

**SACRED SPACE**

# Sai Baba and Ram bhakti

Hemant Dharmat

Sai Baba's birth anniversary is commemorated on Ramnavmi. But few devotees are aware that Sai Baba encouraged his devotees to remain absorbed in Ram bhakti. On this Ramnavmi falling in the 100th year of Sai Baba's Mahasamadhi, it is worthwhile recounting Baba's relevant 'Leelas'.

In 1916, a 'Kirtan-Mandli' arrived in Shirdi village in the hope of making money by singing 'bhajans' at Sai Baba's abode - a dilapidated Mosque, which Baba called Dwarkamai. During this period, Baba's fame having spread far and wide, lot many devotees frequented Shirdi. Each day lot of money would get collected with Sai Baba who would spend as mall amount for purchase of firewood for 'dhuni' and oil for the earthen lamps and distribute the rest to the poor and needy. The kirtanmandli consisting of a Tamilian, his wife, a daughter and his sister-in law sang melodious 'bhajans'. However, their real motive was to earn money. Three out of the four in the troupe were extremely greedy. But his wife was of simple and of God fearing disposition. She was an ardent devotee of Lord Ram and had immense reverence for Baba. One day during the daily noon-time prayer, Baba gave her 'darshan' of Lord Ram. Whereas all else present in the Dwarkamai, witnessed Baba seated on a rock; every time she looked towards Baba, she saw Lord Ram in His place. Unable to control her emotions, she started clapping in sheer ecstasy. She related the experience to her husband who brushed it aside as nothing more than a mental concoction and asked when each one of them saw Sai Baba as usual, how could she alone see Him as Lord Ram. She chose not to enter into an argument as during that time also she was having a vision of Lord Ram.

A few days after, her husband had a dream in which he found himself in shackles behind bars. Soon Sai Baba emerged from nowhere before him. He entreated, "I have come to your refuge on hearing about your exalted spiritual stature. How can such misfortune befall me, when you are so near. I do not remember having committed any despicable sin for which I should be subjected to this punishment". Baba replied, "If not in present life, it could be the result of sins incurred in previous birth". He insisted that he had no recollection of his previous birth adding even if I am responsible for such acts, these should have been decimated on account my close proximity to you". "Do you believe in what you just said?" asked Baba. He replied in the affirmative. Baba directed him to shut his eyelids. When he did so, he heard the sound

of some heavy object falling near him. As he opened his eyes, he found himself out of the barred windows and got terrified on seeing a profusely bleeding wounded police constable having fallen in front of him. Baba warned, policemen would re-arrest him and subject him to severe punishment. He beseeched, "O God Sai! Save me" Then Baba asked him to yet again close his eyes. As he opened his eyes, he found himself a free bird and Baba standing before him. He prostrated at Sai Baba's feet in all humility. Baba asked, "Did you notice any difference between your previous namaskar and this one". "Difference akin to that of the sky and nether world", he replied adding "My earlier namaskar were for the purpose of accumulating wealth. But now I have bowed unto you realizing you as God". Thereafter Baba appeared before him as Shri Ramdas, his Guru. When he woke up, there was complete transformation in his thinking. His greed having vanished, the reality of Baba's greatness dawned on him.

Sai Baba always provided encouragement to noble ideas. As per a well-known adage, if a noble thought crosses your mind in the early morning, and if you reflect on it throughout the day, it would substantially develop your intellect and calm your mind. One evening, Hemadpant decided that he should spend the next Thursday repeating Ram naam. On the following Thursday morning, he took some flowers and left to offer his obeisance to Baba. As he reached near Dwarkamai, he heard SantEknath's following hymn that Aurangabadkar was singing from inside Dwarkamai in an extremely melodious tone:

*Gurukripaanjanpayo mere bhai; Ram binakuch-manatnahi.*

*Andar Rama, bahar Rama; Sapne me dekhatsitarama.*

*Jagat Rama, Sovat Rama; Jahan dekhevahipurankama.*

*EkaJanardanianubhavnika; Jahan dekhevahi Ramsarikha.*

There were thousands of 'bhajan', but why especially this song on Lord Ram, Aurangabadkar chose to sing at that moment. Wasn't it a pleasant arrangement by Sai Baba that left Hemadpant spellbound?

