



## CHAPTER XXXIX

### Baba's Knowledge of Sanskrit

#### *His Interpretation of a Verse from Gita – Construction of the Samadhi Mandir*

This chapter (39) deals with Baba's interpretation of a verse from the Bhagwad-Gita. As some people believed that Baba had little knowledge of Sanskrit but by the interpretation of Nanasaheb Chandorkar's query Hemadpant refuted that charge, in chapter no. 50, and as it deals with the same subject-matter, it is incorporated in this chapter.

#### **Preliminary**

Blessed is Shirdi and blessed is Dwarkamai, where Shri Sai lived and moved, until He took Mahasamadhi. Blessed are the people of Shirdi, whom He obliged and for whom, He lived there. Shirdi was a small village first, but it attained importance, on account of His contact and became a Tirtha, holy place of pilgrimage. Equally blessed are the womenfolk of Shirdi, blessed is their whole and undivided faith in Him. They sang the glories of Baba, while bathing, grinding, pounding corn and doing other house-hold work.

#### **Baba's Interpretation**

Nobody believed that, Baba knew Sanskrit. One day He surprised all by giving an interpretation of a verse from the Gita, to Nanasaheb Chandorkar. A brief account about this matter was written by Mr. B.V. Dev, retired Mamlatdar and published in Marathi in 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine, Vol. IV. Sphuta Vishaya, page 563. Short accounts of the same are also published in 'Sai Baba's Charters and Sayings' page 61 and in 'The Wondrous Saint Sai Baba' page 36 – both by B.V. Narsimhaswami. Mr. B.V. Dev has also given an English version of this, in his statement, dated 27-9-1936 and published on page 66 of 'Devotees' Experiences, Part III', by Narsimha swami. As Mr. Dev has got first hand information about this subject from Nanasaheb himself, we give below his version.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar was a good student of Vedanta. He had read Gita with commentaries. He fancied that Baba knew nothing of Sanskrit texts. So Baba one day pricked the bubble. These were the days, before crowds flocked to Baba, when Baba had individual meetings at

the Mosque with such devotees. Nana was sitting near Baba and massaging His legs and muttering something under his breath.

Baba – Nana, what are you mumbling to yourself?

Nana – I am reciting a Shloka (verse)

Baba – What Shloka?

Nana – From Bhagawad-Gita

Baba – Say it loudly.

Nana, then, recited B.G., IV-34, which is as follows :

*‘Tadviddhi Pranipaatenā Pariprashnena Sevaya,  
Upadekshyanti Te Gnyanam Gnyaninatattwadarshinah’\**

Baba – Nana, do you understand it?

Nana – Yes.

Baba – If you do, then tell me its meaning!

Nana – It means this : “Making Sashtanga Namaskar. i.e. prostration, asking the Guru, serving him, learn, what this Knowledge is. Then those who have attained the real knowledge of the Sadvastu (Brahma) will give you Upadesha (instruction) of Knowledge.”

Baba – Nana, I do not want this sort of collected purport of the whole stanza. Give me each word, its grammatical force and meaning.

Then, Nana explained it word by word.

Baba – Nana, is it enough to merely make prostration?

Nana – I do not know any other meaning for the word ‘Pranipaāt’ than ‘making prostration.’

Baba – What is ‘Pariprashna’?

Nana – Asking questions.

Baba – What does ‘Prashna’ mean?

Nana – The same (questioning).

Baba – If ‘Pariprashna’ means the same as ‘Prashna’ (question), why did Vyasa add the prefix ‘Pari’? Was Vyasa off his head?

Nana – I do not know of any other meaning for the word ‘Pariprashna.’

Baba – ‘Seva’, what sort of ‘Seva’ is meant?

Nana – Just what we are doing to You.

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\* तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।  
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

Baba – Is it enough to render such service?

Nana – I do not know, what more is signified by the word ‘Seva’.

Baba – In the next line ‘Upadekshyanti te Gnyanam’, can you read any other word in lieu of Gnyanam?

Nana – Yes.

Baba – What word?

Nana – Agnyanam.

