

# Shri Sai Satcharitra

## Chapters XVI & XVII

These two Chapters relate the story of a rich gentleman, who wanted Brahma-Jnana, quickly from Sai Baba.

### Preliminary

The last Chapter described how Mr. Cholkar's vow of small offering was completed and accepted. In that story, Sai Baba showed that He would accept with appreciation any small thing offered with love and devotion, but if the same thing was offered with pride and haughtiness, He would reject it. Being Himself full of Sat-Chit-Anand (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) He did not care much for more outward formalities but if an offering was made in meek and humble spirit, the same was welcome and He accepted it with pleasure and avidity. In fact there is no person more liberal and benevolent than a Sadguru, like Sai Baba. He cannot be compared to the Chintamani jewel (the Philosopher's stone which satisfies desires), the Kalpataru (the Celestial Tree which fulfills our desires) or the the Kamadhenu (the Celestial Cow which yields what we desire), for they give us only what we desire; but the Sadguru gives us the most precious thing that is inconceivable and inscrutable (The reality). Now let us hear, how Sai Baba disposed of a rich man, who came to Him and implored Him to give him Brahma-Jnana.

These was a rich gentleman (unfortunately his name and whereabouts are not mentioned) who was very prosperous in his life. He had amassed a large quantity of wealth, houses, field and lands, and had many servants and dependents. When Baba's fame reached his ears, he said to a friend of his, that he was not in want of anything, and so he would go to Shirdi and ask Baba to give him Brahma-Jnana which, if he got, would certainly make him more happy. His friend dissuaded him, saying, "it is not easy to know Brahman, and especially so for an avaricious man like you, who is always engrossed in wealth, wife and children. Who will, in your quest of Brahma-Jnana, satisfy you that won't give away even a pice in charity?"

Not minding his friend's advice, the fellow engaged a return-journey tanga and came to Shirdi. He went to the Masjid, saw Sai Baba, fell at His Feet and said, "Baba, hearing that You show the Brahman to all who come over here without any delay, I have come here all the way from my distant place. I am much fatigued by the journey and if I get the Brahman from You, my troubles will be well-paid and rewarded." Baba then replied, "Oh, My dear friend, do not be anxious, I shall immediately show you the Brahman; all My dealings are in cash and never on credit. So many people come to Me, and ask for wealth, health, power, honour, position, cure of diseases and other temporal matters. Rare is the person, who comes here to Me and asks for Brahma-Jnana. There is no dearth of persons asking for wordly things, but as persons interested in spiritual matters are very rare, I think it a lucky and auspicious moment, when persons like you come and press Me for Brahma-Jnana. So I show to you with pleasure, the Brahman with all its accompaniments and complications."

Saying this, Baba started to show him the Brahman. He made him sit there and engaged him in some other talk or affair and thus made him forget his question for the time being. Then He called a boy and told him to go to one Nandu Marwari, and get from him a hand-loan of Rs. five. The boy left and returned immediately, saying that Nandu was

absent and his house was locked. Then Baba asked him to go to Bala grocer and get from him, the said loan. This time also, the boy was unsuccessful. This experiment was repeated again twice or thrice, with the same result.

Sai Baba was, as we know, the living and moving Brahman Incarnate. Then, some one may ask - "Why did He want the paltry sum of five rupees, and why did He try hard to get it on loan? Really He did not want that sum at all. He must have been fully knowing, that Nandu and Bala were absent, and he seems to have adopted this procedure as a test for the seeker of Brahman. That gentleman had a roll or bundle of currency notes in his pocket, and if he was really earnest, he would not have sat quiet and be a mere onlooker, when Baba was frantically trying to get a paltry sum of Rs. five. He knew that Baba would keep His word and repay the debt, and that the sum wanted was insignificant. Still he could not make up his mind and advance the sum. Such a man wanted from Baba the greatest thing in the world, viz., the Brahma-Jnana! Any other man, who really loved Baba, would have at once given Rs. five, instead of being a mere onlooker. It was otherwise with this man. He advanced no money nor did he sit silent, but began to be impatient, as he was in a haste to return and implored Baba saying- "Oh Baba, please show me the Brahman soon." Baba replied - "Oh my dear friend, did you not understand all the procedure that I went through, sitting in this place, for enabling you to see the Brahman? It is, in short this. For seeing Brahman one has to give five things, i.e. surrender five things viz. (1) Five Pranas (vital forces), (2) Five senses (five of action and five of perception), (3) mind, (4) intellect and (5) ego. This path of Brahma-Jnana of self-realization is 'as hard as to tread on the edge of a razor'.

Sai Baba then gave rather a long discourse on the subject, the purport of which is given below

### **Qualifications for Brahma-Jnana or Self-Realization**

All persons do not see or realize the Brahman in their life-time. Certain qualifications are absolutely necessary. (1) Mumuksha or intense desire to get free. He, who thinks that he is bound and that he should get free from bondage and works earnestly and resolutely to that end; and who does not care for any other things, is qualified for the spiritual life. (2) Virakti or a feeling of disgust with the things of this world and the next. Unless a man feels disgusted with the things, emoluments and honors, which his action would bring in this world and the next, he has no right to enter into the spiritual realm. (3) Antarmukhata (introversion). Our senses have been created by God with a tendency to move outward and so, man always looks outside himself and not inside. He who wants self-realization and immortal life, must turn his gaze inwards, and look to his inner Self. (4) Catharsis from (Purging away of) sins. Unless a man has turned away from wickedness, and stopped from doing wrong, and has entirely composed himself and unless his mind is at rest, he cannot gain self-realization, even by means of knowledge. (5) Right Conduct. Unless, a man leads a life of truth, penance and insight, a life of celibacy, he cannot get God-realization. (6) Preferring Shreyas, (the Good) to Preyas (the Pleasant). There are two sorts of things viz., the Good and the Pleasant; the former deals with spiritual affairs, and the latter with mundane matters. Both these approach man for acceptance. He has to think and choose one of them. The wise man prefers the Good to the Pleasant; but the unwise, through greed and attachment, chooses the Pleasant. (7) Control of the mind and the senses. The body is the chariot and the Self is its master; intellect is the charioteer and the mind is the reins; the senses are the horses and sense-objects their paths. He who has no understanding and whose mind is unrestrained, his senses unmanageable like the

vicious horses of a charioteer, does not reach his destination (get realization), but goes through the round of births and deaths; but he who has understanding and whose mind is restrained, his senses being under control, like the good horse of a charioteer, reaches that place, i.e., the state of self-realization, when he is not born again. The man, who has understanding as his charioteer (guide) and is able to rein his mind, reaches the end of the journey, which is the supreme abode of the all-pervading, Vishnu (lord). (8) Purification of the mind. Unless a man discharges satisfactorily and disinterestedly the duties of his station in life, his mind will not be purified and, unless his mind is purified, he cannot get self-realization. It is only in the purified mind that Viveka (discrimination between the Unreal and the Real), and Vairagya (Non-attachment to the unreal) crop up and lead on the self-realization. Unless egoism is dropped, avarice got rid of, and the mind made desireless (pure), self-realization is not possible. The idea that 'I am the body' is a great delusion, and attachment to this idea is the cause of bondage. Leave off this idea and attachment therefore, if you want to get to the Self-realization. (9) The necessity of a Guru. The knowledge of the self is so subtle and mystic, that no one could, by his own individual effort ever hope to attain it. So the help of another person-Teacher, who has himself got self-realization is absolutely necessary. What others cannot give with great labour and pains, can be easily gained with the help of such a Teacher; for he has walked on the path himself and can easily take the disciple, step by step on the ladder of spiritual progress. (10) and lastly the Lord's Grace is the most essential thing. When the Lord is pleased with any body, He gives him Viveka and Vairagya; and takes him safe beyond the ocean of mundane existence, "The Self cannot be gained by the study of Vedas, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. He, whom the Self chooses, by him It is gained. To him the Self reveals Its nature", says the Katha Upanishad.

