

Chapter 29

Stories of (1) Madrasi Bhajani Mela - (2) Tendulkars (Father and son) - (3) Dr. Captain Hate - (4) Waman Narvekar.

This Chapter described other interesting and wonderful stories of Sai Baba.

(1) Chennai's Bhajani Mela

It was in the year 1916 that a Madrasi Bhajani Mela (Party of the Ramadasi Panth) started on a Pilgrimage to the holy city of Banaras. The Party consisted of a man, his wife, daughter and sister-in-law. Unfortunately their names are not mentioned. On their way, the party heard that there lived at Shirdi in Kopergaon Taluka, Ahmednagar District, a great sage named Sai Baba, who was calm and composed, and who was very liberal and who distributed money every day to His Bhaktas and to skilful persons, who went and showed their skill there. A lot of money in the form of Dakshina was collected daily by Sai Baba and out of this amount, He gave daily one rupee to a three year old girl Amani, the daughter of a Bhakta Kondaji and Rs. 2 to 5 to some, Rs. 6 to Jamali, the mother of Amani and Rs. 10 to 20 and even Rs. 50 to other Bhaktas as He pleased. On hearing all this the party came to Shirdi and stayed there. The Mela did very good bhajan and sang very good songs, but inwardly they craved for money. Three of the party were full of avarice, but the chief lady or mistress was of a very different nature. She had a regard and love for Baba. Once it so happened, that when the noon-day Arati was going on, Baba was much pleased with her faith and devotion, and was pleased to give her darshan of her Ishtam (Beloved Deity). To her Baba appeared as Sitanath (Rama) while to all the others the usual Sainath. On seeing her beloved Deity, she was very much moved.

Tears began to flow from her eyes and she clapped her hands in joy. The people began to wonder at her joyful mood; but were not able to guess its cause. Late in the afternoon she disclosed everything to her husband. She told him how she saw Shri Rama in Sai Baba. He thought that she was very simple and devout, and her seeing Rama might be a hallucination of her mind. He poohpooed her, saying that it was not possible, that she alone should see Rama while they all saw Sai Baba. She did not resent this remark, as she was fortunate enough to get Ramadarshan now and then, when her mind was calm and composed and free from avarice.

Wonderful Vision

Things were going on like this, when the husband got a wonderful vision in his dream one night as follows :- He was in a big city, the police there had arrested him, tied his hands with a rope, and put him up in a cage (lock-up). As the police were tightening the grip, he saw Sai Baba standing quiet outside, near the cage. On seeing Baba so near, he said in a plaintive tone - "Hearing Your fame I came to Your Feet and why should a calamity befall me when You are standing here in person?" Baba said - "You must suffer the consequences of your action" He said - "I have not done anything in this life which would bring such a misfortune on me." Baba said - "If not in this life, you must have committed some sin in your past life." He replied, "I do not know anything of my past life, but assuming that I did commit some sin then, why should it not be burnt and destroyed in Your presence, as dry grass before fire?" Baba - "Have you got such faith?" He - "Yes." Baba then asked him to close his eyes. No sooner did he shut them than he heard a thumping sound of something falling down, and opening his eyes, he saw that he was free and the police had fallen down, bleeding. Being much frightened he began to look at Baba who said - "Now you are well caught, officers will now come and arrest you." Then he begged - "There is no other saviour except You, save me anyhow." Then Baba again asked him to close his eyes. He did so and when he opened them, he saw that he was free, out of the cage and that Baba was by his side. He then fell at Baba's Feet. Baba then asked him - "Is there any difference between this namaskar and your previous ones? Think well and reply." He said "There is a lot of difference; my former namaskaras were offered with the object of getting money from You, but the present namaskar is one offered to You as God; besides, formerly I thought resentfully that you, being a Mahomendan, were spoiling us, the Hindus". Baba "Do you not believe in your mind in Mahomendan Gods?" He said "No". Then Baba said - "Have you not got a Panja (Emblem of Hand) in your house and do you not worship the same in Tabut, i.e. Moharum festival? Also there is in your house another Mahomedan Deity by name Kadbbibi, whom you propitiate and appease on your marriage and other festivals. Is it not so?" He admitted all this. Then Baba said, "What more do you want?" Then a desire arose in his mind to get the darshan of his Guru Ramdas, when Baba asked him to turn back and see. And when he turned, lo, Ramadas was in front of him. No sooner did he begin to fall at His Feet, Ramadas vanished. Then he inquisitively asked Baba, "You look old. Do You know Your age?" Baba - "What! Do you say I am old! just run a race with Me and see." Saying this Baba began to run and he too followed. Baba disappeared in the dust raised by His foot-steps while running and the man was awakened.

After awakening he began to think seriously about the dream-vision. His mental attitude was completely changed and he realised the greatness of Baba. After this, his grabbing and doubting tendencies disappeared and true devotion to Baba's Feet sprang in his mind. The vision was a mere dream, but the questions and answers therein were most significant and interesting. Next morning when all the persons assembled in the Masjid for the Arati, Baba gave him as prasad two rupees' worth sweetmeats and also two rupees from His pocket and blessed him. He made him stay there for a few more days and gave him His blessing, saying, "Allah (God) will give you plenty and He will do you all good". He did not get more money there, but he got far better things viz. Baba's blessing which stood him in good stead all along. The party got plenty of money afterwards and their pilgrimage was successful as they had not to suffer any trouble or inconvenience during their journey. They all returned home safe and sound, thinking of Baba's words and blessings and the Anand(Bliss) they experienced by His grace.

This story illustrates one of the methods, which Baba followed (and is following even now) in some cases to improve and reform His devotees.