Baba – Taking that word (instead of gnyan) is any meaning made out of the verse?

Nana – No, Shankara Bhashya gives no such construction.

Baba – Never mind, if he does not. Is there any objection in using the word ‘Agnyan’ if it gives a better sense?

Nana – I do not understand, how to construe by placing ‘Agnyan’ in it.

Baba – Why does Krishna refer Arjun to Tattwadarshis to do his prostration, interrogation and service? Was not Krishna, a Tattwadarshi, in fact Gnyan itself.

Nana – Yes, He was. But, I do not make out, why he referred Arjun to Gnyanis?

Baba – Have you not understood this?

Nana was humiliated, His pride was knocked down. Then Baba began to explain.

(1) It is not enough merely to prostrate before the Gnyanis. We must make Sarvasva Sharanagati (complete surrender) to the Sadguru.

(2) Mere questioning is not enough. The question must not be made with any improper motive or attitude or to trap the Guru and catch mistakes in the answer, or out of idle curiosity. It must be earnest with a view to achieve spiritual progress or liberation.

(3) Seva is not rendering service with the feeling that one is free to offer or refuse service. One must feel that, he is not the master of the body, that the body is Guru’s and exists merely to render service to him.

If this is done the Sadguru will show you, what the Knowledge referred to in the previous stanza is.

Nana did not understand, what is meant by saying, that a Guru

teaches Agnyan.

Baba – How is Gnyan Upadesh, i.e., imparting of realization to be effected? Destroying ignorance is Gnyan. (of Verse – Ovi – 1396 of Dnyaneshwari, commenting on Gita 18-66 says : “Removal of ignorance is, Oh Arjun, if dream and sleep disappear, you are yourself. It is like that.” Also, Ovi 83 on Gita V-16 says : “Is there anything different or independent in Gnyan besides the destruction of ignorance?”)\* Expelling darkness means light. Destroying duality (Dwaita) means nonduality (Adwaita). Whenever we speak of destroying Dwaita, we speak of Adwaita. Whenever we talk of destroying darkness, we talk of light. If we have to realize the Adwaita state, the feeling of Dwaita in ourselves has to be removed. That is the realization of the Adwaita state. Who can speak of Adwaita, while remaining in Dwaita state? Unless one gets into that state of non-duality, how can one know it and realize it?

Again the Shishya (disciple), like the Sadguru, is the embodiment of Gnyan. The difference between the two lies in the attitude, high realization of Sadguru and his marvellous super human sattva (beingness) and unrivalled capacity and Aishwarya Yoga (divine powers). The Sadguru is Nirgun, Sat-Chit-Anand. He has indeed taken human form to elevate mankind and raise the world. But his real Nirgun nature is not destroyed thereby, even a bit. His existence (or reality), divine power and wisdom remain undiminished. The disciple also is in fact of the same Swarupa. But it is overlaid by the effect of the Sanskars of innumerable births in the shape of ignorance, which veils his view that, he is Shuddha Chaitanya (See, B.G., Ch. V-15).\*\* As stated therein, he gets the impressions : “I am Jiva, a creature, meek and poor.” The Guru has to root out these offshoots of ignorance and has to give Upadesh or instruction. To the disciple, held spell-bound for endless generations by the ideas of his being a Jiva the Guru imparts the teaching : “You are God, you are mighty and opulent.” Then, he realizes that, he is God really. The perpetual delusion, under which the disciple is labouring that he is the body, that he is a creature (jiva) or ego that, God (Paramatma) and the world are different from him, is an ignorance inherited from innumerable past births. From actions, based on it, he has derived his joy, sorrows and mixtures of both. To remove this delusion, this error, this root ignorance, he must start the inquiry. How

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\* मग अज्ञान निमालिया। मीच एक असे अपैसया।।

सनिंद्र स्वप्न गेलिया। आपण जसें।।1396 (गी.अ. 18-66)

तें अज्ञान जें समूल तुटे। तें भ्रांतीचें मसैरें फिटें।।83।। (गी.5-16)

\*\* अज्ञानेनावृत्त ज्ञान तेन मुह्यन्ति जंतवः।

did the ignorance arise? Where is it? And to show him, this is called the Guru's Upadesh. The following are the instances of Agnyan :

- 1 – I am a Jiva (creature).
- 2 – Body is the soul (I am the body).
- 3 – God, world and Jiva are different.
- 4 – I am not God.
- 5 – Not knowing that body is not the soul.
- 6 – Not knowing that God, world and Jiva are one.

