



CHAPTER XXIX

Stories of (1) Chennai's Bhajani Mela (2) Tendulkars (father and son) (3) Dr. Captain Hate (4) Woman Narvekar

This chapter describes other interesting and wonderful stories of Sai Baba.

(1) Chennai's Bhajani Mela

It was in the year 1916 when a Chennai's Bhajani Mela (Party of the Ramdasi Panth) started on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Benaras. The party consisted of a man, his wife, daughter and sister-in-law. Unfortunately, their names are not mentioned. On their way the party heard that there lived in Shirdi, Ahmednagar district, a great saint named Sai Baba, Who was God realized and Who was very generous and distributed money every day to His bhaktas and to skillful persons who went and showed their talent there. A lot of money in the form of dakshina was collected daily by Sai Baba and out of this amount He gave daily one rupee to a three year old girl Amani, the daughter of a bhakta Kondaji and Rs. 2 to 5 to some, Rs. 6 to Jamali, the mother of Amani and Rs. 10 to 20 or even Rs. 50 to other bhaktas, as He pleased. On hearing all this, the party came to Shirdi and stayed there. The Mela did very good bhajan and sang very good songs, but inwardly they desired money. Three of the party were full of avarice but the lady or mistress was of a very different nature. She had regard and love for Baba. Once it so happened that when the noon-day Arati was going on, Baba was much pleased with her faith and devotion and gave her vision of her Ishta (chosen) deity. To her Baba appeared as Sitanath (Ram), while to all others the usual Sainath. On seeing her beloved Deity she was very much moved. Tears began to flow from her eyes and she clapped her hands in joy. The people began to wonder at her joyful mood but were not able to guess its cause. Late in the afternoon she disclosed everything to her husband. She told him how she saw Shri Ram in Sai Baba. He thought that she was a very simple and devout woman and her seeing Ram might be a creation of her mind. He ignored her saying that it was not possible that she alone should see Ram, while they all saw Sai Baba there. She did not resent this remark as she was

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fortunate enough to get Ram-darshan, as and when her mind was calm and composed and free from avarice.

Wonderful Vision

Things were going on like this when the husband got a strange vision in his dream one night : He was in a big city the police there had arrested him tied his hands with a rope and put him up in a cage (lock-up). As the police were tightening the grip he saw Sai Baba, standing quiet outside, near the cage. On seeing Baba so close he said in a plaintive tone, "After hearing Your fame I resorted to Your Feet then why should a calamity befall me when You are standing here in person?" Baba said, "You must suffer the consequences of your action." He said, "I have not done anything in this life which would bring such a misfortune on me." Baba said, "If not in this life you must have committed some sin in your past life." He replied, "I do not know anything of my past life but assuming that I did commit some sin then, why should it not be burnt and destroyed in Your presence as happens to dry grass before fire?" Baba, "Have you got such faith?" He, "Yes." Baba then asked him to close his eyes. No sooner did he shut them, than he heard a thumping sound of something falling down and after opening his eyes he saw that he was free and the police fallen down, bleeding. Being much frightened he began to look at Baba, Who said, "Now you are well caught, officers will now come and arrest you." Then, he begged, "There is no other saviour except You, save me anyhow!" Then Baba again asked him to close his eyes. He did so and when he opened them again he saw that he was free, out of the cage and that Baba was by his side. He then fell at Baba's Feet. Baba then asked him, "Is there any difference between this Namaskar and your previous ones? Think well and then reply." He said, "There is a lot of difference, my former Namaskars were offered with the object of getting money from You but the present Namaskar is one offered to You as God, besides, earlier I thought resentfully that You, being a Mohammeden, were spoiling us the Hindus." Baba, "Do you not believe in your mind in Mohammeden gods?" He said, "No". Then, Baba said, "Have you not got a Panja (Emblem of Hand) in your house and do you not worship the same in Tabut, i.e. Moharrum festival? Also there is in your house another deity, by name Kadbihi whom you propitiate and appease on marriage occasion and other festivals. Is it not so?" He admitted all this. Then Baba said, "What more do you want?" Then a desire arose in his mind to get the

darshan of his Guru Ramdas when Baba asked him to turn back and see. And when he turned around, lo! Ramdas was in front of him. No sooner did he bend to fall at His Feet Guru Ramdas vanished. Then he inquisitively asked Baba, "You look old, do You know Your age?" Baba, "What! Do you say, I am old! Just race with Me and see!" On saying this Baba began to run and he too followed. Baba disappeared in the dust raised by His foot-steps while running, and at that moment man was awakened.

After waking up he began to think seriously about the dream-vision. His mental attitude was completely changed and he realized the greatness of Baba. After this his doubting tendencies disappeared and pure devotion to Baba's Feet descended on his mind. The vision was a mere dream but the questions and answers therein, were most significant and interesting. Next morning when all assembled in the Masjid for the Arati Baba gave him as prasad, two rupees' worth of sweetmeats and also two rupees from His pocket, and blessed him. He made him stay there for a few more days and gave him His blessing saying, "Allah (God) will give you plenty and He will do you all good." He did not get more money there but he got far better things, viz. Baba's blessing, which stood him in good stead all along. The party got plenty of money afterwards and their pilgrimage was successful as they did not suffer any trouble or inconvenience during their journey. They all returned home safe, thinking of Baba's words and blessings, and the Anand (Bliss) they experienced by His grace.

This story illustrates one of the methods which Baba followed in some cases, to improve and reform His devotees.

