



CHAPTER XL

Stories of Baba

(1) Attending Mrs. Dev's Udyapan Ceremony as a Sanyaasi with two others (2) Visiting Hemadpant's House in the Form of His Picture

In this chapter we give two stories; (1) How Baba attended the Udyapan ceremony, organised by Mr. B.V. Dev's mother at his house at Dahanu and (2) How Baba attended the Shimga dinner-party in Hemadpant's house at Bandra.

Preliminary

Blessed is Shri Sai Samartha, Who gives instructions, in both temporal and spiritual matters, to His devotees and makes them happy by enabling them to achieve the goal of their life. Sai, when places His hand on their heads, transfers His powers to them, and thus destroying the sense of differentiation, makes them attain the unattainable thing. He, Who embraces the Bhaktas, who prostrate themselves before Him with no sense of duality or differentiation. He becomes one with the Bhaktas, as the sea with the rivers. Now, to revert to the stories of this chapter.

Mrs. Dev's Udyapan Ceremony

Mr. B.V. Dev was a Mamlatdar at Dahanu (Thana district). His mother had observed 25 or 30 religious vows and a Udyapan (concluding) ceremony, in connection therewith, was to be performed. This ceremony included the feeding of 100 or 200 brahmins. Mr Dev fixed a date for the ceremony and wrote a letter to Bapusaheb Jog asking him to request Sai Baba on his behalf, to attend the dinner of the ceremony, as without His presence the ceremony would not be duly completed. Bapusaheb Jog read out the letter to Baba. Baba noted carefully the pure-hearted invitation, and said, **"I always think of him, who remembers Me. I require no conveyance, carriage, tonga, train, or aeroplane. I manifest Myself to him, who lovingly calls Me.** Write to him a reply that, three of us (the trio), Myself, yourself and a third person, will go and attend it." Mr. Jog informed Mr. Dev, of what Baba said. Mr. Dev was much pleased, but he knew that, Baba never went to any place, except Rahata, Rui and Nimgaon, in person. He also

thought that, nothing was impossible for Baba as He was all-pervading and that, He might suddenly come in any form and fulfil His words.

A few days before this, a Sanyaasi in bengali dress and professing to work for the cause of the protection of the cows, came to the station-master at Dahanu, to collect donations. The Station-master told him to go into the town, and see the Mamlatdar (Mr. Dev) and with his help collect funds. Just then, the Mamlatdar happened to come there. The station-master then introduced the Sanyaasi to him. Both sat talking on the platform. Mr. Dev told him that a subscription-list for some other charitable cause had already been prepared by the leading citizen, Rao Saheb Narottam Shetti, and so, it was not proper to start another subscription-list and that, it would be better, if he would visit the place after 2 or 4 months. Hearing this, the Sanyaasi left the place.

About a month afterwards, the Sanyaasi came in a tonga, which stopped in front of Mr. Dev's house at about 10 a.m. Dev thought that, he came for donations. On seeing him busy with the preparations of the ceremony, the Sanyaasi said that he had come not for money, but for meals. Dev said, "All right, you are welcome in the house." The Sanyaasi said, "Two lads are with me." Dev said, "Well, come with them." As there was about two hours for the meals to be served, Dev enquired, where he should sent for them. He said that, it was not necessary, as he would come himself at the appointed time. Dev asked him to come at noon. Exactly at twelve noon, the trio came, joined the party, and after feeding themselves went away.

After the ceremony was finished, Dev wrote a letter to Bapusaheb Jog, complaining of Baba's breach of promise. Jog went to Baba with the letter, but before it was opened Baba spoke, "Ah, he says that I promised him to come, but deceived him. Tell him that, I did attend his dinner with two others but he failed to recognise Me. Then, why did he call me at all? He thought that, the Sanyaasi came to ask for subscription money, did I not remove his doubt in that respect, and did I not say that I would come with two others, and did not the trio come in time and have their meals? **See, to keep My words, I would sacrifice my life, I would never be untrue to My words.**" This reply pleased Jog's heart, and he communicated the whole reply to Dev. As soon as he read it, he burst into tears of joy; but he took himself to task mentally, for vainly blaming Baba. He wondered, how he was deceived by the Sanyaasi's prior visit and his coming to him for subscriptions, how he also failed

to catch the significance of the Sanyaasi's words that, he would come with two others for meals.

