



CHAPTER XIV

Ratanji Wadia of Nanded – Saint Moulisaheb – Dakshina

In the last chapter, we described, how Baba's word and grace cured many incurable diseases. Now we shall describe, how Baba blessed Mr. Ratanji Wadia and gave him an issue.

The life of this Saint is naturally sweet. His various doings, eating, walking and His natural sayings are also sweet. His life is Bliss Incarnate. Sai gave bliss to His devotees as a means of remembrance. He gave them various stories of duty and action, which ultimately led them to true religion. His object may be, that people should live happily in this world but they should be ever cautious, and achieve the object of their life, viz. self-realization. We get human body as a result of merits in past births and it is worth-while that, with its aid, we should attain devotion and liberation in this life. So, we should never be lazy but always be on the alert to gain our goal of life.

If you hear the Leelas (stories) of Sai daily, you will always see Him. Day and night you will remember Him in your mind. When you assimilate Sai in this way, your mind will lose its fickleness, and if you go on in this manner, it will finally be merged in Pure Consciousness.

Ratanji of Nanded :

Now, let us come to the main story of this chapter. In Nanded, in the Nizam state, there lived a Parsi mill-contractor and trader, by name Ratanji Shapurji Wadia. He had amassed a large amount of money and had acquired fields and lands. He had cattle, horses and conveyance, and was very prosperous. In all outward appearances, he looked very happy and contented but inwardly he was not so. Providential dispensation is such that, no one in this world is completely happy, and rich Ratanji was no exception to this. He was liberal and charitable, gave food and clothing to the poor and helped all in various ways. The people took him to be a good and happy man but Ratanji thought himself miserable, as he had no issue, male or female, for a long time. Just as Kirtan (singing glories of the Lord) without love or devotion, song without rhythmical accompaniments, Brahmin without the sacred thread, proficiency in all arts without commonsense, pilgrimage without

repentance and ornamentation without a necklace, are futile and useless, so is a house-holder without an issue. Ratanji always brooded on this matter and said in his mind, "Would God be ever pleased to grant me a son?" He, thus, looked morose, and did not relish his food. Day and night, he was enveloped with anxiety, as to whether he would ever be blessed with a son. He had a great regard for Das Ganu Maharaj. He saw him and opened his heart before him. Das Ganu advised him to go to Shirdi, take Baba's darshan, fall at His Feet and seek His blessing and pray for an issue. Ratanji liked the idea, and decided to go to Shirdi. After some days, he went to Shirdi, took Baba's darshan and fell at His Feet. Then opening a basket, he took out a beautiful garland of flowers and placed it around Baba's neck and offered Him a basket of fruits. With reverence he then, sat near Baba, and prayed to Him saying, "Many persons, who find themselves in difficult situations come to You, and You relieve them immediately. Hearing this, I have anxiously sought Your Feet, please do not disappoint me." Sai Baba, then, asked him for Dakshina of Rs. five, which Ratanji intended to give, but added that, He had already received Rs. 3-14-0* from him and that, he should pay the balance only. Hearing this, Ratanji was rather puzzled. He could not make out, as to what Baba meant. That was the first time, he thought that, he had come to Shirdi and how was it that, Baba said that He had earlier got Rs. 3-14-0 from him? He could not solve the riddle. But he sat at Baba's Feet and gave the balance of the Dakshina asked for, explained to Baba fully, as to why he came and sought His help and prayed that Baba should bless him with a son. Baba was moved and told him not to worry, and that thence onward his bad days had ended. He then, gave him Udi, placed His hand on his head and blessed him saying that, Allah (God) would satisfy his heart's desire.

