

CHAPTER XXV

Damu Anna Kasar of Ahmednagar - (1) Speculations - (2) Amra-Leela

Preliminary

We begin this Chapter with a bow with all our eight limbs to Sai Baba, Who is an ocean of mercy, the God incarnate, who is Para-Brahman and the great Yogeshwara (Lord of Yoga). Victory be unto Sai Baba, Who is the crest-jewel of the Saints, who is the home of all auspicious things, who is our Atmaram (Dear Self), and who is the able refuge of the devotees. We prostrate ourselves before Him, Who has attained the aim and end of life.

Sai Baba is always full of mercy. What is wanted on our part is whole-hearted devotion to Him. When a devotee has got firm faith and devotion, his wishes are soon fulfilled. When the desire arose in the mind of Hemadpant to write the life and Leelas of Sai Baba, He immediately got it written by him. When the order 'to keep the memos' was given, Hemadpant was inspired and his intellect got strength and boldness to undertake and finish the work. He was not, he say, qualified to write the work, but the gracious blessings of Baba enabled him to complete the undertaking; and thus you have this Satcharita which is a Somakant jewel, from which nectar in the form of Sai Leelas oozes out for the readers to drink to their hearts' content.

Whenever, a devotee had complete and whole-hearted devotion to Sai Baba, all his calamities and dangers were warded off and his welfare attended to by Baba. The story of Damodar Savalaram Resane, Kasar of Ahmednagar (now of Poona) alias Damu Anna illustrating the above statement, is given below.

Damu Anna

The readers are aware that a mention of this gentleman was made in the 6th Chapter, regarding the celebration of Rama-Navami festival in Shirdi. He went to Shirdi about the year 1895, when the Rama-Navami Utsava-celebration began and from that time he has been providing an ornamental flag for that occasion every year. He also feeds the poor and the fakirs that come there for the festival.

His Speculations : (1) Cotton

A Bombay friend of Damu Anna wrote to him, that they should

do some cotton-speculation business in partnership which would bring them about two lacs of rupees as profit. (Damu Anna says in his statement made about the year 1936 to Mr. B.V.Narasimha Swami that the proposal about speculating at Bombay in cotton was from a broker who was not to be a partner, and that he (Damu Anna) was to be the sole adventurer: - vide P.75 of the Devotees' Experiences Part II). The broker wrote that the business was good and involved no risks and that the opportunity should not be lost. Damu Anna was oscillating in his mind. He could not at once determine to venture in the speculation. He thought about this and as he was a devotee of Baba, he wrote a detailed letter to Shama giving all the facts and requested him to consult Baba and take His advice in the matter. Shama got the letter next day and when he came with it at noon to the Masjid and placed it before Baba. He asked Shama what the matter was, and what the paper (letter) was about. He replied that Damu Anna of Nagar wanted to consult Him about something. Then Baba said - "What does he write, and what does he plan? It seems that he wants to catch the sky and that he is not content with what God has given him; read his letter". Shama than said, "The letter contains what you have just said now. Oh, Deva you sit here calm and composed and agitate the devotees and when they get restless, you draw them here, some in person and others through letters. If you know the contents of the latter, why do you then press me to read it?" Baba said - "Oh Shama, read it please. I speak at random and who believes Me."

Then Shama read the letter and Baba heard it attentively and said feelingly - "The Shet (Damu Anna) has gone mad; write to him in reply that nothing is wanting in his house. Let him be content with the half loaf (bread) he has now and let him not bother himself about lacs." Shama sent the reply which Damu Anna was anxiously waiting for. Reading it, he found that all his hopes and prospects about lacs of rupees as profit were dashed to the ground. He thought that he had done a mistake in consulting Baba. But as Shama had hinted in the reply that there was always much difference in seeing and hearing and that, therefore, he should come to Shirdi personally and see Baba. He thought it advisable to go to Shirdi and consult Baba personally about the affair. So he went to Shirdi, saw Baba, prostrated himself before Him and sat shampooing His legs. He had no courage to ask Baba openly about the speculation, but he thought in his mind, that it would be better if some share in the business should be assigned to Baba and said in his mind, that if Baba were to help him in this transaction, he would surrender some share of profits to Him. Damu Anna was thus thinking secretly in his mind, but nothing

was veiled from Baba; everything past, present and future were clear to Him as an Amalaka fruit in hand. A child wants sweets, but its mother gives bitter pills; the former spoil its health, while the latter improve it. So the mother looking to the welfare of her infant, coaxes it and gives it bitter pills. Baba, kind mother as He was, knew the present and future prospects of His devotees, and therefore reading Damu Anna's mind, He openly spoke to him - "Bapu, I do not want to be entangled in any such wordly things (sharing profits)." Seeing Baba's disapproval Damu Anna dropped the enterprise.