After the dissertation was over, Baba turned to the gentleman and said - "Well sir, there is in your pocket the Brahma (or Mammon) in the form of fifty-times five(Rs.250/-) rupees; please take that out." The gentleman took out from his pocket the bundle of currency notes, and to his great surprise found, on counting them, that there were 25 notes of 10 rupees each, Seeing this omniscience of Baba, he was moved and fell at Baba's Feet and craved for His blessings. Then Baba said to him, "Roll up your bundle of Brahma viz. Currency notes. Unless you get rid completely of your avarice or greed, you will not get the real Brahma. How can be, whose mind is engrossed in wealth, progeny and prosperity, expect to know the Brahma, without removing away his attachment for the same? The illusion of attachment or the love for money is a deep eddy (whirlpool) of pain full of crocodiles in the form of conceit and jealousy. He, who is desireless, can alone cross this whirlpool. Greed and Brahma are as poles asunder, they are eternally opposed to each other. Where there is greed, there is no room for thought or meditation of the Brahma. Then how can a greedy man get dispassion and salvation? For a greedy man there is no peace, neither contentment, nor certainty (steadiness). If there be even a little trace of greed in mind, all the Sadhanas (spiritual endeavors) are of no avail. Even the knowledge of a well-read man, who is not free from the desire of the fruit or reward of his actions, and who has got no disgust for the same, is useless and can't help him in getting self-realization. The teachings of a Guru are of no use to a man, who is full of egoism, and who always thinks about the sense-objects. Purification of mind is absolutely necessary; without it, all our spiritual endeavors are nothing, but useless show and pomp. It is, therefore, better for one to take only what he can digest and assimilate. My treasury is full, and I can give anyone, what he wants, but I have to see whether he is qualified to receive what I give. If you listen to Me carefully, you will be certainly benefited. Sitting in this Masjid, I never speak any untruth."

When a guest is invited to a house, all the members of the household and other friends and relations that happen to be present, are entertained, along with the guest. So all those that were present in the Masjid at this time, could partake of the spiritual feast, that was served by Baba for the rich gentleman. After getting Baba's blessings, one and all, including the gentleman left the place quite happy and contented.

### **Special Characteristic of Baba**

There are many Saints, who leaving their houses, stay in forest, caves or hermitages and remaining in solitude, try to get liberation or salvation for themselves. They do not care for other people, and are always self-absorbed. Sai Baba was not of such a type. He had no home, no wife, no progeny, nor any relations, near or distant. Still, He lived in the world (society). He begged His bread from four or five houses, always lived at the foot of the (Neem) tree, carried on worldly dealings, and taught all the people how to act. and behave in this world. Rare are the Sadhus and Saints who, after attaining God-vision, strive for the welfare of the people. Sai Baba was the foremost of these and, therefore, says Hemadpant.

"Blessed is the country, blessed is the family, and blessed are the chaste parents where This extraordinary, transcendent, precious and pure jewel (Sai Baba) was born."

***Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all***

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## **Shri Sai Satcharitra**

### **Chapters XVII & XIX**

#### **How Hemadpant was Accepted and Blessed**

Stories of Mr. Sathe and Mrs. Deshmukh - Encouraging Good Thoughts to Fruition-Variety in Upadesh-Teachings Readings Slander, and Remuneration for Labour.

In the last two Chapters, Hemadpant described, how a rich gentleman, aspiring for quick Brahma-Jnana, was treated by Baba, and now in these two Chapters, he describes how Hemadpant, himself, was accepted and blessed by Baba, how Baba encouraged good thoughts and fructified them; and gives His teachings regarding Self-improvement, slander and remuneration for labour.

#### **Preliminary**

It is a well-known fact, that the Sadguru looks first to the qualifications of his disciples; and then gives them suitable instructions, without unsettling their minds in the least, and leads them on towards the goal of self-realization. In this respect, some say that what the Sadguru teaches or instructs, should not be divulged to others. They think that their instructions, become useless, if they are published. This view is not correct. The Sadguru is like a monsoon cloud. He pours down profusely, i.e., scatters widely his nectar-like teachings. These, we should enjoy and assimilate to our heart's content; and then serve

others with them, without any reserve. This rule should apply, not only to what he teaches in our waking state, but to the visions he gives us in our dreams. To quote an instance: Budhakowshik Rishi composed his celebrated Ram-raksha stotra, which he had seen in his dream.

Like a loving mother forcing bitter but wholesome medicines down the throats of her children for the sake of their health, Sai Baba imparted spiritual instructions to His devotees. His method was not veiled or secret, but quite open. The devotees who followed His instructions got their object. Sad-gurus like Sai Baba open our (eyes of the) intellect and show us the divine beauties of the Self, and fulfill our tender longings of devotion. When this is done, our desire for sense-objects vanishes, twin fruits of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion or non-attachment) come to our hands; and knowledge sprouts up even in the sleep. All this we get, when we come in contact with Saints (Sad-guru), serve them and secure their love. The Lord, who fulfills the desires of His devotees, comes to our aid, removes our troubles and sufferings, and makes us happy. This progress or development is entirely due to the help of the Sadguru, who is regarded as the Lord Himself. Therefore, we should always be after the Sad-guru, hear His stories, fall at His Feet and serve Him. Now we come to our main story.

### **Mr. Sathe**

There was a gentleman named Mr. Sathe, who had attained some publicity many year ago during Crowford Regime, which was put down by Lord Reay, the then Governor of Bombay. He suffered severe losses in trade. Other adverse circumstances gave him much trouble, and made him sad and dejected. Being restless, he thought of leaving home; and going out to a distant place. Man does not generally think of God, but when difficulties and calamities overtake him, he turns to Him and prays for relief. If his evil actions have come to an end, God arranges his meeting with a Saint, who gives him proper directions regarding his welfare. Mr. Sathe had similar experience. His friends advised him to go to Shirdi, where so many people were flocking to get Sai Baba's darshan, for getting peace of mind and the satisfaction of their wants. He liked the idea, and at once came to Shirdi in 1917. Seeing Baba's Form, which was like Eternal Brahma, Self-luminous, Spotless and Pure, his mind lost its restlessness and became calm and composed. He thought, that it was the accumulation of merits in his former births, that brought him to the Holy Feet of Baba. He was a man of strong will. He at once started to make a parayana (study) of Guru-charitra. When the reading was finished in the saptaha (seven days), Baba gave him a vision that night. It was to this effect: Baba with Guru-charitra in His hand was explaining its contents to Mr. Sathe, who was sitting in front and listening carefully. When he woke up, he remembered the dream and felt very happy. He thought that it was extremely kind of Baba. Who awakens souls like his that are snoring in ignorance, and makes them taste the nectar of Guru-charitra. Next day, he informed Kakasaheb Dixit of this vision, and requested him to consult Sai Baba regarding its meaning or significance -- whether one saptah (week's) reading was sufficient or whether he should begin again. Kakasaheb Dixit, when got a suitable opportunity, asked Baba - "Deva (Oh God), what did you suggest to Mr. Sathe by this vision? Whether he should stop or continue the saptaha? He is a simple devotee, his desire should be fulfilled and the vision explained to him, and he should be blessed." Then Baba replied - "He should make one more saptah of the book; if the work be studied carefully, the devotee will become pure and will be benefited, the Lord will be pleased and will rescue him from the bondage of the mundane existence."