(2) Tendulkar family

There lived in Bandra (a suburb of Bombay) a Tendalkar family, all the members of which were devoted to Baba. Mrs. Savitribai Tendulkar has published a Marathi book named "Shri Sainath Bhajan Mala" containing 800 abhangas and padas describing the Leelas of Baba. It is a book worth reading by those who are interested in Baba. The son, Babu Tendulkar was studying hard day and night and wanted to appear for the medical examination. He consulted some astrologers. Examining his horoscope they told him that the stars were not favourable that year and that he should appear for the examination next year, when he would be certainly successful. This cast a gloom over him and made him restless. A few days afterwards his mother went to Shirdi and saw Baba. Amongst other things she mentioned the gloomy and morose condition of her son, who was to appear for the examination in a few days. Hearing this Baba said to her, "Tell your son to believe in Me, to throw aside horoscopes and predictions of astrologers and palmists and go on with his studies. Let him appear for the examination with a calm mind, he is sure to pass this year. Ask him to trust in Me and not to get disappointed". The mother returned home and communicated Baba's message to her son. Then he studied hard and in due course appeared for the examination. In the written papers he did well, but being overwhelmed by doubts he thought that he would not secure sufficient marks for passing. So he did not care to appear for the oral examination. But the examiner was after him. He sent word through a fellow- student, stating that he had passed in the written examination and that he should appear for the oral. The son being thus encouraged appeared for the oral examination and was successful in both. Thus he got through the examination that year successfully by Baba's grace, though the stars were against him. It is to be noted here that doubts and difficulties surround us just to move us and confirm our faith.

We are tested as it were. If we only hold on steadily to Baba with full faith and continue our endeavours, our efforts will be ultimately crowned with success.

The father of this boy, Raghunathrao was serving in some foreign mercantile firm in Bombay. As he grew old, he was not able to attend to his work properly and so he had to take leave and rest. As he did not improve during the period of leave a further extension of leave or retirement from service was inevitable. The Chief Manager of the

firm decided to retire him on pension as he was an old and a reliable servant. The question regarding the amount of pension to be given was under consideration. He was getting Rs.150/- p.m. and his pension i.e. half the amount viz. Rs. 75/- would not be enough to meet the expenses of the family. So they were all anxious about this matter. Fifteen days before the final settlement, Baba appeared to Mrs. Tendulkar in her dream and said, "I wish that Rs. 100/- should be paid (settled) as pension, will this satisfy you?" She replied "Baba, why ask me this? We fully trust in You". Though Baba said Rs.100/- still he was given ten Rupees more i.e. Rs.110/- as a special case. Such wonderful love and care did Baba exhibit for His Bhaktas.

(3) Captain Hate

Captain Hate, who was staying in Bikaner, was a great devotee of Baba. Once Baba appeared to him in his dream and said "Did you forget Me?" Hate then immediately held Baba's Feet and replied, "If a child forgets his mother, how could it be saved?" Then Hate went into the garden and took out fresh walpapadi vegetables, and arranging 'shidha' (ghee, wheat-flour and dal etc.) and Dakshina, was about to offer all this to Baba when he was awakened and came to know that the whole thing was a dream.

Then he decided to send all these things to Baba at Shirdi. When he came to Gwalior some days afterwards, he sent Rs.12/- by money order to a friend, with instructions that Rs. 2 should be spent in buying shidha articles and walpapadi vegetables, and those should be offered to Baba with Rs. 10 as Dakshina. The friend went to Shirdi and purchased the things mentioned, but walpapadi was not available. In a short time a woman turned up with a basket on her head, which curiously enough contained the vegetables. It was purchased and then all the things were offered to Baba on behalf of Captain hate. Mr. Nimonkar prepared the 'naivedya' (rice and walpapadi vegetables) next day and offered the same to Baba. All the people were surprised to see that Baba while dining, took and ate walpapadi, and did not touch rice and other things. Hate's joy knew no bounds when he heard of this from his friend.

Consecrated Rupee

At another time Captain Hate wished that he should have in his house a coin of rupee consecrated by Baba with His touch. He came across a friend who was bound for Shirdi. With him Hate sent his rupee. The friend went to Shirdi and after the usual salutation gave first his Dakshina which Baba pocketed. Then he gave Hate's rupee, which Baba took in His hand and began to stare at it. He held it in front, tossed it up with His right thumb and played with it. Then He said to the friend, "Return this to its owner with the Prasad of Udi, tell him that I want nothing from him, ask him to live in peace and contentment." The friend returned to Gwalior, handed over the consecrated rupee to Hate, and told him all the happened at Shirdi. This time Hate was much pleased and realised that Baba always encouraged good thoughts, and as he wished intently, Baba fulfilled the same accordingly.

(4) Waman Narvekar

Now let the readers hear a different story. A gentleman, named Waman Narvekar loved Baba very much. He once brought a rupee. On one side (obverse) of it were engraved the figures of Rama, Laxman and Sita and on the other (reverse) side was engraved the figure of Maruti, with folded hands. He offered it to Baba with a hope that He should consecrate it with His touch and return it to him with Udi. But Baba immediately pocketed it. Then Shama spoke to Baba, regarding Wamanrao's intention and requested Him to return it. Then Baba spoke in the presence of Wamanrao as follows :- "Why should it be returned to him? We should keep it ourselves. If he gives Rs.25/- for it, it will be returned." Then, for the sake of that rupee, Wamanrao collected Rs.25/- and placed them before Baba. Then Baba said, "The value of that rupee far exceeds 25 Rupees. Shama, take this rupee, let us have it in our store, keep this in your shrine and worship it." No one had the courage to ask Baba why He followed this particular action. He only knows what is best and most suitable to each and all.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

