher couple and gave the blessing- "Land has been bought. A Mandir costing 20 lakhs will be built on it. People from all parts of the country will throng there. Your visits to this part of the country will be more frequent and we shall meet".
- 7) 13th October 1994 - Bhoomipujan ceremony of the Pathri Sai Mandir performed by Abdulla Khan Durrani, the then Chairman of the Pathri Nagar Parishad, and now M.L.A., on Vijaya Dashmi day.

- 8) May 1995 - Commencement of the digging of the foundation of the Shrine - Querns, moortis of Hanuman and Khandoba, articles of puja etc. discovered in excavation.
- 9) 10th June 1995 - Bed- concreting of foundation commenced at the hands of S. T. Sangde, Manager, State Bank of Hyderabad, Pathri Branch.
- 10) 18th July 1995 - Mr. V. B. Kher, Mr. Sitaram Dhanu and Architect Dali visited Pathri - as two arches and a tunnel were discovered in excavation; on Architect Dali's advice, it was decided to build a full basement under the Mandir.
- 11) 20th December 1995 - Mr. V. B. Kher and two other Applicants applied under Section 50 - A of the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950 to the Assistant Charity Commissioner, Parbhani,, for framing a scheme for the administration and management of Shri Sai Smarak Samiti, P. T. R. No. E - 43 (Parbhani).
- 12) From 1st October 1996, the construction work was suspended for a period of two years, for some unavoidable reasons.
- 13) 13th July 1998 - By the consent of all parties, an agreement was filed in the Parbhani District Court,- constituting the first Board of Trustees, comprising the following individuals:
 - a) Mr. Vishwas, Bal Kher.
 - b) Mr. Sitaram Soma Dhanu.
 - c) Mr. Dinkar Vasudeo Chaudhari.
 - d) Mr. Abdulla Khan Durrani.
 - e) Mr. Kalidas Chaudhari.
 - f) Mr. Suryabhan Tulsiram Sangde.
 - g) Mr. Subhash Rajaram Dali.

14) 9th August 1998 :- At the first meeting of the Board of Trustees, Mr. V. B. Kher was elected as the Chairman, Mr. D. V. Chaudhari as the Managing Trustee and Mr. S. T. Sangde as the Treasurer.

15) 19th October 1999 :- Due to the generous and substantial financial donation by Mr. K. V. Ramani, an industrialist engaged in software technology and founder and Managing Trustee of Shirdi Sai Trust, the magnificent Pathri Sai Mandir came into being; and in the fitness of things, the Mandir was declared open by him on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashmi which is also the day of Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi.

16) For the inaugural function, Shirdi Sai Moorti Pranpratishtha Committee was appointed and Mr. Sitaram Dhanu was the Chairman thereof as well as of it's Mumbai Branch. The Mumbai Branch performed excellent work and contributed liberally in the form of financial assistance.

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3. SWAMI SAI SHARAN ANAND

A Biographical Sketch

Shri Sai Baba had no disciples though he had, and has, innumerable devotees. One such devotee, a holy person who shunned the limelight, was Swami Sai Sharan Anand. Prior to his being ordained as a Sannyasi he was Vaman Prangovind Patel. He was born on April 5, 1889 in a well-to-do and educated Brahmin family at Mota, a village in Bardoli Taluka (famous for the Satyagraha of peasants in 1928) of Surat District which was then a part of the composite Bombay Province. His father, Prangovind Lalbhai Patel, was employed in the Excise Department (Salt Branch) of the Government of India. His mother, Manigauri, was the daughter of the well-known educationalist, Tuljaram Somnath. Vaman's grandfather had served as a Talathi in Navasari and was known as an honest, upright government servant who practised and enforced discipline. His grandmother, Nandkumari, was a very religious lady and so was his mother, Manigauri.

Vaman studied up to the sixth form in his village, Mota and for the seventh form he came to stay at Kheda with his uncle - Ramgovind, who was a head clerk in the Collector's office. From 1899, he commenced his secondary education at Ahmedabad where his father had been transferred. In 1903, his father had been transferred to Bombay. So Vaman joined the New High School (which was later renamed after its Principal, Bharda, as the Bharda New High School) in Bombay, and passed the matriculation examination in 1905.