(2) Grain-Dealing

Then he thought of trading in grain, rice, wheat and other groceries. Baba read also this thought and said to him, "You will be buying at five seers and selling at seven seers a rupee". So this business was also given up. The rice in the prices of grains was kept up for some time, and Baba's prophecy seemed to be falsified, but in a month or two there was abundant rain everywhere and the prices suddenly fell down; and, therefore, those who stored grains suffered a severe loss. Damu Anna was saved from this fate. Needless to say that the cotton speculation which was conducted by the broker with the help of another merchant also collapsed with a severe loss to the adventurers. After seeing that Baba had saved him from two severe losses in cotton and grain speculations, Damu Anna's faith in Baba grew strong and he remained a true devotee of Baba till His passing away and even now.

Amra-Leela (Mango miracle)

Once a parcel of about 300 good mangoes was received at Shirdi. It was sent from Goa by one Mamlatdar named Rale to Sai Baba in the name of Shama. When it was opened, all the mangoes were found to be in a good condition. They were given in Shama's charge and only four were retained and placed in the kolamba (pot) by Baba. He said that, "These four fruits are for Damu Anna, let them lie there".

This Damu Anna had three wives. According to his statement mentioned above, he had not three but two wives only. He had no issue. He consulted many astrologers and himself studied astrology to some extent and found that as there was a 'papi' (inauspicious) planet in his horoscope, there was no prospect of any issue to him in this life. But he had great faith in Baba. When he went to Shirdi, two hours after the receipt of the mango parcel, for worshipping Baba, He said, "Though other people are looking for the mangoes, they are Dammya's. He whose they are, should 'eat and die'." Damu Anna on hearing these words was first shocked, but on Mhalsapati (a

prominent Shirdi devotees) explaining to him that death meant the death of the little self or egos, and to have it at Baba's Feet was a blessing, he said that he would accept the fruits and eat them. But Baba said to him. "Do not eat yourself, but give them to your junior wife. This Amra-Leela (mango miracle of 4 mangoes) will give her four sons and four daughters. This was done and ultimately in due course it was found Baba's words turned out true and not those of the astrologers.

Baba's speech established its efficacy or greatness while He was living in the flesh, but wonder of wonders! It did the same even after His passing away. Baba said - "Believe Me, though I pass away, My bones in My tomb will give you hope and confidence. Not only Myself but My tomb would be speaking, moving and communicating with those who would surrender themselves whole-heartedly to Me. Do not be anxious that I would be absent from you. You will hear My bones speaking and discussing your welfare. But remember Me always, believe in Me heart and soul and then you will be most benefited.

Prayer

Hemadpant closes this Chapter with a prayer. "Oh Sai Sad-guru, the wish fulfilling tree of the Bhaktas, Let us never forget and lose sight of Your Feet; we have been troubled with the ins and outs (births and deaths) in this samsar; now free us from this cycle of births and deaths. Restrain us from the outgoing of our senses to their objects and introvert us and bring us face to face with the Atma (Self). As long as this outgoing tendency of the senses and the mind is not checked, there is no prospect of self-realisation. Neither son, nor wife nor friend will be of any use in the end. It is only You, Who will give us salvation and happiness. Destroy completely our tendency for discussions and other evil matters, let out tongue get a passion for chanting Your name. Drive out our thoughts, good or otherwise and make us forget our bodies and houses, and do away with our egoism. Make us ever remember Your name and forget all other things. Remove the restlessness of our mind, and make it steady and calm. If you just clasp us, the darkness of night of our ignorance will vanish and we shall live happily in Your light. That You made us drink the nectar of Your Leelas and awakened us from our slumber is due to Your grace and our store of merits in past births".

Note :- In this connection the following extract from Damu Anna's

statement mentioned above, is worth perusal, (Page 76).

"Once when I sat at His Feet along with many others, I had two questions in my mind and He gave answers to both.

(1) There are so many crowding to Sai Baba. Do they all get benefit from Him?

To this, He replied orally - "Look at the mango tree in blossom. If all the flowers brought fruit, what a splendid crop it would be. But do they? Most fall off (either as flowers or as unripe fruits) by wind etc. Very few remain".

(2) The second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how am I to fare then? To this Baba answered that **He would be with me when and wherever I thought of Him. That promise He had kept up before 1918 and has been keeping up after 1918. He is still with me. He is still guiding me.** This was about 1910-11, when brothers separated from me and my sister died, and there was a theft and police enquiry, all of which incidents upset me very much.

When my sister died, my mind was much upset. I did not care for life and enjoyments. When I went to Baba, He pacified me with His Upadesh and made me eat a feast of Pooran Poli at Appa Kulkarni's house and get pasted with sandal.

There was a theft in my house. A thirty year's friend of mine stole my wife's jewel-box, including her auspicious Nathi (nose-ring). I wept before Baba's photo. The next day, the man returned the jewel-box and prayed for pardon.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all