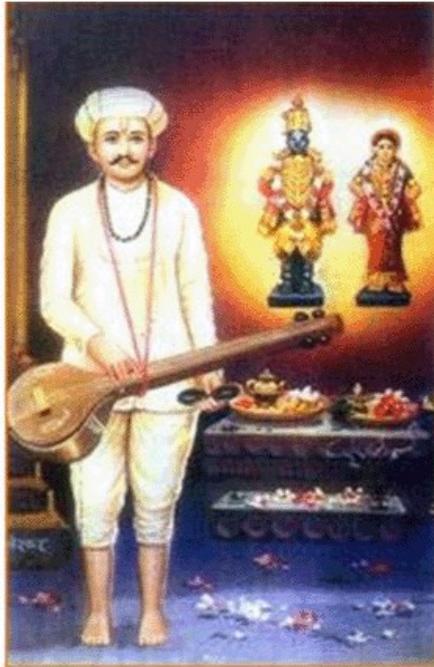




## [Glory of Bharath](#) » Santh Darsan

### Sri Sena Nhavi



One of the Sants belonging to the Varkari Sampradaya or the movement of Varkari is Sant Sena Nhavi. Varkaris worship Vittoba or Vittal, the presiding deity of Pandharpur, regarded as a form of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu. As per the Varkari movement, a duty based approach towards life is enjoined on the Varkaris. The emphasis is on moral behavior, strict avoidance of alcohol and tobacco, a vegetarian diet, fasting on Ekadasi day, brahmacharya (celibacy) during bachelorhood, equality and humanity for all, eschewing discrimination based on caste or wealth, daily reading of holy books and Haripath (of Sant Jnanesheshwar) by all varkaris and performing regular Bhajan and Kirtan. Every year Varkaris walk hundreds of miles to the holy town of Pandharpur gathering there on the Aashada Ekadasi Day. Varkaris making the pilgrimage to Pandharpur carry the Palkhis or Palanquins of the Sants from the places of their Samadhi.

Sena Nhavi was a barber by profession who was in the royal services of a Mohammedan King. Very pious and God loving, he was obsessed with Lord Vittala, fondly revered as Panduranga or Vittoba. He used to get up early in the morning, perform his ablutions and only after doing pooja to Lord Vittala would commence his daily occupation and other chores. Sena used to visit the palace and perform his duty whenever called upon by the King. Sena Nhavi was a disciple of Swami Ramananda. He completely engaged himself in the devotional service of Vittala without much attachment to his family.

Once seeing a group of Varkaris on their way to Pandharpur, Sena Nhavi invited them to his house. The Varkaris trooped in him and started performing Bhajan and Kirtan in his house. Sena also joined them merrily and started dancing with great frenzy. He was so immersed in the divine act that he totally forgot to go to the King's Palace to perform his daily duty. Some of the courtiers who were jealous of Sena complained to the King that Sena has not turned up for his duty at the Palace engaged as he is, in devotion to Krishna. The King on hearing this got furious and ordered his guards to arrest Sena Nhavi and bring him to the Court immediately.

At the same time, Vittala, the all pervading, omnipotent and omnipresent God, took the form of Sena Nhavi and reached the King's Palace, simply overcome by sheer mercy to protect His devotee. Upon seeing (Vittala, in the guise of) Sena Nhavi, the King became sober and ordered him to carry on with his daily duty. Vittala in the form of Sena Nhavi promptly performed all the services required of a Barber, to the King. The King somehow felt something pleasantly inexplicable, mesmerized as he was by the services of Sena Nhavi. While the King was lost in a trance and continued to feel thrilled as if he was in heaven, Vittala miraculously disappeared from the scene. But the King had still not come out completely from the blissful feeling thanks to the miraculous touch of Vittala. Enjoying the feeling, the King reached his court.

Almost at the same time the guards brought the hand cuffed Sena Nhavi and produced him before the King. Seeing Sena Nhavi - who had only moments ago given him the greatest experience - in fetters, the King immediately ordered the guards to release him. He was still under the impact of Vittala and embraced Sena Nhavi and expressed his deep gratitude to him. But Sena, oblivious to the divine leela of Vittala, promptly requested for pardon as he could not come on time for his duty. The King wondered why at all was there a need to pardon him as he had come to the palace and performed his duty in an exemplary manner. He even declared that the day's service was much better than any of the earlier days! Sena Nhavi then realized that it was none other than Lord Vittala Himself who had come to protect him in the garb of a barber. He promptly confessed that he could not make it to the palace that morning as he was immersed in the devotion of Vittala forgetting his imperial duty and informed the King that it was Lord Vittala who had come.

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The King repented for ordering his guards to hand cuff Sena and realizing the true Bhakti of Sena Nahavi, fell at his feet and asked him for pardon. Sena Nhavi then told that the King was more blessed than him since he was physically touched and stroked by the Lord. And he was overwhelmed with emotion as it was he who had made Vittala take the form of a Barber. Later the enraptured Sena Nhavi left the palace, shifted to Phandarpur with his family and did the job of a Barber to all the Varkaris.