At that time there were three colleges in Bombay: Wilson College, St. Xavier's College and Elphinstone College. Their fees for one term were Rs. 36/- Rs.48/-

and Rs. 64/- respectively. As Vaman's father was a government servant, he preferred to put his son in Elphinstone College from which he graduated in 1909 in Arts with Philosophy. Manu Subhedar, who later entered the field of commerce and industry and represented that Constituency in the Central Legislative Assmebly in 1934, was a co-student and friend of Vaman. Vaman passed LL.B. examination in 1911 and signed articles with a Solicitor's firm in Bombay known as Messrs. Jehangir Gulabbhai and Billimoria.

According to the custom at that time, Vaman was married at the age of thirteen to Kalavati, the daughter of Ambaram Krishnashankar Shukla. From his childhood, Vaman had a religious bent of mind which was nourished by the religious atmosphere in his household. In his childhood, he learnt to recite Ramraksha, Vishnu Sahasranam and Aditya -Hriday Stotra. When he was about five years old, his father was posted for some time at Dharasana Salt Depot where they stayed in a tent. Since many months, Vaman was suffering from diarrhoea and everyone had given up hope of his survival. Once Vaman's mother was sitting outside the tent with him in her lap, sighing for her infant, when suddenly a fakir appeared and the following conversation ensued between her and the fakir.

Fakir : Your child is very fortunate.

Vaman's mother : What fortunate ! He gets so many loose motions that we feel he is a companion of only four days.

Fakir : No, No, don't say that. He is very fortunate. In his right armpit is a wart and a mole on his right side. (Here, Vaman's mother raised his frock and found that Vaman did have those identification marks. So the conversation further proceeded.)

Vaman's mother : What you say is correct. But what about his sick condition?

Fakir : Take this udi and put it in his mouth and all will be well.

Swami Sai Sharan Anand records in his Gujarati autobiography Sainathne Sharane, published posthumously in 1983 (pp. 19-20) that thereafter his health improved rapidly and his parents were relieved. His mother had told him so.

When Vaman was seven years old and was schooling at Kheda, early morning he would visit the temple of Somnath Mahadev with his mother and sisters, where he would meet a fakir who would playfully tease him. Vaman would also pass him on his way to the school, when the fakir would again indulge in some such pranks. In 1911, when Vaman first visited Shirdi, he recognized at once that the fakir he used to meet at Kheda in his childhood was none other than Sai Baba. Similarly, once in 1913, holding his two palms opposite each other a few inches apart, Sai Baba remarked to Hari Sitaram Dikshit that he had known Vaman since he was as small as a mouse. When Vaman told his mother about this remark of Sai Baba, it was then that she told him about the sudden appearance of a fakir at Dharasana, when she was sitting outside the tent in the incident which has been narrated above.

When Vaman was in Inter Arts class, he lost interest in his daily religious rites, like sandhya-puja, and stopped performing them. However, since he was habituated to some regular ritual, his mind was not at rest and he continued to recite the stotras after the morning bath, and started reading the Bhagavad-Gita before retiring to bed, as he found that it infused mental strength into him. He was also convinced by studying Neetishatak and Vairagyashatak by Bhartruhari, that the ideal of Aryavarta was the realisation of God through renunciation. As he got first class marks in logic in Inter Arts examination, Vaman chose Logic and Moral Philosophy as his subjects of study

for B. A. R. S. Mars was then the Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy in the Elphinstone College. He was a scholar of German and Greek and had read works of Kant in the original. As such he was very popular with students. The study of Kant's philosophy unsettled Vaman's mind and he wondered whether God really existed or was merely the creation of man's mind; whether the universe was sustained by a conscious creative power or was created accidentally. The more he thought, the more he became eager and anxious to unravel the mystery of life and to see God face to face, like Swami Vivekananda had done. When he was in this state of mind, his father took him to Balakrishna Maharaj. Vaman told Balakrishna Maharaj that he would only accept him as his guru if he would enable him to get a direct perception of God. Now Vaman longed to meet a Mahatma who would finally resolve his doubts. His prayer was answered. His father, who had just returned from a visit to Sai Baba, told him that the latter was capable of meeting all his demands. So on 10 December, 1911, after his second LL.B. examination was over, Vaman left for Shirdi. The account of his first meeting with Sai Baba is narrated in detail in his Gujarati autobiography Sainathne Sharane. After the first meeting with Sai Baba, Vaman visited Shirdi frequently, right up to Sai Baba's mahasamadhi on October 15, 1918. However, his two visits in 1913 and 1916 were particularly significant and productive from a spiritual point of view.