At this time, Hemadpant was present there. He was shampooing Baba's Legs. When he heard Baba's words, he thought in his mind as follows - "What! Mr. Sathe read for a week only and got a reward; and I am reading it for forty years with no result! His seven days' stay here becomes fruitful while my seven years' stay (1910 to m1917) goes for nothing. Like a Chatak bird I am ever waiting for the Merciful Cloud (Baba) to pour its nectar on me; and bless me with His instructions." No sooner did this thought cross his mind, Baba knew it then and there. It was the experience of the Bhaktas that Baba read and understood all their thoughts, and that He suppressed the evil thoughts and encouraged the good ones. Reading Hemadpant's mind Baba at once asked him to get up, go to Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande), get from him Rs. 15/- as Dakshina, sit and chitchat with him for a while and then return. Mercy dawned in Baba's mind, and so he issued this order. And who could disobey Baba's order?

Hemadpant immediately left the Masjid and came to Shama's house. He had just bathed, and was wearing a dhotar. He came out and asked Hemadpant - "How is it that you are here now? It seems that you have come from the Masjid. Why do you look restless and dejected? Why are you alone? Please sit and rest, while I shall just do my worship and return: in the meanwhile you please take pan-vida (leaves and betel nuts etc.) let us then have a pleasant chat." After saying his, he went inside and Hemadpant sat alone in the front varandah. He saw in the window a wellknown Marathi book named 'Nath-Bhagwat.' This is a commentary by the Saint Ekanath, on the eleventh Skandha (chapter) of the bigger Sanskrit work, the Bhagwat. At the suggestion or recommendation of Sai Baba, Messrs. Bapusaheb Jog and Kakasaheb Dixit read daily in Shirdi, BhagwadGeeta with its Marathi commentary named Bhawartha-Deepika or Jnaneshwari (A dialogue between Krishna and His friend devotee Arjuna) and Nath Bhagwat (A dialogue between Krishna and His servant devotee Uddhava) and also Ekanath's othe big work, viz. Bhawartha Ramayana. When devotees came to Baba and asked Him certain questions. He sometimes answered them in part, and asked them to go and listen to the readings of the above-mentioned works, which are the main treatises of Bhagwat Dharma. When the devotes went and listened, they got full and satisfactory replies to their questions. Hemadpant also used to read daily some portions of the book Nath-Bhagwat.

That day, he did not complete the daily portion of his reading, but had left it unfinished in order to accompany certain devotees, who were going to the Masjid. When he took up the book from Shama's window and casually opened, it, he found, to his surprise, that the unfinished portion turned up. He thought that Baba sent him very kindly to Shama's house for enabling him to complete his daily reading. So he went throught the unfinished portion and completed it. As soon as this was over, Shama, after doing his worship came out, and the following conversation took place between them.

Hemadpant :- I have come with a message from Baba. He has asked me to return with Rs. 15/- as Dakshina from you, also to sit with you for a while and have a pleasant chitchat and then return to the Masjid with you.

Shama (with surprise):- I have no money to give. Take my 15 Namaskaras (bows) in lieu of rupees as Dakshina, to Baba.

Hemadpant:- Alright, your Namaskaras are accepted. Now let us have some chitchat. tell me some stories and Leelas of Baba, which will destroy our sins.

Shama:- Then sit here for a while. Wonderful is the sport (Leela) of this God (Baba). You know it already. I am a village rustic, while you are an enlightened citizen. You have

seen some more Leelas since your coming here. How should I describe them before you? Well, take these leaves, betel nut and chunam and eat the pan-vida; while I go in, dress myself and come out.

In a few minutes Shama come out and sat talking with Hemadpant. He said - "The Leela of this God (Baba) is inscrutable; there is no end to His Leelas. Who can see them? He plays or sports with His Leelas, still He is outside of (unaffected by) them. What do we rustics know? Why does not Baba Himself tell stories? Why does He send learned men like you to fools like me? His ways are inconceivable. I can only say, that they are not human." With this preface Shama added, - "I now remember a story, which I shall relate to you. I know it personally. As a devotee is resolute and determined, so is Baba's immediate response. Sometimes Baba puts the devotees to severe test; and then gives them 'Upadesh' (instructions).

As soon as Hemadpant heard the word 'Upadesh', a flash of lightning crossed, through his mind. He at once remembered the story of Mr. Sathe's Guru-charitra reading and thought that Baba might have sent him to Shama, in order to give peace to his restless mind. However, he curbed this feeling, and began to listen to Shama's stories. They all showed how kind and affectionate Baba was to His devotees. Hemadpant began to feel a sort of joy while hearing them. Then Shama began to tell the following story.

### **Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh**

There was an old woman by name Radhabai, She was the mother of one Khashaba Deshmukh. Hearing Baba's fame, she came to Shirdi with the people of Sangamner. She took Baba's darshan and was much satisfied. She loved Baba intimately and resolved in her mind, that She should accept Baba as her Guru, and take some Upadesh from Him. She knew nothing else. She determined to fast herself unto death, so long as Baba did not accept her, and give her any Upadesh or Mantra. She stayed in her lodging and left off taking any food or water for three days. I was frightened by this ordeal of the old woman, and interceded with Baba on her behalf. I said, "Deva, what is this You have started? You drag so many persons here. You know that old lady. She is very obstinate and depends on You entirely, She has resolved to fast unto death, if You don't accept and instruct her. If any thing worse happens, people will blame You, and say that Baba did not instruct her, and consequently she met her death. So take some mercy on her, bless her and instruct her." On seeing her determination, Baba sent for her, changed the turn of her mind by addressing her as follows:-

"Oh mother, why are you subjecting yourself to unnecessary tortures and hastening your death? You are really My Mother and I am your child. Take pity on Me and hear Me through. I tell you My own story, which if you listen carefully, will do you good. I had a Guru. He was a great Saint and most merciful. I served him long, very long; still he would not blow any Mantra into My ears. I had a keen desire, never to leave him but to stay with and serve him; and at all costs receive some instructions from him. But he had his own way. He first got my head shaved and asked Me two pice as Dakshina. I gave the same at once. If you say that as My Guru was perfect, why should he ask for money and how should he be called desireless? I replied plainly that he never cared for coins. What had he to do with them? His two pice were (1) Firm Faith and (2) Patience or perseverance. I gave these two pice or things to him, and he was pleased.



"I resorted to My Guru for 12 years. He brought Me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He was full of love nay, he was love incarnate. How can I describe it? He loved Me most. Rare is a Guru like him. When I looked at him, he seemed as if he was in deep meditation, and then we both were filled with Bliss. Night and day, I gazed at him with no thought of hunger and thirst. Without him, I felt restless. I had no other object to meditate, nor any other thing than My Guru to attend. He was My sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. This is one pice Dakshina. Saburi (Patience or perseverance) is the other pice. I waited patiently and very long on My Guru and served him. This Saburi will ferry you across the sea of this mundane existence. Saburi is manliness in man, it removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways, and casts aside all fear, and ultimately gives you success. Saburi is the mine of virtues, consort of good thought. Nishtha (Faith) and Saburi (Patience) are like twin sisters, loving each other very intimately."

"My Guru never expected any other thing from Me. He never neglected Me, but protected Me at all times. I lived with him, and was sometimes away from him; still I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected Me by his glance, just as the tortoise feeds her young ones, whether they are near her or away from her on the other side of the river bank, by her loving looks. Oh mother, My Guru never taught Me any Mantra, then how shall I blow any Mantra in your ears? Just remember that Guru's tortoise-like loving glance gives us happiness. Do not try to get Mantra or Upadesh from anybody. Make Me the sole object of your thoughts and actions; and you will, no doubt, attain Paramartha (the spiritual goal of life). Look at Me whole-heartedly, and I in turn look at you similarly. Sitting in this Masjid, I speak the truth, nothing but the truth. No Sadhanas, nor proficiency in the six Shastras, are necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully, that Guru is the sole Actor or Doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks him to be Hari, Hara and Brahma (Trimurti) Incarnate."