This story clearly shows that, when the devotees surrender themselves completely to their Sadguru, He sees to it that, the religious functions in their houses are duly executed and complied with all the necessary formalities.

Hemadpant's Shimga Dinner

Now, let us take another story, which shows how Baba appeared in the form of His picture and fulfilled the desire of His devotee.

In 1917, on the morning of the full-moon day Hemadpant had a vision. Baba appeared to him in his dream in the form of a well-dressed Sanyaasi, woke him up, and said that He would come to him for meals that day. This vision constituted a part of the dream. When he fully woke up, he saw neither Sai nor any Sanyaasi. But, when he began to recollect the dream, he remembered each and every word the Sanyaasi uttered in his dream. Though, he was in contact with Baba for seven years and always meditated on Baba, he never expected that Baba would come to his house for meals. However, being much pleased with Baba's words, he went to his wife and informed her that being the Holi day a Sanyaasi was coming for meals and that, some more rice should be prepared. She enquired about the guest, who he was and where he was coming from. Then, not to cause any misunderstanding, he gave her the truth, and told her about the dream. She, doubtfully asked, whether it was possible that, Baba should come there (Bandra) from Shirdi, leaving the dainty dishes there to accept their coarse food. Hemadpant then assured her that Baba might not come in person, but He might attend in the form of a guest, and that they would lose nothing, if they cooked some more rice.

After this, preparations for the dinner went on, and it was ready at noon. The Holika-worship was through and the leaves¹, were spread and arranged with 'Rangoli' around them. Two rows were arranged with a central seat between them for the honourable guest. All members of the family – sons, grandsons, daughters and sons-in-law etc. came and occupied their seats, and the serving of the various items commenced. While this was being done, everybody was watching for

1. Big size leaves are stapled with firewood pieces as food is served on them, which are used as disposable plates.

the guest but none turned up, though it was past noon. Then, the entrance was closed, the Anna-shuddhi (ghee) was served. This was a signal to start eating. Formal offering to the Vaishwadeva (Fire), and Naivaidya to Shri Krishna were also over and the members were about to begin, when foot-steps in the stair-case were heard distinctly. Hemadpant went immediately and opened the door and saw two men there : (1) Ali Mohammed and (2) Moulana Ismu Mujavar. These two persons, seeing that meals were laid out and all the members were about to begin eating, apologised to Hemadpant and requested him to excuse their interference. They said, "You left your seat and came running to us, others are waiting for you, so, please take this thing, and I shall relate all about it later, at your convenience." Saying so, he took out from under his arm a packet, wrapped in an old newspaper, and placed it on the table. Hemadpant uncovered the packet and saw, to his great wonder and pleasant surprise, a big and nice picture of Sai Baba. On seeing it, he was much moved, tears ran down from his eyes and hair stood on end all over his body, and he bent and placed his head on the Feet of Baba in the picture. He thought that, Baba had blessed him by this miracle or Leela. Out of curiosity, he asked Ali Mohammed, how he got this picture. He said that, he bought it from a shop and that, he would give all the details about it afterwards; and wished that as all the members were waiting for him, he should go and join them. Hemadpant thanked him, bade them good-bye, and returned to the dining-hall. The picture was placed on the central seat, reserved for the guest, and after making the due offering of the Naivaidya, the whole party commenced eating and finished it in proper time. On seeing the beautiful form of Sai in the picture, everybody was extremely pleased and wondered, how all this happened.

This is how Sai Baba fulfilled His words, uttered by Him in the dream of Hemadpant. The story of the picture with all its details, viz., how Ali Mohammed got it, why he bought it and gave it to Hemadpant, is reserved for the next chapter.

Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all