Vaman went to Shirdi in May 1913 and Sai Baba detained him for nearly eleven months. Initially Sai Baba made him do Gayatri Purascharan to wipe off his past karma. He would also send him on his behalf to the four or five houses for alms. He also put him through the necessary spiritual discipline, made him read Jnaneshwari and other spiritual works, and gave him spiritual experiences. He treated him with affection, like his own son, and would call him by the pet name of Babu. One day, Sai Baba told him to go home. So he returned to Bombay in March 1914.

Due to his long stay in Shirdi, Vaman's period of articulated clerkship was interrupted. On his return to Bombay, he met Jehangir, the senior partner of the firm, who told him that the period of 13 months earlier put in by him, was now wasted as his period of training was interrupted; it would not be counted and he would have to put in two years afresh. About this time he received two offers of employment, one of Police Prosecutor and another as an Assistant Teacher in C.J.N.L. High School, Navasari. On the advice of Sai Baba, he accepted the latter and served over a year in that post. In the following vacation, Vaman consulted Gulabbhai, another partner of the firm, who advised him to apply to the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court for condonation of the break in his articles. On making the necessary application, an order was passed by the Chief Justice condoning the break and Vaman was permitted to serve for the remaining period of eleven months to complete his period of articulated clerkship. This is said to be the only instance of its kind in the history of the Bombay High Court. Accordingly, Vaman completed his period of articulated clerkship and started preparing for the solicitor's examination.

In October - November 1916, Vaman spent three weeks in Shirdi which were very important from his point of view, for he had many invaluable spiritual experiences of a high order, and he became fearless. He would go anywhere at midnight and sit for meditation for long hours, near the stream or in the jungle. Once in the afternoon, he started with Kakasaheb Dikshit for the masjid. At that time construction work was going on in the Butiwada. Dikshit skirted the Butiwada and went to the Masjid. Vaman took the short-cut through the Butiwada, and while doing so, a heavy stone fell on his head which made him unconscious. It was a serious accident, but Sai Baba sent an ointment for application on Vaman's head and shoulder. With one application, the pain ceased at once and the wounds healed naturally after some days without any further treatment. During this period, Sai Baba opened his seventh chakra

Brahmarandhra and united his prana with the universal prana.

Between 1917 and 1935, the career of Vaman was full of vicissitudes as will be seen from what follows. From March 1917 to January 1921, he worked as the Principal of Model High School at Ahmedabad. Then he returned to Bombay and was for some time an Assistant in Kanga and Sayani, a firm of solicitors. For a year thereafter he joined the Pioneer Rubber Works of his friend, Manu Subhedar. In 1923 he passed his Solicitor's examination and from, January 1924 conducted a firm of solicitors, Nanavati & Co, for a year and quarter. Next he worked as an Assistant Solicitor in Choksi & Co., Solicitors. Between 25 July 1925 and 15 September 1926 he was a partner of Paralkar in a firm of solicitors called Paralkar & Patel. Once again the pull of Ahmedabad proved stronger and he joined Model High School as Principal. He left Ahmedabad in 1929 to take up his appointment as a Professor in Law College, Bombay. During this time he published a commentary on the Companies Act and a commentary of the Insolvency Act.

Within a year thereafter, he took up his appointment as an Assistant in Crawford Bayley & Co., Solicitors, to which he stuck on for two years. That was the end of his legal career and his residence in Bombay as well. He went back to Ahmedabad, and from January 1935 served for fifteen years as Principal of Umreth High School, Umreth, in Nadiad District from which he retired in 1950.

Even after Sai Baba's samadhi, Vaman's upasana and tapas continued with vigour and he lived in the world but was not of it. Mentally he had renounced all attachment to the world. In 1951, his wife Kalavati passed away after forty-nine years of married life. She had given birth to a son, Meghashyam, who died prematurely, and a daughter, Triveni, who was married happily. She too expired on 1 August, 1978.

