

CHAPTER XXX

Drawn To Shirdi

(1) Kakaji Vaidya of Vani - (2) Punjabi Ramalal of Bombay.

In this Chapter the story of two more devotees that were drawn to Shirdi, is narrated.

Preliminary

Bow to the Kind Sai Who is the Abode of Mercy and Who is affectionate towards His devotees. By His mere darshan, He does away with their fear of this 'bhava' (samsar) and destroys their calamities. He was first Nirgun (formless), but on account of the devotion of His Bhaktas, He was obliged to take a form. To give liberation - self-realisation to the Bhaktas is the mission of the saints, and for Sai - the Chief of them, that mission is inevitable. Those who take refuge in His Feet have all their sins destroyed and their progress is certain. Remembering His Feet, Brahmins from holy places come to Him and read scriptures and chant the Gayatri mantra in His presence. We, who are weak and without any merits, do not know what Bhakti is but we know this much, that though all others may leave us, Sai won't forsake us. Those whom He favours get enormous strength, discrimination between the Unreal and the Real and knowledge.

Sai knows fully the desire of His devotees and fulfills the same. Hence they get what they want and are grateful. So we invoke Him and prostrate ourselves before Him. Forgetting all our faults let Him free us from all anxieties. He who being overcome with calamities remembers and prays Sai thus, will get his mind calmed and pacified through His grace.

This Sai - the ocean of mercy, says Hemadpant, favoured him and the result of this, is the present work - Sai-Satcharia. Otherwise what qualifications had he and who would undertake this enterprise? But as Sai took all the responsibility, Hemadpant felt no burden, nor any care about this. When the powerful Light of knowledge was there to inspire his speech and pen, why should he entertain any doubt or feel any anxiety? Sai got the service in the form of this book done by him; this is due to the accumulation of his merits in the past births and, therefore, he thinks himself fortunate and blessed.

The following story is not a mere tale, but pure nectar. He who drinks it will realise Sai's greatness and all-pervasiveness. Those who want to argue and criticise, should not go in for these stories. What is wanted here, is not discussion but unlimited love and devotion. Learned, devout and faithful believers or those, who consider themselves as servants of the Saints, will like and appreciate these stories, others will take them to be fables. The fortunate Bhaktas of Sai, will find the Sai-leelas as the Kalpataru (Wish-fulfilling Tree). Drinking this nectar of Sai-leelas, will give liberation to the ignorant Jivas, satisfaction to the house-holders and a sadhana to the aspirants. Now to the story of this Chapter.

Kakaji Vaidya

There lived in Vani, Nasik District, a man named Kakaji Vaidya. He was the priest of the Goodness Sapta-Shringi there. He was so much overwhelmed with adverse circumstances and calamities that he lost peace of mind and became quite restless. Under such circumstances one evening he went into the temple of the Goodess and prayed unto Her from the bottom of his heart and invoked Her aid to free him from anxiety. The Goddess was pleased with his devotion and the same night appeared to him in his dream and said to him, "You go to Baba and then your mind will become calm and composed". Kakaji was anxious to know from Her who that Baba was, but before he could get any explanation, he was awakened. Then he began to think as to who might be that Baba, to whom the Goodess has asked him to go. After some thinking, he resolved that this Baba might be 'Tryambakeshwar' (Lord Shiva). So he went to the holy place 'Tryambak' (Nasik District) and stayed there for ten days. During this period, he bathed early in the morning, chanted the 'Rudra' hymns, did the 'Abhishekam' (pouring unceasingly fresh cold water over the Pindi) and did other religious rites; but with all that, he was as restless as before. Then he returned to his place and again invoked the Goddess most pitifully. They night She again appeared in his dream and said - "Why did you go to Tryambakeshwar in vain? I mean by Baba - Shri Sai Samarth of Shirdi."

The question before Kakaji now was 'How and when to go to Shirdi and how to see Baba? If anybody is in real earnest to see a Saint, not only the Saint but God also, fulfills his wish. In fact the 'Sant' (Saint) and the 'Anant' (God) are one and the same; there is not the least difference between them. If anybody thinks that he will go himself and see a Saint, that will be a mere boast. Unless the Saint wills it, who is able to go and see him? Even the leaf

of the tree won't move without his bidding. The more anxious a Bhakta is for the saint's visit, the more devout and faithful he is, the more speedily and effectively is his wish satisfied to his heart's content. He who invites anybody for a visit, also arranges everything for his reception, and so it happened with Kakaji.