Then after taking Baba's leave, Ratanji returned to Nanded and told Das Ganu everything, that took place at Shirdi. He said that everything went on well there, that he got Baba's darshan and blessing with Prasad, but there was one thing, which he could not understand. Baba said to him that he had got Rs. 3-14-0 before. Please explain, as to what Baba meant by this remark. He said to Das Ganu, "I never went to Shirdi before, and how could I give Him the sum, to which Baba referred?" To Das Ganu too, it was a puzzle and he thought much over it for a long time. Some time afterwards, it struck him that, Ratanji had received some days ago a Mohammeden saint, by name Moulisaheb in

* In those days, the currency was Rupees, Annas and Paise. Re 1 = 16 Annas = 64 Paise

his house and had spent some money for his reception. This Moulisaheb, was a well known saint of Nanded and worked as a porter. When Ratanji decided to go to Shirdi, this Moulisaheb turned up at Ratanji's house. Ratanji knew him and loved him. So, he gave a small party in his honour. Das Ganu got from Ratanji, the memo of expenses of this reception, and everybody was wonderstruck to see that, the expenses amounted to exactly Rs. 3-14-0, nothing more, nothing less. They all came to know that, Baba was Omniscient, that though, He lived in Shirdi, He knew what happened outside, far away from Shirdi. In fact, He knew the past, present and future, and could identify Himself with anybody. In this particular instance, how could He know, the reception given to Moulisaheb and the amount spent therefore, unless, He could identify Himself with him and be one with him?

Ratanji was satisfied with this explanation and his faith in Baba was confirmed and increased. In due time, he was blessed with a son and his joy knew no bounds. It is said that he had in all a dozen issues, out of which only four survived.

In a foot-note towards the end of this chapter, it is stated that, Baba told Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe, after the death of his first wife, to remarry and that, he would get a son. R.B. Sathe married second time. The first two issues, by this wife were daughters and he therefore, felt very despondent. But, the third issue was a son. Baba's word did come true and he was satisfied.

Dakshina

Now, we shall close this chapter with a few points about Dakshina. It is a well-known fact that, Baba always asked for Dakshina from people, who went to see Him. Somebody may ask a question, "If Baba was a Fakir and perfectly non-attached, why should He ask for Dakshina and care for money?" We shall consider this question broadly now.

First, for a long time, Baba did not take anything, He stored burnt matches and filled His pocket with them. He never asked anybody for anything, whether he be a devotee or otherwise. If anybody placed before Him a paisa or two, He purchased oil or tobacco. He was fond of tobacco, for He always smoked a Bidi or Chillim (an earthen pipe). Then, some persons thought that, they should not go to saints empty-handed and therefore, placed some copper coins before Baba. If a paisa was placed before Him, He used to pocket it, if it was a two paise coin,

it was returned immediately. Then, after Baba's fame had spread far and wide, people began to flock in numbers and Baba began to ask Dakshina from them. It is said in the Shruti (Veda) that Puja of the gods is not complete, unless a golden coin was offered. If a coin was necessary in the Puja of the gods, why should it be not so in the Puja of the saints also? Ultimately, the Shastras laid it down that, when one goes to see god, king, saint or guru, he should not go empty-handed. He should offer something, preferably, money. In this connection we may notice the precepts, recommended by the Upanishads. The Brihadaranyak Upanishad says that the Lord Prajapati advised the gods, men and demons by one letter 'Da'. The gods understood by this letter that, they should practise 'Dama'¹, i.e. self-control; the men thought or understood that, they should practise 'Dana'², i.e. charity; the demons understood that they should practise 'Daya'³, i.e. compassion. To men, charity or giving was recommended. The teacher, in the Taittiriya Upanishad, exhorts his pupils, to practise charity and other virtues. Regarding charity, he says, "Give with faith, or even without it give with magnanimity, i.e. liberally, give with modesty, awe and sympathy. In order to teach the devotees the lesson of charity and to remove their attachment to money and thus, to purify their minds, Baba extracted Dakshina from them but there was this peculiarity, as Baba said that He had to give back hundred times more of what He received. There are many instances, in which this has happened. To quote an instance, Mr. Ganpatrao Bodas, the famous actor, says in his Marathi autobiography that, on Baba's pressing him often for Dakshina, he emptied his money-bag before Him. The result of this was, as Mr. Bodas says that, in later life he never lacked money, as it came to him abundantly.