One day Baba rose from his seat and immediately started partaking lunch brought for Him by Mrs Khaparde wife of a famous lawyer. Devotees present there complained, "Normally, plates offered by others remain lying for hours without even being touched by You. Why this partiality with this lady Baba?" He replied, "Truly this meal is special. She was a healthy cow in a previous birth and provided abundant milk. After casting off her animal body, she was born in a gardener's house. Later she took birth in Kshashtrya caste and was married to a trader. Ages after she has met Me. Let me take a few bites from her plate. After relishing the meal, Baba resumed his seat. Mrs Khaparde massaged His lotus feet. Pleased by her service, Baba advised her to chant Rajaram.Rajaram saying if she remains absorbed in contemplation, she would attain salvation.



**BOOK REVIEW**

# Science & spirituality must go hand in hand

O.P. Sharma & Manoj Kumar

Name of the Book	: Spirituality is Science
Author	: Er. M.R. Kotwal
Publication by	: Er. M.R. Kotwal, Jammu
Year	: 2017
Pages	: 312
Price	: Not mentioned

This 312 pages book in English entitled "Spirituality is Science" authored by M.R. Kotwal is based on thoughts of Dr. Ram Rattan Khajuria on spirituality expressed during various discourses, discussions and deliberations. Dr. Khajuria is former Director, J&K Milk Federation and an eminent social worker who founded some important organisations like J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra devoted to the cause of deaf, dumb and persons with disability and some other noted NGOs.

He also remained founding president, Life Patron, Honorary Director and President of the noted NGOs like Vichar

ality is Science". The subject is related to spirit and the way to attain self-realization and ultimately merge with the all powerful authority- The Brahma. The difference between religion and spirituality in Chapter two of the book has been made very clearly for the benefit of the readers.

To follow the path of meditation has been dealt in detail to assimilate all virtuous qualities and shunning off the opposites (negativities) for purification of mind.

**Spiritual Enlightenment**

His writing in the Chapter 9, depicts the comparison of body and soul which makes valuable reading. Also the path of spiritual enlightenment of a sadhak alongwith relation of Atma and Parmatma which constitutes the fundamentals of spirituality is elaborated and lucidly deliberated upon in depth.

A suggestion has been made in the book to attract the scientists and intellectuals towards spirituality by involving the famous universities/ institutions and NGOs by constituting commission at national level under the Union Ministry of Culture and HRD.

The importance of spirituality and its dire necessity in the present world of science has been rightly stressed upon in the book not only for self-realisation and enlightenment but to attain Moksh/ Mukti by all individuals but for overall cleansing of society of evils, egos and conflicts prevailing throughout the globe.

**Absorbing Reading**

Depending upon a person's ability and capacity, different ways for spirituality have been mentioned in the book for the benefit of the general relationship.

Efforts have also been made to clarify Avtaarvad viz-a-viz existence of the Creator without discrimination of any religion or state, so that whole humanity is awakened to the cause and its effect phenomenon, for overall peace, harmony and development of every human being. Dr. Ram Rattan Khajuria of J&K State, a well known figure, has remained throughout his life involved in scientific and spiritual pursuits.

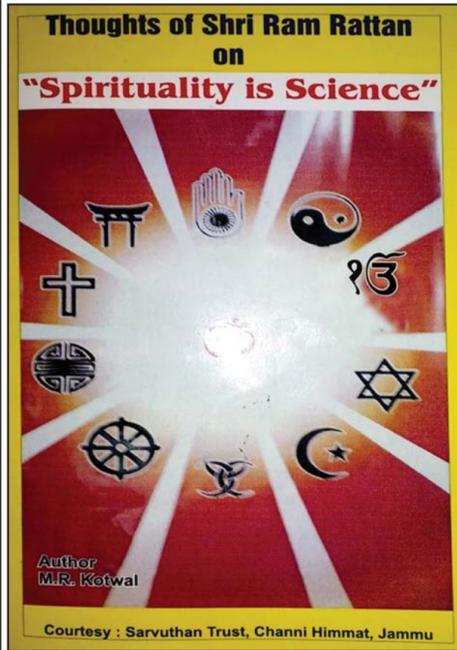
In the chapter 17 of the book, emphasis has been laid to clean all the evils and misdeeds of the individuals involved by invoking the element of spirituality in them by organising special short duration courses/ seminars.

On science and spirituality the thoughts of Sai Baba and other renowned authors are worth reading for the persons interested in development of human values for the welfare and betterment of mankind.

A very interesting feature is that it has been made essential for the book reader for replacement of all personal negativities by positivities, impurities by purities, spiritual infection by perfections through sincere and serious Sadhna, perseverance and inspiring others for the same. It is really a curious way of charging the readers for this useful book.