Shama's Vows

When Kakaji was thinking his visit to Shirdi, a guest came to him at his place to take him to Shirdi. He was no other than Shama, a very close and intimate devotee of Baba. How he came to Vani at this juncture, we shall just see. Shama was severely ill when he was very young and his mother had taken a vow to her family Goddess Sapta-Shringi at Vani, that if the son got well, she would bring and dedicate him at Her feet. Then after some years the mother herself suffered much from ring-worms on her breasts. At that time she again took another vow to her Deity that if she got all right, she would offer Her two silver breasts. These two vows remained unfulfilled. At her death-bed she called her son Shama to her and drew his attention to the vows and after taking a promise from him that he would fulfill them, she breathed her last. After some time, Shama quite forgot about these vows and thus 30 years elapsed. About this time a famous astrologer had come to Shirdi and stayed there for a month. His predictions in the case of Shriman Booty and others came true and everybody was satisfied. Shama's younger brother Bapaji consulted him and was told that his mother's vows, which his elder brother promised to fulfill at her death-bed, were not yet fulfilled; hence the Goddess was displeased with them and bringing troubles on them. Bapaji told this to his brother Shama who was then reminded of the unfulfilled vows. Thinking that any further delay would be dangerous, he called a goldsmith and got a pair of silver breast prepared. Then he went to the Masjid, prostrated himself before Baba and, placing before Him the two silver breast, requested Him to accept them and free him from the vows as He was to him his Sapta-Shringi Goddess. Then Baba insisted upon him to go himself to the temple of Sapta-Shringi and offer them in person at the feet of the Goddess. Then after taking Baba's permission and Udi, he left for Vani and searching for the priest came to Kakaji's house. Kakaji was then very anxious to visit Bab and Shama went there to see him, at that very time. What a wonderful coincidence is this!

Kakaji asked him who he was and whence he had come, and on learning that he came from Shirdi, he at once embraced him. So overpowered was he with love! Then they talked about Sai-leelas and after finishing the rites of Shama's vows, they both started for Shirdi. On reaching the place, Kakaji went to the Masjid, and fell at Baba's Feet. His eyes were soon bedewed with tears, and his mind attained calmness. According to the vision of the Goddess, no sooner did he see Baba, that his mind lost all its restlessness and it became calm and composed. Kakaji began to think, in his mind, "What a wonderful power is this! Baba spoke nothing, there was no question and answer, no benediction pronounced; the mere darshana itself was so conducive to happiness; the restlessness of my mind disappeared by His mere darshan, consciousness of joy came upon me - this is what is called 'the greatness of darshan'." His vision was fixed on Sai's feet and he could utter no word. Hearing Baba's Leelas, his joy knew no bounds. He surrendered himself completely to Baba, forgot his anxiety and cares and got undiluted happiness. He lived happily there for twelve days and after taking Baba's leave, Udi and blessings returned home.

Khushalchand of Rahata

It is said that a dream, which we get in the small hours of the morning, generally comes out true in the walking state. This may be so, but regarding Baba's dreams there is no restriction of time. To quote an instance :- Baba told Kakasaheb Dixit one afternoon to go to Rahata and fetch Khushalchand to Shirdi, as He had not seen him since long. Kakasaheb accordingly took a tanga and went to Rahata. He saw Khushalchand and gave him Baba's message. Hearing it, Khushalchand was surprised and said that he was taking a noon nap after meals when Baba appeared in his dream and asked him to come to Shirdi immediately and that he was anxious to go. As he had no horse of his own nearby, he had sent his son to inform Baba; when his son was just out of the village-border, Dixit's tanga turned up. Dixit then said that he was sent specially to bring him. Then they both went in the tanga back to Shirdi. Khushalchand saw Baba and all were pleased. Seeing this Leela of Baba, Khushalchand was much moved.

Punjabi Ramalal of Bombay

Once a Punjabi Brahmin of Bombay named Ramalal got a dream in which Baba appeared and asked him to come to Shirdi. Baba

appeared to him as a Mahant (Saint), but he did not know His whereabouts. He thought that he should go and see Him, but as he knew not His address, he did not know what to do. But He Who calls anybody for an interview makes the necessary arrangements for the same. The same happened in this case. The same afternoon when he was strolling in the streets, he saw a picture of Baba in a shop. The features of the Mahant, he saw in the dream, exactly tallied with those of the picture. Then making enquiries, he came to know that the picture was of Sai Baba of Shirdi. He then went soon after to Shirdi and stayed there till his death.

In this way Baba brought His devotees to Shirdi for darshan and satisfied their wants, material as well as spiritual.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all