Instructed in this way, the old lady was convinced; she bowed to Baba and gave up her fast.

Hearing this story carefully and attentively, and marking its significance and appropriateness, Hemadpant was most agreeably surprised. Seeing this wonderful Leela of Baba, he was moved from top to toe, he was overflowing with joy, his throat was choked, and he was not able to utter a single word. Shama, on seeing him in this condition asked him, - "What is the matter with you, why are you silent? How many innumerable Leelas of Baba shall I describe!"

Just at that time the bell in the Masjid began to ring, proclaiming that the noon-worship and Arati ceremony had begun. Therefore, Shama and Hemadpant hurried to the Masjid. Bapusaheb Jog had just started the worship. Women were up in the Masjid, and men were standing below in the open courtyard and they were all loudly singing the Arati in chorus to the accompaniment of drums. Shama went up, pulling Hemadpant with him. He sat to the right and Hemadpant in front of Baba. On seeing them, Baba asked Hemadpant to give the Dakshina brought from Shama. He replied that Shama gave Namaskaras in lieu of Rupees and that he was there in person. Baba said, "Alright, now let Me know whether you both had a chitchat, and if so, tell Me all that you talked about." Not minding the sounds of the bell, the drum and the chorus songs, Hemadpant was eager to tell what they had talked and started to narrate it. Baba was also anxious to hear, and so He left the bolster and leaned forward. Hemadpant said all that they talked about was



very pleasant, and that specially the story of the old lady was most wonderful and that on hearing it, he thought that His Leela was inexplicable, and under the guise of that story, He really blessed him. Baba then said - "Wonderful is the story. How were you blessed? I would like to know everything in detail from you, so tell Me all about it." Then Hemadpant related in full the story which he had heard a little while before, and which had made a lasting impression on his mind. Hearing this Baba was much pleased and asked him - "Did the story strike you and did you catch its significance?" He replied - "Yes, Baba the restlessness of my mind has vanished and I have got true peace and rest, and come to know the true path."

Then Baba spoke as follows:- "My method is quite unique. Remember well, this one story, and it will be very useful. To get the knowledge (realization) of the Self, Dhyana (meditation) is necessary. If you practice it continuously, the Vrittis (thoughts) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord, Who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. Meditate always on My formless nature, which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate on My Form from top to toe as you see here night and day. As you go on doing this, your Vrittis will concentrate on one point and the distinction between the Dhyata (meditator), Dhyana (act of meditation), Dhyeya (this meditated upon) will be lost and the meditator will be one with the Consciousness and be merged in the Brahman. The (mother) tortoise is on one bank of the river, and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk, nor warmth to them. Her mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing, but remember (meditate upon) their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a down-pour of nectar, the only source of sustenance and happiness. Similar is the relation, between the Guru and disciples."

When Baba uttered these last words, the chorus of the Arati songs stopped and all cried out loudly in one voice: "Victory be to our Sadguru Sai Maharaj, Who is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss." Dear readers, let us imagine, that we are at this time, standing amongst the crowd in the Masjid; and let us join them in this Jayajayakar.

After the Arati ceremony was over, Prasad was distributed. Bapusaheb Jog advanced as usual, and after saluting Baba, gave into His hand a handful of sugar-candy. Baba pushed all this quantity into the hands of Hemadpant and said to him, "If you take this story to heart and remember it well, your state will be sweet as the sugar-candy, all your desires will be fulfilled and you will be happy." Hemadpant bowed before Baba and implored, "Do favour me like this, bless and protect me always." Baba replied - "Hear this story, meditate on it and assimilate its spirit. Then you will always remember and meditate on the Lord, Who will manifest Himself to you."

Dear readers! Hemadpant got Prasad of sugar-candy then; and we now get the Prasad of sugar-candy or nectar of this story. Let us drink it to our heart's content, meditate on it, and assimilate it, and be strong and happy by Baba's grace. Amen!

Towards the end of the 19th Chapter Hemadpant had dealt with some other matters which are given below.

### **Baba's Advice Regarding our Behaviour**

The following words of Baba are general and invaluable. If they are kept in mind and acted upon, they will always do you good. "Unless there is some relationship or

connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them, with due respect. Shri Hari (God) will be certainly pleased, if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and your verandah to strangers for sitting and resting. If anybody wants any money from you, and you are not inclined to give, do not give, but do not bark at him, like a dog. Let anybody speak hundreds of things against you, do not resent by giving any bitter reply. If you always tolerate such things, you will certainly be happy. Let the world go topsy-turvy, you remain where you are. Standing or staying in your own place, look on calmly at the show of all things passing before you. Demolish the wall of difference that separates you from Me; and then the road for our meeting will be clear and open. The sense of differentiation, as I and thou, is the barrier that keeps away the disciple from his Master, and unless that is destroyed the state of union or atonement is not possible, "Allah Malik" i.e. God is the sole Proprietor, nobody else is our Protector. His method of work is extra-ordinary, invaluable, and inscrutable. His will will be done and He will show us the way, and satisfy our heart's desires. It is on account of Rinaubandh (former relationship) that we have come together, let us love and serve each other and be happy. He, who attain the supreme goal of life, is immortal and happy; all others merely exist, i.e., live so long as they breathe".

### **Encouraging Good Thoughts of Fruition**

It is interesting to note how Sai Baba encouraged good thoughts. You have to surrender yourself completely to Him with love, and devotion, and then you will see how, He helps you, off and on, in so many things. Some Saint has said, that when you get a good thought, immediately after awakening from sleep, and if you develop the same afterwards during the day, your intellect will be unfolded and your mind will attain calmness. Hemadpant wanted to try this. On one Wednesday night before going to bed, he thought - "To-morrow is Thursday - an auspicious day and the place, viz. Shirdi, is so holy; so let me pass the whole day in remembering and chanting the Rama-nama, and then he slept. Next morning when he got up he remembered without any effort the name of Rama and was much pleased. He then, after finishing his morning duties, went to see Baba with flowers. When he left Dixit's Wada, and was just passing Booty's Wada (present Samadhi-mandir) he heard a beautiful song that was being sung nicely by one Aurangabadkar, in the Masjid before Baba. The song was Guru - kripanjani payo mere bhai" etc. by Ekanath, in which he says that he got collyrium in the form of Guru's grace which opened his vision and made him see Rama, in and out, in sleep, dream, and waking state and everywhere. There were so many songs; and why was this song particularly chosen by Aurangabadkar, a devotee of Baba? Is this not a curious coincidence arranged by Baba to feed the determination of Hemadpant to sing unceasingly Rama-nama, during the day?

All Saints agree on and lay stress upon the efficacy of uttering Rama's (God's) name, in fulfilling the ambitions of the Bhaktas and in protecting and saving them from all calamities.

### **Variety in Upadesh -- Slanderer Condemned**

Sai Baba required no special place, nor any special time for giving instructions. Whenever any occasion demanded, He gave them freely. Once it so happened that a Bhakta of Baba, reviled another behind his back, before other people. On leaving aside merits, he dwelt on the faults of his brother, and spoke so sarcastically, that the hearers

were disgusted. Generally, we see that people have a tendency to scandalize others, unnecessarily; and this brings on hatred and ill-will. Saints see scandal, in another light. They say that there are various ways of cleansing or removing dirt, viz. by means of earth, water and soap etc., but a scandal-monger has got a way of his own. He removes the dirt (faults) of others by his tongue; so in a way of obliges the person, whom he reviles and for this he is to be thanked. Sai Baba had his own method of correcting the scandal-monger. He knew by his omniscience what the slanderer had done and when He met him at noon near the Lendi, Baba pointed out to him a pig that was eating filth near the fence and said to him - "Behold how, with what relish it is gorging dung. Your conduct is similar. You go on reviling your own brethren to your heart's content. After performing many deeds of merit, you are born a man, and if you act like this, will Shirdi help you in any way?" Needless to say, that the Bhakta took the lesson to his heart, and went away.