(2) Tendulkar family

There lived in Bandra (a suburb of Mumbai), a Tendulkar family, all the members of which were devoted to Baba. Mrs. Savitribai Tendulkar has published a Marathi book, named 'Shri Sainath Bhajan Mala', containing 800 Abhangas and Padas, describing the Leelas of Baba. It is a book worth reading by those, who are interested in Baba. The son Babu Tendulkar was studying hard day and night and wanted to appear for the medical examination. He consulted some astrologers. On examining his horoscope they told him that the stars were not favourable that year and that he should appear for the examination

next year when he would be certainly successful. This cast a gloom over him and made him restless. A few days afterwards his mother went to Shirdi and saw Baba. Amongst other things she mentioned the gloomy and morose condition of her son who was to appear for the examination in a few days. On hearing this Baba said to her, "Tell your son to believe Me, to throw aside horoscopes and predictions of astrologers and palmists and go on with his studies. Let him appear for the examination with a calm mind, he is sure to pass this year. Ask him to trust Me and not to get disappointed." The mother returned home and communicated Baba's message to her son. Then he studied hard and in due course appeared for the examination. In the written papers he did well, but being overtaken by doubts he thought that he would not secure sufficient marks for passing. So he did not care to appear for the oral examination. But the examiner was after him. He sent word through a fellow-student stating that he had passed in the written examination, and that he should appear for the oral. The son being thus encouraged, appeared for the oral examination and was successful in it also. Thus, he got through the examination that year successfully by Baba's grace, though the stars were against him, as indicated. **It is to be noted here that doubts and difficulties surround us, just to move us and confirm our faith. We are tested as it were. If we only hold on steadily to Baba, with full faith and continue our endeavours, our efforts will be ultimately crowned with success.**

The father of this boy Raghunathrao was serving in some foreign mercantile firm in Mumbai. As he grew old he was not able to attend to his work properly, and so he had to take leave and rest. As he did not improve during the period of leave, a further extension of leave or premature retirement from service was inevitable. The chief manager of the firm decided to retire him on pension as he was an old and a reliable servant. The question regarding the amount of pension to be given was under consideration. He was getting Rs. 150/- p.m. and his pension, i.e. half the amount, viz. Rs. 75/- would not be enough to meet the expenses of the family. So they were all anxious about this matter. Fifteen days before the final settlement Baba appeared to Mrs. Tendulkar in her dream and said, "I wish that Rs. 100/- should be settled as pension, will this satisfy you?" She replied, "Baba, why ask me this? We fully trust in You." Though Baba said Rs. 100/-, still he was given ten Rupees more, i.e. Rs. 110/-, as a special case. Such wonderful love and care did Baba exhibit towards His bhaktas.

(3) Captain Hate

Captain Hate, who was staying in Bikaner was a great devotee of Baba. Once, Baba appeared to him in his dream and said, "Did you forget Me?" Hate then immediately held Baba's Feet and replied, "If a child forgets his mother how could he be saved?" Then Hate went into the garden and took out fresh Walpapadi vegetables and after arranging 'Shidha' (ghee, wheat-flour and dal etc.) and dakshina, was about to offer all this to Baba when he was awakened and came to know that the whole thing was a dream. Then he decided to send all these things to Baba at Shirdi. When he came to Gwalior some days afterwards, he sent Rs. 12/- by money order to a friend with instructions that Rs. two should be spent in buying Shidha articles and Walpapadi vegetables, and those should be offered to Baba with Rs. ten as dakshina. The friend went to Shirdi and purchased the things mentioned but Walpapadi was not available. In a short time a woman turned up with a basket on her head, which curiously enough contained the Walpapadi vegetables. It was purchased and then all the things were offered to Baba on behalf of captain Hate. Mr. Nimonkar prepared the 'Naivaidya' (rice and Walpapadi vegetables) next day and offered the same to Baba. All the people were surprised to see that Baba while dining, took and ate Walpapadi and did not touch rice and other things. Hate's joy knew no bounds when he learnt this from his friend.

Consecrated Rupee

At another time captain Hate wished that he should have in his house, a rupee consecrated by Baba with His touch. He came across a friend who was bound for Shirdi. Through him Hate sent his rupee. The friend went to Shirdi and after the usual salutation gave first his dakshina which Baba accepted. Then he gave Hate's rupee which Baba took in His hand and began to gaze at it. He held it in front, tossed it up with His right thumb and played with it. Then He said to the friend, "Return this to its owner with the Prasad of Udi, tell him that I want nothing from him; ask him to live in peace and contentment!" The friend returned to Gwalior handed over the consecrated rupee to Hate and told him all that happened at Shirdi. This time Hate was much pleased and realized that Baba always encouraged good thoughts, and as he wished intently, Baba fulfilled the same accordingly.

(4) Waman Narvekar

Now let the readers hear a different story. A gentleman named Waman Narvekar, loved Baba very much. He once brought a rupee. On one side (obverse) of it were engraved the figures of Ram, Laxman and Sita and on the other (reverse) side was engraved the figure of Maruti with folded hands. He offered it to Baba with a hope that He should consecrate it with His touch and return it to him with Udi. But Baba immediately pocketed it. Then Shama spoke to Baba regarding Wamanrao's intention and requested Him to return it. Then Baba spoke in the presence of Wamanrao, "Why should it be returned to him? We should keep it ourselves. If he gives Rs. 25/- for it, it will be returned." Then for the sake of that rupee, Wamanrao collected Rs. 25/- and placed them before Baba. Then Baba said, "The value of that rupee far exceeds 25 Rupees. Shama take this rupee, let us have it in our store, keep this in your shrine and worship it!" No one had the courage to ask Baba why He followed this peculiar action. He only knows what is best and most suitable to each and all.

Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all