Unless these errors are exposed to his view, the disciple cannot learn, what is God, Jiva, world, body; how they are interrelated and whether they are different from each other, or are one and the same. To teach him these and destroy his ignorance, is this instruction in Gnyan or Agnyan. Why should Gnyan be imparted to the Jiva (who is a Gnyan moorti). Upadesh is merely to show him his error and destroy his ignorance.

Baba added - (1) Pranipaata implies complete surrender (2) Surrender must be of body, mind and wealth (3) Why should Krishna refer to other gnyanis? Sadbhakata takes everything to be Vasudev (B.G. VII-19 i.e. any Guru would be Krishna to the devotee and Guru takes disciple to be Vasudev (B.G. 7-18). As Shri Krishna knows that there are such Gurus and disciples, He refers Arjun to them so that their greatness be known.

### **Construction of the Samadhi Mandir**

Baba never made any fuss about things, which He wanted to accomplish, but He so skillfully arranged the circumstances that the people were surprised at the slow but sure results attained. The construction of the Samadhi Mandir is an instance. Shriman Bapusaheb Buti, the famous multi-millionaire of Nagpur, lived in Shirdi with his family. Once an idea arose in his mind that he should have a building of his own there. Some time after this, while he was sleeping in Dixit Wada he got a vision. Baba appeared in his dream and ordered him to build a Wada with a temple. Shama, who was sleeping there, also got a similar vision. When Bapusaheb awoke, he saw Shama crying and asked the latter, as to why he was in tears. Shama replied that in his vision, Baba came to him and ordered distinctly : "Build the Wada with the temple! I shall fulfil the desires of all." On hearing the sweet and loving words of Baba, I was overpowered with emotion, my throat was choked, my eyes were overflowing with tears and I began to cry."

Bapusaheb was surprised to see that both their visions tallied. Being a rich and capable man, he decided to build a Wada there and drew up a plan with Shama (Madhavrao). Kakasaheb Dixit also approved of it. And when it was placed before Baba, He also sanctioned it immediately. Then the construction-work was duly started, and under the supervision of Shama, the ground floor, the cellar and the well were completed. Baba on his way to and from Lendi, also suggested some improvements. Further work was entrusted to Bapusaheb Jog; and when it was going on, an idea struck Bapusaheb Buti's mind that, there should be an open space or platform and in the centre, the image of Murlidhar (Lord Krishna with the flute) be installed. He asked Shama to refer this matter to Baba and get His consent. The latter asked Baba about this when He was just passing by the Wada. On hearing Shama, Baba gave His consent saying, "After the temple is complete, I will come there to stay", and staring at the Wada He added, "After the Wada is complete, we shall use it ourselves, we shall live, move and play there, embrace each other and be happy". Then, Shama asked Baba, whether this was the auspicious time to begin the foundation-work of the central room of the shrine. Baba answered in the affirmative. Then Shama got a coconut broken there and started the work. In due time the work was completed and an order was also placed for making a good image of Murlidhar. But before it was ready, a new situation turned up. Baba became seriously ill. Bapusaheb became very sad and dejected, thinking that if Baba passed away, his Wada would not be consecrated by the holy touch of Baba's Feet, and all his money (about a lakh of rupees) would be wasted away. But the words "Keep Me in the Wada", which came out of Baba's mouth just before His passing away, consoled not only Bapusaheb, but one and all. In due time, Baba's holy body was placed and preserved in the central shrine meant for Murlidhar, and Baba Himself became Murlidhar, and the Wada thus became the Samadhi Mandir of Sai Baba. His wonderful leela is unfathomable.

Blessed and fortunate is Bapusaheb Buti, in whose Wada lies the holy and the pure body of Baba.

**Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all**