In this way Baba went on giving instructions whenever necessary. If these are borne in our minds and acted upon, the spiritual goal (realization) is not far off. There is a proverb which says - "If there be my Hari (Lord), He will feed me on my cot." This proverb is only true in respect of food and clothing, but if anyone trusting in this, sits quiet and does nothing in spiritual matters, he will be ruined. One has to exert himself to his utmost for attaining self-realization. The more he endeavours, the better for him.

Baba said that He was omnipresent, occupying land, air, country, world, light and heaven, and that He was not limited. To remove the misunderstanding of those, who thought that Baba was only His body - three cubits and a half in length, He incarnated Himself in this form and if any devotee meditated on Him day and night with complete self-surrender, he experienced complete union (without any difference) with Him like sweetness and sugar, waves and sea, eye and its luster. He, who wants to get rid of the cycle of births and deaths, should lead a righteous life, with his mind calm and composed. He should always engage himself in good actions, should do his duties and surrender himself, heart and soul to Him. He need not then be afraid of anything. He who trusts Him entirely, hears and expounds His Leelas and does not think of anything else, is sure to attain Self-realization. Baba asked many to remember His name and to surrender to Him, but to those, who wanted to know who they were ('Who am I' enquiry), He advised Shraavanam (study) and Mananam (meditation). To some, He advised remembering God's name, to others hearing His Leelas, to some worship of His Feet, to others reading and studying Adhyatma Ramayan, Jnaneshwari and other sacred scriptures. Some He made sit near His Feet, some He sent to Khandoba's temple, and some He advised the repetition of the thousands names of Vishnu and some the study of Chhandogya Upanishad and Geeta. There were no limit, nor restriction to His instructions. To some, He gave them in person. To others by visions in dreams. To one addicted to drink, He appeared in his dream, sat on his chest, pressed it and left him, after he gave a promise not to touch liquor anymore. To some, He explained some Mantras like 'Gurur Brahma' in dreams. To some devotee, who was practising Hath-Yoga, He sent word that he should leave off Hath-Yoga practices, sit quiet and wait (Saburi). It is impossible to describe all His ways and methods. In ordinary wordly dealings, He set examples by His actions, one of which is given below.

### **Remuneration for Labour**

One day at noon, Baba came near Radha-Krishna-Mai's house and said - "Bring Me a ladder." Some men brought it and set it against a house as directed by Baba. He climbed

up on the roof of Vaman Gondkar's house, passed the roof of Radha-Krishna-Mai's house and then got down from the other corner. What object Baba had, none could know. Radha-Krishna-Mai was, at that time, shivering with Malaria. It may be to drive off that fever, that He may have gone there. Immediately after getting down, Baba paid Rupees two to the persons who brought the ladder. Somebody asked Baba, why he paid so much for this. He replied that nobody should take the labour of others, in vain. The worker should be paid, his dues promptly and liberally.

*Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all*

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## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Chapter XX

Das Ganu's Problem Solved by Kaka's Maid-Servant

In this Chapter, Hemadpant describes, how Das Ganu's problem was solved by Kakasaheb Dixit's maid-servant.

#### Preliminary

Sai (Lord) was originally formless. he assumed a form for the sake of Bhaktas. With the help of the actress Maya, He played the part of the Actor in the big drama of the universe. Let us remember and visualize Shri Sai. Let us go to Shirdi, and see carefully the programmes, after the noon-Arati. After the Arati ceremony was over, Sai used to come out of the Masjid, and standing on its edge, distribute udi to the devotees with very kind and loving looks. The Bhaktas also got up with equal fervour, clasped His Feet, and standing and staring at Him, enjoyed the shower of Udi. Baba passed handfuls of Udi into the palms of the devotees and marked their foreheads with Udi with His fingers. The love He bore for them in His heart was boundless. Then He addressed the Bhaktas as follows:- "Oh Bhau, go to take your lunch; you Anna, go to your lodgings; you Bapu, enjoy your dishes". In this way He accosted each and every devotee and sent them home. Even now, you can enjoy these sights if you bring into play your imagination. You can visualize and enjoy them. Now bringing Sai before our mental vision, let us meditate on Him, from His Feet upwards to His face, and prostrating before Him humbly, lovingly and respectfully, revert to the story of this Chapter.

#### Ishavasya Upanishad

Das Ganu once started to write a Marathi commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad. Let us first give a brief idea of this Upanishad, before proceeding further. It is called a 'Mantropanishad', as it is embodied in the Mantras of the Vedic Samhita. It constitutes the last or the 40th Chapter of the Vajasaneyi Samhita (Yajurveda) and it is, therefore, called Vajasaneyi Samhitopanishad. Being embodied in Vedic Samhitas, this is regarded as superior to all other Upanishads, which occur in the Brahmanas and Aranyakas

(explanatory treatises on Mantras and rituals). Not only this, other Upanishads are considered to be commentaries on the truths mentioned briefly in the Ishavasya Upanishad. For instance, the biggest of the Upanishads, viz, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, is considered by Pandit Satwalekar to be a running commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad.

Profesor R.D. Ranade says:- "The Ishopanishad is quite a small Upanishad; and yet it contains many hints which show an extraordinarily piercing insight. Within the short compass of 18 verses, it gives a valuable mystical description of the Atman, a description of the ideal sage, who stands unruffled in the minds of temptations and sorrows; and adumbration of the doctrine of Karma-Yoga as later formulated, and finally a reconciliation of the claims of knowledge and works. The most valuable ideas, that lies at the root of the Upanishad, is that of a logical synthesis between the two opposites of knowledge; and work, which are both required according to the Upanishad to be annulled in a higher synthesis". (page 24 of the Constructive Survey of the Upanishad Philosophy). In another place he says that "The poetry of the Ishopanishad is a Commixture of moral, mystical and metaphysical (ibid, Page 41)".

From the brief description given above about this Upanishad, any one can see how difficult it is to translate this Upanishad in a vernacular language, and brief out its exact meaning. Das Ganu translated it in Marathi 'Ovi'metre, verse by verse, but as he did not comprehend the gist or essence of the Upanishad, he was not satisfied with his performance. He therefore consulted some learned men regarding his doubts and difficulties and discussed with them at great length. They did not solve them nor did they give him any rational and satisfactory explanation. So Das Ganu was a little restless over this matter.

### **SadGuru only competent and Qualified to Explain**

As we have seen, this Upanishad is the quintessence of the Vedas. It is the science of self-realization, it is the scythe or weapon which can rend asunder the bondage of life and death, and make us free. Therefore, he thought, that he who has himself attained self-realization, can only give him the true or correct interpretation of the Upanishad. When nobody could satisfy Das Ganu, he resolved to consult Sai Baba about this. When he got an opportunity to go to Shirdi, he saw Sai Baba, prostrated himself before Him, and mentioned his difficulties about the Ishavasya Upanishad and requested Him to give the correct solution. Sai Baba, blessed him and said- "You need not be anxious, there is no difficulty about the matter, the mind-servant of Kaka (Kakasaheb Dixit) will solve your doubts at Vile Parle, on your way home". The people who went present then and heard this, thought that Baba was joking and said, "How could an illiterate maid-servant solve the difficulties of this nature", but Das Ganu thought otherwise. He was sure, that whatever Baba spoke, must come true, Baba's word was the decree of the Brahma (Almighty).

