

## Ram Navami Message



Literature is the reflection of the time in which it is written. Good literature truly manifests the happenings and thoughts of its time. It works as a link between yesterday and today. Of all the literature that exists, that pertaining to different religious, spiritual movements on this earth is the most valued and permanent in nature. This is because the spiritual and religious movements are spread over millenniums when compared to the other movements i.e. social, economic, political, etc. As history has shown, Agrarian economy has changed to Industrial economy; Autocratic systems of Government have changed to Democratic systems of Governance; Monarchies have changed to Republics; and a closed society has given rise to an open society. Notwithstanding all such social changes through thousands of years, Shri Krishna remains Shri Krishna and Jesus Christ remains Jesus Christ. They or for that matter such spiritual revolutionaries would always remain as the guiding force of human civilization.

Given this backdrop, let us consider the vast amount of literature written on Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi for over a century now. Shri Shirdi Sai Baba left His human embodiment in October 1918, after which most of such literature has been produced. However, some literature in the proper sense of the term and some documents relating to Shri Sai which later became part of literature were available even before 1918.

These are:

- Bhakta Leeleamrit and Sant Kathamrit, the writings of Das Ganu Maharaj in Marathi Ovi poetic metre.
- Personal diaries of daily happenings at Shirdi maintained by H. S. Dixit, G.S. Khaparde and others.
- Correspondence between different devotees on Baba and Shirdi related issues – It is written in Sai Satcharitra that many devotees used to write letters to Shama to be presented to Baba and would get replies thereof.
- Sainath Prabha, a bilingual magazine in English and Marathi which used to be printed in Poona was being published from Shirdi by Hari Vinayak Sathe and
- Literature by individual devotees like Bhim, Savitri Tendulkar, Upasani Maharaj, Vaman Rao Patel (Sai Sharan Anand), etc in the form of prayers, bhajans, artis, etc.

In 1923, Shri Sai Leela magazine was published for the first time in Marathi by Shri Sai Baba Sansthan. In 1929, Govind Raghunath Dabholkar (Hemadpant) brought out a compilation of his notes and other devotees experiences in the form of Shri Sai Satcharitra in Ovi poetic metre in Marathi language that has become a classic text on the life and teachings of Shri Sainath Maharaj.

In 1935, B.V. Narasimha Swami interviewed the then surviving devotees of Shri Sai Baba and published Devotees Experiences under the auspices of All India Sai Samaj from Madras in Tamil which was later translated into English and other languages. Over a period of time, Shri Sai Satcharita also got translated into all the major languages in India.

During the last few decades a host of Indian and Foreign writers have written on Shri Shirdi Sai Baba. Some of them, like Antonio Rigopolous (Italy), Kevin Sheperd (United Kingdom), Mariane Warren (Canada), etc have done research for their writings as part of academic curriculum. However, original research on Baba was at first undertaken by Das Ganu Maharaj followed by Govind Raghunath Dabholkar and later by B.V. Narasimha Swami.

Yet there is lot of scope for further research not only at the personal level but also at institutional level by using available research methods in various languages. Such research can be carried on by creating Chairs in the universities, creating research institutes, academic research by Scholars, publication of research papers in various languages, etc. Sai Devotees would do well to encourage and contribute towards research on Sai literature.

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