

CHAPTER XXXVI

Wonderful Stories of

(1) Two Goa Gentleman - (2) Mrs. Aurangabadkar.

This Chapter relates the wonderful stories of two gentlemen from Goa and Mrs. Aurangabadkar of Sholapur.

Two Gentlemen

Once two gentlemen came from Goa for taking darshan of Sai Baba, and prostrated themselves before him. Though both came together, Baba asked only one of them to give Him Rs.15/- as Dakshina which was paid willingly. The other man voluntarily offered Rs. 35/-. This sum was rejected by Baba to the astonishment of all. Shama, who was present, asked Baba, "What is this? Both came together, one's Dakshina you accept, the other, though voluntarily paid, you refuse. Why this distinction? Baba replied, "Shama, you know nothing. I take nothing from anybody. The Masjidmayi (The presiding Deity of the Masjid) calls for the debt, the donor pays it and becomes free. Have I any home, property or family to look after? I require nothing. I am ever free. Debt, enmity and murder have to be atoned for, there is no escape". Baba then continued in His characteristic way as follows:-

As first he was poor and took a vow to his God that he would pay his first month's salary if he got an appointment. He got one on Rs.15/- p.m. Then he steadily got promotions, from Rs.15/- he got Rs. 30, 60, 100, 200 and ultimately Rs.700/- per month. But in his prosperity he forgot clean the vow he took. The force of his karma has driven him here and I asked that amount (Rs.15/-) from him as Dakshina.

Another story, While wandering by the sea-side I came to a huge mansion and sat on its verandah. The owner gave me a good reception and fed me sumptuously. He showed me a neat and clean place near a cupboard for sleeping. I slept there. While I was sound asleep, the man removed a literite slab and broke the wall entered in and scissored off all the money from my pocket. When I woke up, I found that Rs.30,000/- were stolen. I was greatly distressed and sat weeping and moaning. The money was in currency notes and I thought that the Brahmin had stolen it. I lost all interest in food

and drink and sat for a fortnight on the verandah, bemoaning my loss. After the fortnight was over, a passing fakir saw me crying, and made enquiries regarding the cause of my sorrow. I told him everything. He said, "If you act according to my bidding, you will recover your money; go to a fakir, I shall give his whereabouts, surrender yourself to him, he will get back your money; in the meanwhile give up your favourite food till you recover your money." I followed the fakir's advice and got my money. Then I left the Wada and went to the sea-shore. There was a steamer, but I could not get into it as it was crowded. There a good-natured peon interceded for me and I got in luckily. That brought me to another shore, where I caught a train and came to the Masjidmayi.

The story finished and Baba asked Shama to take the guests and arrange for their feeding. Then Shama took them home and fed them. At dinner, Shama said to the guests that Baba's story was rather mysterious, as He had never gone to the sea-side, never had any money (Rs.30,000/-), never travelled, never lost any money and never recovered it, and enquired whether they understood it and caught its significance. The guests were deeply moved and were shedding tears. In a choking voice they said that Baba was omniscient, infinite, the One (Para Brahma) without a second. The story He gave out is exactly our story, What He spoke has already taken place in our case. How He knew this, is a wonder of wonders! We shall give all the details after the meals.

Then after the meals while they were chewing betel-leaves, the guests began to tell their stories. One of them said:-

"A hill-station on the ghats is my native place. I went to Goa to earn my living by securing a job. I took a vow to God Datta that if I got any service, I would offer Him my first month's salary. By His grace I got an appointment of Rs.15/- and then I got promotions as described by Baba. I did forget all about my vow. Baba has just reminded me of it in this way and recovered Rs. 15/- from me. It is not Dakshina as one may think it to be, but a repayment of an old debt and fulfillment of long forgotten vow".

Moral

Baba never, in fact, actually begged any money, nor allowed His Bhaktas to beg. He regarded money as a danger or bar to spiritual progress and did not allow His Bhaktas to fall into its clutches. Bhagat Mhalsapati, is an instance on this point. He was very poor and could hardly make both ends meet. Baba never

allowed him to make any money, nor gave him anything from the Dakshina amount. Once a kind and liberal merchant named Hansaraj gave a large amount of money to Mhalsapati in Baba's presence, but Baba did not allow him to accept it.

Then the second guest began his tale. "My Brahmin (cook) was serving me faithfully for 35 years. Unfortunately he fell into bad ways, his mind changed and he robbed me of my treasure. By removing a laterite slab from my wall where my cup-board is fixed, he came in while we were all asleep and carried away all my accumulated wealth, Rs. 30,000/- in currency notes. I know not how Baba mentioned the exact amount. I sat crying day and night. My enquiries came to nothing. I spent a fortnight in great anxiety. As I sat on the verandah, sad and dejected, a passing fakir noted my condition and enquired of its cause, and I told him all about it. He told me that an Avalia by name Sai lives in Shirdi, Kopergaon Taluka. Make vow to Him and give up any food that you like best and say to Him mentally that 'I have given up eating that food till I take your darshan'. Then I took the vow and gave up eating rice and s0aid, "Baba, I will eat it after recovering my property and after taking your darshan".