The book has been well produced with fine printing on quality paper and in a simple language and direct easy to understand style for common readers. Both the author and Dr. R.R Khajuria have done a commendable job in creating wide-spread awakening for the uplift of the entire humanity. The volume needs to be made available to mass readership with its translation in variety of languages, Indian as well as foreign. The book is recommended for all the readers for spiritual enlightenment and scientific outlook.

(Starline Syndicate Service)



Kranti Manch International, Confederation of J&K Voluntary Social and Charitable organisation; SAWERA, which runs a high school as also Kushi Nirvaran Society in Jammu. Dr. Khajuria has rendered notable service to the society and later on turned more to spiritualism along with his scientific temper and background.

**All Important Topic**

The book is on thoughts of Dr. R.R. Khajuria on 'Spirit-

**LIFESTYLE**

# Music as Medicine

Dr. TK Munshi

Music is the soundtrack of our lives, whether we are aware of it or not. It exists within, uniting and guiding us, and has helped heal body and spirit since the dawn of humanity. NASA scientists recently discovered that the universe itself has a song. **Pioneering Practitioners** : From the soothing tones of a harp to the jarring screeches of a construction site, the stress-reducing or stress-producing properties of sound are familiar to us all. "Stress is an underlying cause of the vast majority of all illnesses, and sound and music are effective in relieving stress and bringing stillness," says Jonathan Goldman, renowned director of the Sound Healers Association in Colorado. Through his book, 'The 7 secrets of Sound Healing, Goldman is convinced of the profound effect sound has on the human organism'. The simple chanting of the sound 'om' or 'aum', in addition

participants' heart rates to synchronize, producing relaxation similar to group meditation. **Cancer** : Dr. Gaynor used music to treat even advanced cancer patients for decades, considering it a 'disease of disharmony'. He advocated re-harmonizing the body with sound vibrations that affect virtually every cell enhancing immune function and potentially preventing cancer from spreading. Several studies confirm that listening to any kind of soothing music relieves anxiety in cancer patients; a large study from Drexel University confirms that it also relieves pain, lowers blood pressure, improves breathing and minimizes nausea associated with chemotherapy. **Depression** : Drumming can better counter depression than the prescription drug Prozac, according to a recent study by Royal College of Music in UK. The drumming group participants experienced

singing causes longer exhalations than normal, helping to naturally eliminate toxins and acidity'. According to an early study done by Dr.Kataria in Denmark the people that hummed for just 10 minutes were able to reduce their systolic blood pressure by 10 to 15 points, their diastolic by five points and their pulse rate by 10 beats per minute. Kataria found that people with breathing problems like asthma and emphysema experienced positive effects because it strengthened belly muscles used in breathing. Kataria is also a fan of 'kirtan' - Hindu devotional call-and-response chants often accompanied by ecstatic dancing. Neurosurgeon Dr. Eben Alexander, recorded his near-death experience in his 'Proof of Heaven' as cosmic music that made him to use specific sound frequencies on the brain. In his medical practice in Virginia, he often employs music from a patient's past to help him emerge from a brain injury or coma. He



to instilling calmness and relaxation, causes the release of melatonin and nitric oxide. It relaxes blood vessels, releases soothing endorphins, reduces the heart rate and slows breathing,' he explains. "Sound can change our immune function, wrote Dr. Mitchell Gaynor, former director of medical oncology at Cornell Medical College, New York. "After chanting or listening to certain forms of music, your interleukin-1 level, an index of your immune system, goes up between 12 and 15 percent. Even the heart rate and blood pressure are lowered. There is no part of your body not affected."

**Practical applications** : Singing with a tune or not, is a powerful way to combat stress, according to many studies. A recent joint study by German and British researchers confirms that simply listening to soothing music results in significantly lower levels of stress hormone, cortisol. A collective study by several Swedish universities showed that group singing caused

reduced symptoms. **Smartphone addiction** : Korean research found that music therapy is helpful in overcoming this condition. **Muscle tension dysphonia** : Even tuneless humming sounds like 'um-hum' can have a measurable therapeutic effect on individuals that have lost their voices due to overuse. **Pain** : Just listening to harp music for 20 minutes decreased anxiety, lowered blood pressure and relieved pain in a group of patients with short-term pain participating in a University of Central Florida study in Orlando. **Alzheimer's Disease** : Researchers at Florida's Miami School of Medicine found that a group of patients that participated in music therapy for four weeks, experienced increased levels of the calming brain chemical melatonin. **How it works** : According to Dr. Madan Kataria of Mumbai, 'humming or