### **Kaka's Maid-Servant**

On fully believing in Baba's words, he left Shirdi and came to Vile Parle (a suburb of Bombay), and stayed with Kakasaheb Dixit. There the next day, when Das Ganu was enjoying his morning nap (some say when he was engaged in worship), he heard a poor girl singing a beautiful song in clear and melodious tones. The subject matter of the song was a crimson coloured Sari, how nice it was, how fine was its embroidery, how beautiful

were its ends and borders etc. He liked the song so much that he came out, and saw that it was being sung by a young girl, the sister of Namya, who was a servant of Kakasaheb. The girl was cleaning vessels, and had only a torn rag on her person. On seeing her impoverished condition, and her jovial temperament, Das Ganu felt pity for her and when Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan next day gave him a pair of dhotars, he requested him to give a sari to the poor little girl also. Rao Bahadur bought a good Chirdi (small Sari) and presented it to her. Like a starving person getting luckily good dishes to eat, her joy knew to bounds. Next day she wore the new Sari, and out of great joy and merriment, whirled, danced round and played 'Fugadi' with other girls and excelled them all. The Day following, she kept the new Sari in her box at home and came with the old and torn rags, but she looked as merry as she did the previous day. On seeing this, Das Ganu's pity was transferred into admiration. He thought that the girl being poor had to wear a torn rag, but now she had a new Sari which she kept in reserve and putting on the old rag, strutted herself, showing no trace of sorrow or dejection. Thus he realized that all our feelings of pain and pleasure depend upon the attitude of our mind. On thinking deeply over this incident, he realized that a man ought to enjoy whatever God has bestowed on him in the firm conviction that He besets every thing, from behind and before, and on all sides and that whatever is bestowed on him by God must be for his good. In this particular case, the impoverished condition of the poor girl, her torn rag and the new Sari, the donor, the dance and the acceptance were all parts of the Lord and pervaded by Him. Hence, Das Ganu got a practical demonstration of the lesson of the Upanishad - the lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens, is ordained by God, and is ultimately good for us.

### **Unique Method of Teaching**

From the above incident, the reader will see that Baba's method was unique and varied. Though Baba never left Shirdi, He sent some to Machhindragad, some to Kolhapur or Sholapur for practising sadhanas. To some He appeared in His usual form, to some He appeared in waking or dreaming state, day or night and satisfied their desires. It is impossible to describe all the methods, that Baba used in imparting instructions to His Bhaktas. In this particular case, He sent Das Ganu to Vile Parle, where he got his problem solved, through the maid-servant. To those, who say that it was not necessary to send Das Ganu outside and that Baba could have personally taught him, we say that Baba followed the right or best course, or how else could Das Ganu would have learnt a great lesson, that the poor maid-servant and her Sari were pervaded by the Lord.

Now we close the Chapter with another beautiful extract about this Upanishad.

### **The Ethics of the Ishavasya Upanishad**

"One of the main features of the Ishavasya Upanishad, is the ethical advice it offers, and it is interesting to note that the ethics of the Upanishad are definitely based upon the meta-physical position advanced in it. The very opening words of the Upanishad tell us that God pervades every thing. As a corollary from this metaphysical position, the ethical advice it offers is, that a man ought to enjoy whatever God bestows on him in the firm belief, that as He pervades everything, whatever is bestowed on him by God must be good. It follows naturally, that the Upanishad should forbid us from coveting another man's property. In fact, we are fittingly taught here a lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens, it is divinely ordained and it is hence good



for us. Another moral advice is, that man must spend his life-time always in doing action, specially the karmas enjoined in the Shastras, in a mood of believing resignation to His will. Inactivity, according to this Upanishad, would be the canker of the soul. It is only when a man spends his life-time on doing actions in this manner, that he can hope to attain the ideal of Naishkarmya. Finally, the text goes on to say that a man, who sees all beings in the Self and sees the Self as existing in all beings; in fact, for whom all beings and everything that exists have become the Self - how can such a man suffer infatuation? What ground would such a man have for grief? Loathfulness, infatuation and grief verily proceed from our not being able to see the Atman in all things. But a man, who realizes the oneness of all things, for whom everything has become the Self, must ipso facto, cease to be affected by the common foibles of humanity. (Page 169-170 of The Creative Period by Messrs. Belvalkar and Ranade).

***Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all***

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## **Shri Sai Satcharitra**

### **Chapter XXI**

Stories of (1) V.H. Thakur (2) Anantrao Patankar and (3) Pandharpur Pleader.

In this Chapter, Hemadpant relates the stories of Vinayak Harishchandra Thakur, B.A., Anantrao Patankar of Poona, and a pleader from Pandharpur. All these stories are very interesting which if very carefully read and grasped, will lead the readers on to the spiritual path.

#### **Preliminary**

It is a general rule, that it is our good luck in the form of accumulation of merits in past births, that enables us to seek the company of Saints and profit thereby. In illustration of this rule, Hemadpant gives his own instance. He was a resident Magistrate of Bandra, A suburb of Bombay, for many years. A famous Mahomedan Saint named Pir Moulana was living there and many Hindus, Parsis and many others who followed different religion used to go to him and take his darshan. His Mujavar (priest) by name Inus pressed Hemadpant many a time, night and day, for going to see him, but for some reason or other he was not able to see him. After many years his turn came and he was called to Shirdi where he was permanently enlisted in Sai Baba's Darbar. Unfortunate fellows do not get this contact of the Saints. It is only the fortunate ones that get it.

#### **Institution of Saints**

There have been institutions of Saints in this world, from time immemorial. Various Saints appear (incarnate) themselves in various places to carry out the missions allotted to them, but though they work in different places, they are, as it were, one. They work in unison under the common authority of the Almighty Lord and know full well what each



of them is doing in his place, and supplement his work where necessary. An instance illustrating this is given below.

### **Mr. Thakur**

Mr. V.H.Thakur, B.A., was a clerk in the Revenue Department and he once came to a town named Vadgaum near Belgaum (S.M. Country) along with a Survey party. There he saw a Kanarese Saint (Appa) and bowed before him. The Saint was explaining a portion from the book "Vichar-Sagar" of Nischaldas (a standard work on Vedanta) to the audience. When Thakur was taking his leave to go, he said to him, "you should study this book, and if you do so, your desires will be fulfilled, and when you go to the North in the discharge of your duties in future, you will come across a great Saint by your good luck, and then he will show you the future path, and give rest to your mind and make you happy".

Then, he was transferred to Junnar, where he had to go by crossing Nhane Ghat. This Ghat was very steep and impassible, and no other conveyance, than a buffalo was of use in crossing it. So he had to take a buffalo-ride through the Ghat, which inconvenienced and pained him much. Thereafter, he was transferred to Kalyan on higher post, and there he became acquainted with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He heard much about Sai Baba from him and wished to see Him. Next day, Nanasaheb had to go to Shirdi, and he asked Thakur to accompany him. He could not do so as he had to attend the Thana Civil Court for a civil case. So Nanasaheb went alone. Thakur went to Thana, but there the case was postponed. Then, he repented for not accompanying Nanasaheb. Still he left for Shirdi and when he went there, he found that Nanasaheb had left the place the previous day. Some of his other friends, whom he met there, took him to Baba. He saw Baba, fell at His Feet and was overjoyed. His eyes were full of tears of joy and his hair stood on end. Then after a while the omniscient Baba said to him - "The path of this place is not so easy as the teaching of the Kanarese Saint Appa or even as the buffalo-ride in the Nhane Ghat. In this spiritual path, you have to put in your best exertion as it is very difficult". When Thakur heard these significant signs and words, which none else than he knew, he was overwhelmed with joy. He came to know, that the word of the Kanarese Saint had turned true. Then joining both hands and placing his head on Baba's Feet, he prayed that he should be accepted and blessed. Then Baba said - "What Appa told you was all right, but these things have to be practised and lived. Mere reading won't do. You have to think and carry out what you read, otherwise, it is of no use. Mere book-learning, without the grace of the Guru, and self-realization is of no avail". The theoretical portion was read from the work 'Vichar Sagar' by Thakur, but the practical way was shown to him at Shirdi. Another story given below will bring out this truth more forcibly.