Fifteen days passed after this. The Brahmin, of his own accord, came to me, returned my money and apologized, saying, "I went mad and acted thus; I now place my head on your feet, please forgive me". Thus everything ended well. The fakir that met me and helped me, was not seen again. An intensive desire to see Sai Baba, whom the fakir pointed out to me, arose in my mind. I thought that the fakir who came all the way to my house was no other than Sai Baba. Would He, who saw me and helped me to get my lost money ever covet to get Rs.35/-? On the contrary without expecting anything from us, He always tries His best to lead us on the path of spiritual progress.

I was overjoyed when I recovered my stolen property and being infatuated, I forgot all about my vow. Then when I was at Colaba, one night I saw Sai Baba in my dream. This reminded me of my promised visit to Shirdi. I went to Goa and from there wanted to start for Shirdi, by taking a steamer to Bombay, en route. But when I came to the harbour, I found that the steamer was crowded and there was no place. The captain did not allow me, but on the intercession of a peon, who was stranger to me, I was allowed to get into the steamer which brought me to Bombay. From there, I got in the train and came here. Surely I think that Baba is all-pervading and all-knowing. What are we and where

is our home? How great our good fortune that Baba got back our money and drew us here to Himself? You Shirdi folk must be infinitely superior and more fortunate than we; for Baba has played, laughed, talked and lived with you for so many years. I think that your store of good merits must be infinite, for it attracted Baba into Shirdi. Sai is our Datta. He ordered the vow. He gave me a seat in the steamer and brought me here and thus gave proof of His omniscience and omnipotence".

Mrs. Aurangabadkar

A lady from Sholapur, wife of Sakharam Aurangabadkar had no issue during the long period of 27 years. She had made a number of vows of Gods and Goddesses for an issue, but was not successful. She then became almost hopeless. To make a last attempt in this matter, she came to Shirdi with her step-son Vishwanath and stayed there for two months, serving Baba. Whenever she went to the Masjid, she found it full and Baba surrounded by devotees. She wanted to see Baba alone, fall at His feet and open her heart and pray for an issue, but she got no suitable opportunity. Ultimately she requested Shama to intercede with Baba for her when He was alone. Shama said to her that Baba's Darbar was open, still he would try for her and that the Lord might bless her. He asked her to sit ready with a cocoa-nut and joss-sticks on the open courtyard at the time of Baba's meals and that when he beckoned to her, she should come up. One day after dinner, Shama was rubbing Baba's wet hands with a towel when the latter pinched Shama's cheek. Shama feigning anger said, "Deva, is it proper for you to pinch me like this? We don't want such a mischievous God who pinches us thus. Are we Your dependents, is this the fruit of our intimacy?" Baba replied, "Oh Shama, during the 72 generations that you were with me, I never pinched you till now and now you resent my touching you". Shama, "We want a God that will give us ever kisses and sweets to eat; we do not want any respect from You, or heaven, balloon etc. Let our faith unto Your Feet be ever wide-awake". Baba, "Yes, I have indeed come for that. I have been feeding and nursing you and have got love and affection for you".

Then Baba went up and took his seat. Shama beckoned to the lady. She came up, bowed and presented the cocoa-nut and joss-sticks. Baba shook the cocoa-nut which was dry. The Kernal within rolled and made a noise. Baba said, "Shama, this is rolling, see what it says". Shama, "The woman prays that a child might be similarly rolling and quickening in the womb. So give her the cocoa-nut with Your blessing".

Baba, "Will the coconut give her any issue? How people are foolish and fancy such things!"

Shama, "I know the power of Your word and blessing. Your word will give her a string or series of children. You are wrangling and not giving real blessing".

The parley went on for a while. Baba repeatedly ordering to break the coconut and Shama pleading for the gift of the unbroken fruit to the lady. Finally Baba yielded and said, "She will have an issue". "When?" asked Shama. "In 12 months" was the reply. The cocoa-nut was therefore broken into two part, one was eaten by the two, the other was given to the lady.

The Shama turned up to the lady and said, "Dear madam, you are a witness to my words. If within 12 months you do not get any issue, I will break a cocoa-nut against this Deva's head and drive him out of this Masjid. If I fail in this, I will not call myself Madhav. You will soon realize what I say".

She delivered a son in one year's time and the son was brought to Baba in his fifth month. Both husband and wife, prostrated themselves before Baba and the grateful father (Mr. Aurangabadkar) paid a sum of Rs.500/- which was spent in constructing a shed for Baba's house "Shyamakarna".

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all