After his retirement from the educational field, Vaman turned his hand to literary activity, authoring religious books. He joined the Sastu-Sahitya Mandal and published the following fourteen books in Gujarati between 11 December, 1950 and 31 March, 1953.

1. *Shri Sai Baba (2nd edition)*
2. *Shankaracharya*
3. *Manushyadharma*
4. *Nityapath*
5. *Sati Savitri*
6. *Shri Prahlad*
7. *Jadabharat*
8. *Ambarish*
9. *Shukadevji*
10. *Gajendramoksha*
11. *Mastaram*
12. *Jnandev ane Changdev 'Pasashti'*
13. *Dharmakatha*
14. *Japa ane Namasmaran*

Besides these he has authored a poetical work, Sai Leelkhyan, in 24 chapters, describing the various leelas of Sai Baba which he published independently in April 1962. His book, Sai Baba, was very popular in Gujarat and ran into six editions until 1966.

His commitment to worldly affairs was now at an end and on 12 July 1953, he took Sannyasa at Dakor as per Sai Baba's directions. Thereafter, he lived an austere

and virtuous life for twenty-nine years and experienced complete unity and oneness with Sai Baba. He attained nirvana at Ahmedabad at twenty minutes past midnight on Wednesday 25 August, 1982. His body was interred and a Samadhi has been erected over it.

Swami Sai Sharan Anand had supernatural powers which he used sparingly and judiciously in hard cases, without ever speaking about them. After his nirvana the following books of his were published posthumously :

1. *Sainathne Sharane, 1983, being his spiritual experiences.*
2. *Brahma Parimal, November, 1986.*
3. *Siddhamrit, February, 1987.*

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4.

Shri Bulb Baba

A Biographical Sketch

The personality of Shri Bulb Baba, was in his time, a subject of curiosity in Aurangabad. Some Hindus regarded him as a Pakistani spy, while some persons of the Muslim community considered him an informer of the Police department. He would come around noon to the Hanuman Mandir in Gulmandi area in Aurangabad and spend some hours there. Persons of all communities in the neighbourhood, looked upon him with respect as a Wali. The tourist guides in Aurangabad, would take interested travellers to see the quizzical expression on his face.

Mr. Vasant Limaye who retired after thirty-eight years of service as a Senior Officer in the Intelligence Section of the C. I. D. of the State Government, has settled down in Aurangabad. He knew Bulb Baba personally, and has furnished us particulars about him, from which the following account has been compiled. He says that his full name was Asaram Yashwant alias, Yesuji Bankar, and he was born in a Mali family in a place called Babara. Babara is a town in Sillod taluka of Aurangabad District, and is situated at a distance of 55kms. to the north of Aurangabad. There is an ancient temple of Balaji and also of Ganesh in Babara. He was the son of Harnabai, but he had a step-mother too, by the name of Putlabai.

Asaram was married to Mathura Babai and he had a child by her, who died when it was two months old. Thereafter, in 1947, Asaram renounced his household and proceeded to Aurangabad, where he worked first as a

tongawallah for some time and later served in a cotton textile mill. As he met with an accident while working in the mill, he left his job and went to Nasik. However, his nephew, Kachruji Kisrao Bankar brought him back to Aurangabad to stay with him. Kachruji was a supervisor in New Punjab Hotel on Station Road and lived in Usmanpur locality.

After a lapse of some time, Asaramji went to Kachner for his spiritual sadhana. Kachner is about 40 kms. on the Aurangabad-Beed road and there are temples of Mahadev and Devi in this place. Even though he was unlettered, by his sadhana he acquired siddhi of speech and advanced on the path of spirituality. Many have experienced the effect of his powers, including the editor of this Hand Book of Information.

After returning to Aurangabad from Kachner, he camped in the open Muslim Burial ground. As he was harassed by anti-social elements there, around 1956-1957, he shifted to Kanfatya Maruti Mandir, near Paithan Gate. The roof over this Mandir was of corrugated iron sheets,, and he would sleep under this roof.