### **Anantrao Patankar**

One gentleman from Poona, by name Anantrao Patankar wished to see Baba. He came to Shirdi, and took Baba's darshan. His eyes were appeased, he was much pleased. He fell at Baba's Feet; and after performing proper worship said to Baba - "I have read a lot, studied Vedas, Vedants and Upanishads and heard all the Purnas, but still I have not got any peace of mind; so I think that all my reading was useless. Simple ignorant devout persons are better than myself. Unless the mind becomes calm, all book-learning is of no avail. I have heard, from many people, that you easily give peace of mind to so many people by your mere glance, and playful word; so I have come here; please take pity on me and bless me". Then Baba told him a parable, which was as follows:-

## **Parable of Nine Balls of Stool (Nava-vidha Bhakti)**

"Once a Soudagar (merchant) came here. Before him a mare passed her stool (nine balls of stool). The merchant, intent on his quest, spread the end of his dhotar and gathered all the nine balls in it, and thus he got concentration (peace) of mind".

Mr. Patankar could not make out the meaning of this story; so he asked Ganesh Damodar, alias Dada Kelkar, "What does Baba mean by this?" He replied - "I too do not know all that Baba says and means, but at His inspiration I say, what I come to know. The mare is God's grace and the nine balls excreted are the nine forms or types of Bhakti, viz., (1) Shravana (Hearing); (2) Kirtana (Praying); (3) Smarana (Remembering); (4) Padasevana (resorting to the feet); (5) Archana (Worship); (6) Namaskara (Bowling); (7) Dasya (Service); (8) Sakhyatva (Friendship); (9) Atmanivedana (surrender of the self). These are the nine types of Bhakti. If any of these is faithfully followed, Lord Hari will be pleased, and manifest Himself in the home of the devotee. All the sadhanas, viz. Japa (vocal worship), Tapa (penance), Yoga practice and studying the scriptures and expounding them are quite useless unless they are accompanied by Bhakti, i.e., devotion. Knowledge of the Vedas, or fame as a great Jnani, and mere formal Bhajan (worship) are of no avail. What is wanted is Loving Devotion. Consider yourself as the merchant or seeker after the truth and be anxious and eager like him to collect or cultivate the nine types of devotion. Then you will attain stability and peace of mind".

Next day, when Patankar went to Baba for saluation, he was asked whether he collected the 'nine balls of stool'. Then he said that he, being a poor fellow, should first be graced by Baba, and then they will be easily collected. Then Baba blessed and comforted him, saying that he would attain peace and welfare. After hearing this, Patankar became overjoyed and happy.

## **The Pandharpur Pleader**

We shall close this Chapter with short story showing Baba's omniscience and His using it for correcting people and setting them on the right path. Once a pleader from Pandharpur came to Shirdi, went to the Masjid, saw Sai Baba, fell at His Feet and, without being asked, offered some Dakshina, and sat in a corner eager to hear the talk, that was going on. Then Baba turned His face towards him and said - "How cunning the people are! They fall at the feet, offer Dakshina, but inwardly give abuses behind the back. Is not this wonderful?" This cap (remark) fitted the pleader and he had to wear (take) it. None understood the remark. The pleader grasped it, but kept silent. When they returned to the Wada, the pleader said to Kakasaheb Dixit - "What Baba remarked was perfectly right. The dart (remark) was aimed at me, it was a hint to me, that I should not indulge in reviling or scandalizing others (calling by names). When the subjudge or munsiff of Pandharpur (Mr.Noolkar) came and stayed here for the improvement of his health, a discussion about this matter was going on in the bar-room at Pandharpur (as it ever happens in many a bar-room). It was said or discussed there whether the ailments, from which the sub-judge suffered were, ever likely to be got rid of without medicines, by merely going after Sai Baba, and whether it was proper for an educated man, like the sub-judge, to have recourse to such methods. The sub-judge was taken to task, i.e. he was ciritised, as also Sai Baba. I also took some part in this affair; and now Sai Baba showed the impropriety of my conduct. This is not a rebuke to me, but a favour, an advice that I

should not indulge in any scandal or slander of others; and not interfere unnecessarily in others' affairs".

Shirdi is about 100 Koss (Koss=3 miles) distant from Pandharpur; still Baba by His omniscience knew what transpired there in the bar-room. The intervening places -- rivers, jungles and mountains - were not a bar to His all-perceiving sight and He could see or read the hearts of all. There was nothing secret or veiled from Him. Everything, far or near, was plain and clear to Him as broad as daylight. Let a man be far or near, he cannot avoid the all-pervading gaze of Sai Baba. From this incident, the pleader took the lesson that he should never speak ill of others, nor unnecessarily criticize them. This his evil tendency was completely got rid of, and he was set on the right path.

Though the story refers to a pleader, still it is applicable to all. All should, therefore, take this lesson to heart and profit thereby.

Sai Baba's greatness is unfathomable, so are His wonderful Leelas. His life is also such; for He is Para-Brahman (Lord God) incarnate.

***Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all***

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## **Shri Sai Satcharitra**

### **Chapter XXII**

Rescues from Serpent-bites - (1) Balasaheb Mirikar (2) Bapusaheb Booty (3) Amir Shakkar (4) Hemadpant - Baba's Opinion Regarding Killing of Serpents.

#### **Preliminary**

How to meditate on Baba? No one has been able to fathom the nature or the form of the Almighty. Even the Vedas and the thousand-tongued Shesha are not able to describe it fully; but the devotees cannot but know and look at the form of the Lord, for they know that His Feet are the only means of their happiness. They know no other method of attaining the supreme goal of life, except meditating on the Holy Feet. Hemadpant suggests an easy way of devotion and meditation as follows:-

As the dark fortnight of every month wears out gradually, the moonlight also wanes in the same degree and on the newmoon day, we do not see the moon at all, nor do we get her light. Therefore, when the bright fortnight begins, people are very anxious to see the moon. On the first day, the moon is not seen and on the second day also she is not clearly visible. Then the people are asked to see the moon through an opening between the two branches of a tree, and when they begin to see through this aperture eagerly and after concentratedly, the distant small crescent of the moon comes, to their great delight, within their ken. Following this clue, let us try to see Baba's Light. Look at Baba's

posture, how fine it is! He is sitting with His legs folded, the right leg held across the left knee. The fingers of His left hand are spread on the right-foot. On the right toe are spread His two fingers-the index and middle ones. By this posture Baba means to say, as it were-if you want to see My Light, be egoless and most humble and meditate on My toe through the opening between the two branches-index and middle fingers-and then you will be able to see My Light. This is the easiest means of attaining devotion.

Now let us turn for a moment to Baba's life. Shirdi had become a place of pilgrimage on account of Baba's stay. People from all quarters began to flock there, and both the rich and the poor began to be benefited in more ways than one and in some form or other. Who can describe Baba's boundless love and His wonderful natural knowledge and His all-pervasiveness? Blessed is he, who could experience one or all of these. Sometimes Baba observed long silence which was, in a way, His dissertation on Brahman; at other times He was Consciousness-Bliss Incarnate, surrounded by His devotees. Sometimes He spoke in parables, and at other times indulged in wit and humour. At times, He was quite unambiguous (clear) and at times He seemed enraged. Sometimes He gave His teachings in a nut-shell, at other times He argued at length. Many a time He was very plain. In this way, He gave varied instructions to many, according to their requirements. His life was, therefore, inscrutable, beyond the ken of our mind, beyond our intellect and speech. Our longing to see His face, to talk with Him and hear His Leelas was never satisfied; still we were overflowing with joy. We can count the showers of rain, encircle (tie) the wind in a leather bag, but who can gauge or measure His Leelas? Now we deal here with one aspect of them, viz. how He anticipated or forestalled the calamities of His devotees and warded them off in time.