believes that it is magical what the right type of music can do to the brain stem to free up our consciousness. **Group singing** : has become increasingly popular, especially following the hit TV show 'Glee'. The recent data from Montreal's McGill University shows that types of music tend to have specific effects; for example, blues slows heart rate and calms an anxious person, rock and punk can boost energy, and reggae can help control anger. On 'spiritual music', Alexander opines: 'the sound of music is absolutely crucial in launching us into transcendental awareness. For the true, deep seeker, sound and vibration and the memory of music can serve as a powerful engine to help direct us in the spiritual realms'. Researcher Beckman believes that 'the combination of yoga, meditation and sound therapy helps to release energetic blocks, reinstating the natural sense of balance and harmony to the body.'

*'The simple chanting of the sound 'om' or 'aum', in addition to instilling calmness and relaxation, causes the release of melatonin and nitric oxide.*

**SOCIETY**

# Care of Currency



**Capt Purushottam Sharma (Retd)**

We often come across bridegrooms and some 'important personalities' also loaded with garlands made of currency notes. Obviously, this is the misuse of currency which is primarily meant for conducting our routine transactions. It is nothing but a 'false pride' and a 'cheap pomp' which emerge either in offering or in accepting such currency note-garlands of varieties of hues with different denominations.

The currency notes used in making garlands are always new which are not normally found in plenty in day-to-day circulation. Vendors, however, somehow manage to get new currency notes and prepare garlands which they sell at exorbitant rates. New currency notes are pricked, pierced and twisted in the process of making garlands thus causing reduction in their 'life span'. The damage done to the currency notes by thread-piercing, staple-pricks and unpleasant folds amounts to mutilation. After a currency note is removed from the garland, it carries on it the 'pellets' of staples which have to be removed before putting it in circulation. These pricks leave behind 'scars' and 'holes' and the poor currency note is permanently disfigured and damaged.

A garland made of currency notes cannot fetch the amount of elation and joy which one derives from that made of natural flowers, imagine and roses. Such a garland is elating to the eyes and throws flood of fragrance around and arouses all the admiration for the Mother Nature and the owner of the Universe.

We invariably offer natural flowers

and their garlands to the Gods and Goddesses in our daily worship. If Gods and Goddesses are made to propitiate with natural flowers and their garlands then why not human beings also?

A true and trustworthy friend or a relative will neither offer nor accept such fake garlands of currency notes for such offers smack of material motive and not genuine love, affection and regards that the mutual ties demand. Surely their warm-heartedness will be more profound if they

**There will be huge saving in costs of paper, printing, minting and transportation to required destinations.**

make use of natural flowers full of rich fragrance.

We also find some of the users keeping and taking out currency notes looking like wicks with many awkward folds which is also one of the reasons for reducing the life-span of currency notes.

Some currency notes are found smudged by the betel sellers and betel chewers which give an irksome look. Some people use blank spaces of currency notes for writing cell numbers, names and even addresses.

We ought to handle the currency with all humility and due reverence for

we call it Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth who is also the Lord Vishnu's consort. So we cannot afford to incur Their displeasure by maltreating or mishandling the currency.

In this age of enlightenment and fast move towards Golden Age which the Global Family aspires for, it is not worthwhile to let grow such unhealthy practices of offering or accepting garlands made of currency notes in the society wherein there are countless millions of people in appalling condition whose basic needs are not being met.

If a bridegroom is extended the offer of currency-notes-garlands to make him look majestic and captivating why a bride is denied this offer? Is it not unfair to her and detrimental to the cause of women empowerment?

Such a practice of using garlands made of currency notes may be a temptation of a 'select group' but it does not find favour with the wise people. It is embarrassing to those who can ill-afford such a practice. It is a teasing to the poor.

Currency should be handled meticulously, kept and stored in wallets of appropriate size, its piercing, pricking and twisting avoided so that its life span is preserved to the maximum extent. The country will be economically benefitted if the currency is handled with care to last longer. There will be huge saving in costs of paper, printing, minting and transportation to required destinations.

People must stop use of currency notes in making garlands in the interest of saving our national resources. Government of India and Reserve Bank of India should also take necessary steps to implement the relevant provisions of law. If required, law prohibiting misuse of currency should be legislated.