There were also secondary meanings of Dakshina, in many cases, in which Baba did not want any pecuniary amount. To quote two instances : (1) Baba asked Rs. 15/-, as Dakshina from Prof. G.G. Narke, who replied that, he did not have any money. Then, Baba said, "I know, you have no money but you are reading Yoga Vasishtha. Give Me Dakshina from that". Giving Dakshina in this case meant, "Deriving lessons from the book and lodging them in the heart, where Baba resides." (2) In the second case, Baba asked a certain lady (Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad), to give Rs. 6/-, as Dakshina. The lady felt pained, as she had nothing to give. Then, her husband explained to her that, Baba wanted six inner enemies (lust , anger, avarice etc.), to be surrendered to Him.

* द (1) दम (2) दान (3) दया

Baba agreed with this explanation.

It is to be noted that, though, Baba collected a lot of money by Dakshina, He would distribute the whole amount the same day and the next morning He would become a poor Fakir as usual. When Baba took His Mahasamadhi, even after receiving thousands and thousands of Rupees as Dakshina, for about ten years, He had only a few Rupees in His possession.

In short, Baba's main object in taking Dakshina, from His devotees, was to teach them the lessons of Renunciation and Purification.

Post-script

Mr. B.V. Dev of Thana, retired Mamlatdar, and a great devotee of Baba, has written an article on this subject (Dakshina) in 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine, Vol. II, P. 6-26, in which he says as follows :

"Baba did not ask Dakshina of all. If some gave Dakshina unasked, He some times accepted it and at other times refused it. He asked it of certain devotees only. He never demanded it, from those devotees, who thought in their minds that Baba should ask for it and then they should pay it. If anybody offered it against His wish, He never touched it and if he kept it there, He asked him to take it away. He asked for small or big amounts from devotees, according to their wish, devotion and convenience. He asked it, even of women and children. He never asked of all the rich for it, nor of all the poor.

"Baba never got angry with those, of whom He asked Dakshina and who did not give it. If any Dakshina was sent, through some friend, who forgot to hand-over the same to Baba, He reminded him of it and made him pay it. On some occasions, Baba used to return some sum, from the amount tendered as Dakshina and ask the donor to guard it or keep it in his shrine for worship. This procedure benefitted the donor or devotee immensely. If anybody offered more than he originally intended to give, He returned the extra amount. Some times, He asked of some more Dakshina than, what they originally intended to give and if they had no money, asked them to beg or borrow from others. Of some, He demanded Dakshina three or four times a day."

"Out of the amount collected as Dakshina, Baba spent very little for His own sake, viz. for buying Chillim (smoking pipe) and fuel for His Dhuni (sacred fire), and all the rest He distributed as charity in

varying proportions to various persons. All the paraphernalia of the Shirdi Sansthan was brought by various rich devotees at the instance and suggestion of Radhakrishnamai. Baba always used to get wild and scolded those, who brought any costly and rich articles. He said to Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar that all His property consisted of one Koupin (codpiece), one stray piece of cloth, one Kafni and a Tumrel (tinpot) and that, all the people troubled Him with bringing all these unnecessary costly articles.”

Woman and wealth are the two main obstacles in the way of our Paramartha (spiritual life) and Baba had provided in Shirdi two institutions, viz. Dakshina and Radhakrishnamai for, whenever they came to Him, He demanded Dakshina from them and asked them to go to the ‘SCHOOL’ (Radhakrishnamai’s house). If they stood these two tests well, i.e. if they showed that, they were free from attachment for woman and wealth, their progress in spirituality was rapid and assured by Baba’s grace and blessings.

Mr. Dev has also quoted passages from the Gita and Upanishads and shown that charity, given in a holy place or to a holy personage, conduces to the donors’ welfare. What is more holy than Shirdi and its Presiding Deity – Sai Baba!

Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all