

Chapter 40

(1) Attending Mrs.Deo's Udyapan Ceremony as a Sannyasi with two Others (Trio) and - (2) Hemadpant's House in the Form of His Picture.

In this chapter we give two stories: (1) How Baba attended the Udyapan ceremony of Mr.B.V.Deo'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 He who 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 difference. He becomes one with the Bhaktas as the sea with the rivers when they meet it in the rainy season and gives them His power and position. It follows from this that he who sings the Leelas of God's Bhaktas is equally or more dear to Him than one who sings the Leelas of God only. Now to revert to the stories of this chapter.

Mrs.Deo's Udyapan Ceremony

Mr.B.V.Deo was a Mamlatdar at Dahanu (Thana District). His mother had observed 25 or 30 different vows and a Udyapan (concluding) ceremony in connection therewith was to be performed. This ceremony included the feeding of 100 or 200 Brahmins. Mr.Deo 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 attendance 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, tanga, nor train nor aeroplane. I run and manifest myself to him who lovingly calls me. Write to him a pleasing reply that three of us (the trio), myself, yourself and a third will go and attend it." Mr.Jog informed Mr.Deo of what Baba said. The latter 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 to Baba as He was all-pervading and that He might suddenly come, in any form He likes and fulfill His words.

A few days before this, a Sannyasi with Bengali dress and professing to work for the cause of the protection of the cows, came to the station-master at Dahanu to collect subscriptions. The latter told him to go into the town and see the Mamlatdar (Mr.Deo) and with his help collect funds. Just then the Mamlatdar happened to come there. The station-master then introduced the Sannyasi to him. Both sat talking on the platform. Mr.Deo told him that a subscription-list for some other charitable cause had already been opened by the leading citizen Rao Saheb Narottam Shetti and so it was not good 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 Sannyasi left the place.

About a month afterwards, the Sannyasi came in a tanga and stopped in front of Mr.Deo's house at about 10 a.m. Deo thought that he came for subscriptions. Seeing him busy with the preparations of the ceremony, the Sannyasi said that he had come not for money but for meals. Deo said - "Alright, very glad, you are welcome, the house is yours." The Sannyasi - "Two lads are with me." Deo - "Well, come with them." As there was time (2 hours) for dinner, Deo enquired where he should send for them. He said that it was not necessary as he would come himself at the appointed time. Deo asked him to come at noon. Exactly at twelve noon, the Trio came and joined the dinner party and after feeding themselves went away.

After the ceremony was finished, Deo 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. Inform him that I did attend his dinner with two others, but he failed to recognize Me. Then why did he call me at all? Tell him that he thought that the Sannyasi 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 take their meals? See, to keep My words I would sacrifice my life, I would never be untrue to My words." This reply gladdened Jog's heart and he communicated the whole of the reply to Deo. 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 Sannyasi's prior visit and his coming to him for subscriptions, how he also failed to catch the significance of the Sannyasi's words that he would come with two others for meals.

This story clearly shows that when the devotees surrender themselves completely to their Sad-guru, He sees 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 full-moon morning, Hemadpant had a vision. Baba appeared to him in his dream in the form of a well-dressed Sannyasi, woke him up, and said that He would come to him for meals that day. This awakening constituted a part of the dream. When he fully awoke, he saw no Sai nor any Sannyasi. But when he began to recollect the dream, he remembered each and every word the Sannyasi uttered in his dream. Though he was in contact with Baba for seven years and though he 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 Sannyasi guest was coming for meals and that some more rice should be prepared. She enquired about the guest, who he was and whence he was coming. Then not to lead her astray and not to cause any misunderstanding he gave her the truth, i.e., 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 for accepting 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 quite ready at noon. The Holika-worship was gone through and the leaves (dishes) were spread and arranged with 'Rangoli' marks around them. Two rows were put up with a central seat between them for the guest.

All the members of the family - sons, grandsons, daughters and sons-in-law etc., came and occupied their proper seats and the serving of the various articles commenced. While this was being done, everybody was watching for the guest, but none turned up though it was past noon. Then the door was closed and chained; the anna-shuddhi (ghee) was served. This was a signal to start eating. Formal offering to the Vaishwadeva (Fire), and Naivedya to Shri Krishna were also over and the members were about to begin, when foot-steps in the staircase were distinctly heard. Hemadpant went immediately and opened the door and saw two men there: (1) Ali Mahomed and (2) Moulana Ismu Mujavar. These two persons, seeing that meals were ready and all the members were about to begin eating, apologized 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 your *Thing* and I shall relate all the wonderful tale about it later on at your convenience." So saying he took out from his arm-pit a packet wrapped in an old newspaper cover and placed it on the table. Hemadpant uncovered the packet and saw, to his great wonder and surprise, a big nice picture of Sai Baba. Seeing it, he was much moved, tears ran 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 Mahomed whence he got this picture. He said that he bought it from a shop and that he would give all the details about it some time 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 the due offering of the Naivedya, the whole party commenced eating and finished it in proper time. Seeing the beautiful form in the picture everybody was extremely pleased and wondered how all this happened.

This is how Sai Baba kept up and fulfilled His words uttered by Him in the dream of Hemadpant. The story of the picture with all its details, viz., how Ali Mahomed 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



Shri Sai Satcharitra