Asaramji's attire was bizarre. He wore a long robe of Sholapur Chaddar or rough woolen kambal, Vasudeo cap with multicoloured bulbs, peacock feathers, rudraksh or cauri malas tied thereto adorned his head. He also wore metal bracelets on both wrists of his hands. The fancy footwear he used, was made from automobile tyres. The name Bulb Baba seems to have been given to him from this strange dress.

In the afternoons,, he would turn up at Gul Mandi area of Aurangabad, and stand before any shop. It is said that the said shopkeeper would do brisk business on that day. Nearby was a Mewadi restaurant. It's owner held Bulb Baba in great esteem and had instructed his staff to receive him with all courtesies, whenever he chose to visit the restaurant and to attend to all his wants.

In September 1982, tourist guide K. K. Jumbade of Aurangabad, had taken the Kher couple to visit him. Though known to be reticent, he discoursed to them for forty-five minutes on pure Vedanta with quotes from Kabir's dohas and sakhis. At the conclusion of their visit, Mr. Kher bowed to him and placed in his hands two ten rupee notes by way of dakshina, which he accepted graciously,, and pronounced the benediction " A plot of land has been purchased, where a shrine costing rupees twenty lakhs will be constructed. People from all over the country will throng there for darshan, and your visits to this part of the country will be more frequent, and we shall meet". This saintly figure and his words of blessing will ever remain enshrined in the hearts of the Kher couple.

Bulb Baba passed away on Monday 7th October 1991 in the morning at sunrise in his room on Plot No. 152, Gandhi Nagar, behind Fire Brigade, Aurangabad. His date of birth is not known, but he is said to have been about 80 to 85 years old when he breathed his last. A samadhi has been built over his sacred body at the spot. A photograph of his, and the things that he used in his daily life, such as his robe, bed, wooden swing, thali and vati, brass vessels etc. have been displayed neatly in the room.

ANNUAL FESTIVALS CELEBRATED AT SAI JANMASTHAN MANDIR PATHRI

THREE DAYS' FESTIVALS

- 1) Shriram Navami (Chaitra Shuddha 9)
 - 2) Vyas- Guru Purnima (Ashadh)
 - 3) Vijaya Dashmi Dasara (Ashwin Shuddha 10)
- Shri Sai Baba, Mahasamadhi Day and Pathri Sai Mandir's Anniversary.

ONE DAY FESTIVALS.

- 1) Hanuman Jayanti (Chaitra Purnima)
- 2) Swami Sai Sharan Anand Jayanti (5th April)
- 3) Shrikrishna Jayanti (Shravan Vadya, 8)
- 4) Swami Sai Sharan Anand Punyatithi (26th August)
- 5) Shri Bulb Baba Punyatithi (7th October)
- 6) Shri Dattatreya, Jayanti (Margashirsha Purnima)



How To Reduce The Ego.

- Slowly overcome the sense of "me" and "mine" in your daily life.
- Surrender to Him the role of the doer of action.
- Do not take the credit of any action.
- Act without expecting the fruit thereof.
- As the faith grows, ego subsides.
- Learn to listen and ego will slowly subside.
- It is better to learn from others than to teach.
- "That I know nothing" is a state of mind conducive to the subduing of ego.
- Always appreciate the virtues of others.
- The very thought that I have no ego, itself creates a subtle sense of ego.
- Serve others to subdue your ego.
- Self surrender, gratitude and prayer help to reduce the ego.
- Lesser the identification with the body, lesser the ego.
- Conscious overcoming of passions enfeebles the ego.
- Reaction,, interruption and complaining do not help in reducing the ego.
- Comparison of ourselves with the vastness of the Universe, reduces the ego.



THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMA - SMARAN.

- The intensity of Prarabdha lessens.
- The capacity to bear Prarabdha increases.
- Difficulties in worldly life are reduced.
- The capacity to adjust to the circumstances expands.
- We get satisfaction.
- Home environment becomes pure.
- Peace enters our residence.
- Harmony prevails at home.
- Ties of goodwill are created.
- Divine presence pervades the home.
- Calamities are faced with equanimity.
- Cares and fear vanish.
- Our nature begins to change.
- Our wants are reduced.
- We come closer to our Maker.