### **Balasaheb Mirikar**

Balasaheb Mirikar, son of Sirdar Kakasaheb Mirikar was Mamlatdar of Kopergaon. He was going on tour to Chitali. On the way he came to Shirdi to see Sai Baba. When he went to the Masjid and prostrated himself before Baba, usual conversation regarding health and other matters commenced, when Baba sounded a note of warning as follows:- "Do you know our Dwarakamayi?" As Balasaheb did not understand he kept quiet, Baba continued - "This is our Dwarakamayi, where you are sitting. She wards off all dangers and anxieties of the children, who sit on her lap. This Masjidmayi (its presiding Deity) is very merciful, she is the mother of the simple devotees, whom she will save in calamities. Once a person sits on her lap, all his troubles are over. He, who rests in her shade, gets Bliss". Then Baba gave him Udi, and placed His protecting hand on his head. When Balasaheb was about to depart, He again said- "Do you know the "Lamba Bava" (long gentleman), Viz. serpent?" And then closing the left arm like fist He brought it near the right elbow, and moving His left arm like the hood of a serpent, He said- "He is so terrible, but what can he do to the children of Dwarakamayi: When the Dwarakamayi (its presiding deity) protects, what can the serpent do?"

All who were present there, were curious to know the meaning of all this and its reference to Mirikar, but none had the courage to ask Baba about this. Then Balasaheb saluted Baba and left the Masjid with Shama. Baba called Shama back and asked him to accompany Balasaheb, and enjoy the Chitali trip. Shama came to Balasaheb, and told him that he would go with him according to Baba's wish. Balasaheb replied that he need not come as it would be inconvenient. Sharma returned to Baba and told Him what Balasaheb said to him. Baba said, "Alright, do not go. We should mean well and do well. Whatever is destined to happen, will happen".

In the meanwhile Balasaheb thought over again, and calling Shama asked him to accompany him. Then Shama going again to Baba and taking His leave started with Balasaheb in the tanga. They reached Chitali at 9 P.M. and encamped in the Maruti temple. The office-people had not come; so they sat quiet in the temple, talking and chitchating. Balasaheb was sitting on a mat reading a newspaper. His Uparani (upper dhotar) was spread across his waist and on a part of it a snake was sitting unobserved. It began to move with a rustling sound which was heard by the peon. He brought a lantern, saw the snake and raised an alarm- 'serpent, serpent'. Balasaheb was frightened and began to quiver. Shama was also amazed. Then he and others moved noiselessly and took sticks and clubs in their hands. The snake got down slowly from the waist and it moved away from Balasaheb; it was immediately done to death. Thus this calamity, which was prophesied by Baba, was averted and Balasaheb's love for Baba was deeply confirmed.

### **Bapusaheb Booty**

A great astrologer named Nanasaheb Dengale told one day Bapusaheb Booty, who was then in Shirdi, "To-day is an inauspicious day for you, there is a danger to your life". This made Bapusaheb restless. When they, as usual, came to Masjid, Baba said to Bapusaheb- "What does this Nana say? He foretells death for you. Well, you need not be afraid. Tell him boldly "Let us see how death kills." Then later in the evening Bapusaheb went to his privy for easing himself where he saw a snake. His servant saw it and lifted a stone to strike at it. Bapusaheb asked him to get a big stick, but before the servant returned with the stick, the snake was seen moving away and soon disappeared. Bapusaheb remembered with joy Baba's words of fearlessness.

### **Amir shankar**

Amir Shankar was a native of the village Korale, in Kopergaon Taluka. he belonged to the butcher caste. He worked as a commission agent in Bandra, and was well-known there. He once suffered from Rheumatism, which gave him much pain. He was then reminded of God, and so, he left his business and went to Shirdi, and prayed to Baba to relieve him from his malady. Baba then stationed him in the Chavadi, which was then a damp unhealthy place, unfit for such a patient. Any other place in the village, or Korale itself would have been better for Amir, but Baba's word was the deciding factor and the chief medicine. Baba did not allow him to come to the Masjid, but fixed him in the Chavadi, where he got very great advantage. Baba passed via Chavadi every morning and evening; and every alternate day Baba went to the Chavadi in a procession and slept there. So Amir got Baba's contact very often easily. Amir stayed there for full nine months, and then, somehow or other, he got a disgust for the place. So one night he stealthily left the place and came to Kopergaon and stayed in a Dharmashala. There he saw an old dying Fakir, who asked him for water. Amir brought it and gave it to him. As soon as he drank it, he passed away. Then Amir was in a fix. He thought that if he went and informed the authorities, he would be held responsible for the death as he was the first and sole informant, and knew something about it. He repented for his action, viz. leaving Shirdi without Baba's leave, and prayed to Baba. He then determined to return to Shirdi, and that same night he ran back, remembering and muttering Baba's name on the way, and reached Shirdi before day-break, and became free from anxiety. Then he lived in the Chavadi in perfect accordance with Baba's wishes and orders, and got himself cured. One night it so happened that Baba cried at midnight- "Oh Abdul, some devilish creature is dashing against the side of My bed". Abdul came with a lantern, examined Baba's bed but found nothing, Baba asked him to examine carefully all the place and

began to strike ground with His satka. Seeing this Leela of Baba, Amir thought that Baba might have suspected some serpent had come there. Amir could know by close and long contact the meaning of Baba's words and actions. Baba then saw near Amir's cushion something moving. He asked Abdul to bring in the light, and when he brought it, he saw the coil of a serpent there, moving its head up and down. Thereupon the serpent was immediately beaten to death. Thus Baba gave timely warning and saved Amir.

### **Hemadpant (Scorpion and Serpent)**

(1) At Baba's recommendation Kakasaheb Dixit was daily reading the two works of Shri Eknath Maharaj, viz., Bhagwat and Bhawartha Ramayana and Hemadpant had the good fortune to be one of the audience when the reading of the works was going on. Once when a portion from the Ramayana relating to Hanuman's testing Rama's greatness, according to his mother's instructions, was being read, all the listeners were spell-bound. Hemadpant was one of them. A big scorpion (none knew where it came from), jumped and sat on the right shoulder of Hemadpant, on his Uparani (upper dhotar). First it was not noticed, but as the Lord protects those, who are intent on hearing His stories, he casually cast a glance over his right shoulder and noticed it. It was dead silence, not a bit moved here or there. It seemed as if, it also enjoyed the reading. Then by the Lord's grace, Hemadpant without disturbing the audience, took the two ends of his dhotar, folded them, and brought them together, enclosing the scorpion within. Then he went out, and threw it in the garden. (2) On another occasion some persons were sitting in the upper floor of Kakasaheb's Wada, just before nightfall, when a serpent crept through a hole in the window frame and sat coiled up. A light was brought. Though it was first dazzled, yet it sat still and only moved its head up and down. Then many persons rushed there with sticks and cudgels, but as it sat in an awkward place, no blow could be dealt. But hearing the noises of men, the serpent went out hastily through the same hole. Then all the persons there felt relieved.

### **Baba's Opinion**

One devotee named Muktaram, then said that it was good that the poor creature escaped. Hemadpant challenged him saying that serpents should better be killed. There was a hot discussion between them - the former contending that serpents, and such creatures, should not be killed, the latter that they should be. As night came on, the discussion came to an end, without any decision being arrived at. Next day, the question was referred to Baba, who gave His settled opinion as follows:- "God lives in all beings and creatures, whether they be serpents or scorpions. He is the Great Wirepuller of the world, and all beings, serpents, scorpions etc., obey His command. Unless He will it, nobody can do any harm to others. The world is all dependent on Him, and no one is independent. So we should take pity and love all creatures, leave off adventurous fights and killings and be patient. The Lord (God) is the Protector of all.

***Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all***

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