

Shri Sai Satcharita

Chapter 20

Das Ganu's Problem Solved by Kaka's Maidservant

In this Chapter, Hemadpant describes, how Kakasaheb Dixit's maidservant solved Das Ganu's problem.

Preliminary

Sai (Lord) was originally formless. he assumed a form for the sake of Bhaktas. With the help of the actress Maya, He played the part of the Actor in the big drama of the universe. Let us remember and visualize Shri Sai. Let us go to Shirdi, and see carefully the programmes, after the noon-Arati. After the Arati ceremony was over, Sai used to come out of the Masjid, and standing on its edge, distribute udi to the devotees with very kind and loving looks. The Bhaktas also got up with equal fervour, clasped His Feet, and standing and staring at Him, enjoyed the shower of Udi. Baba passed handfuls of Udi into the palms of the devotees and marked their foreheads with Udi with His fingers. The love He bore for them in His heart was boundless. Then He addressed the Bhaktas as follows:- "Oh Bhau, go to take your lunch; you Anna, go to your lodgings; you Bapu, enjoy your dishes". In this way He accosted each and every devotee and sent him or her home. Even now, you can enjoy these sights if you bring into play your imagination. You can visualize and enjoy them. Now bringing Sai before our mental vision, let us meditate on Him, from His Feet upwards to His face, and prostrating before Him humbly, lovingly and respectfully, revert to the story of this Chapter.

Ishavasya Upanishad

Das Ganu once started to write a Marathi commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad. Let us first give a brief idea of this Upanishad, before proceeding further. It is called a 'Mantropanishad', as it is embodied in the Mantras of the Vedic Samhita. It constitutes the last or the 40th Chapter of the Vajasaneyi Samhita (Yajurveda) and it is, therefore, called Vajasaneyi Samhitopanishad. Being embodied in Vedic Samhitas, this is regarded as superior to all other Upanishads, which occur in the Brahmanas and Aranyakas (explanatory treatises on Mantras and rituals). Not only this, other Upanishads are considered to be commentaries on the truths mentioned briefly in the Ishavasya Upanishad. For instance, the biggest of the Upanishads, viz, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, is considered by Pandit Satwalekar to be a running commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad.

Profesor R.D. Ranade says:- "The Ishopanishad is quite a small Upanishad; and yet it contains many hints which show an extraordinarily piercing insight. Within the short compass of 18 verses, it gives a valuable mystical description of the Atman, a description of the ideal sage, who stands unruffled in the minds of temptations and sorrows; and adumbration of the doctrine of Karma-Yoga as later formulated, and finally a reconciliation of the claims of knowledge and works. The most valuable ideas, that lies at the root of the Upanishad, is that of a logical synthesis between the two opposites of knowledge; and work, which are both required according to the Upanishad to be annulled in a higher synthesis". (Page 24 of the Constructive Survey of the Upanishad Philosophy). In another place he says "The poetry of the Ishopanishad is a Commixture of moral, mystical and metaphysical (ibid, Page 41)".

From the brief description given above about this Upanishad, any one can see how difficult it is to translate this Upanishad in a vernacular language, and brief out its exact meaning. Das Ganu translated it in Marathi 'Ovi'metre, verse-by-verse, but as he did not comprehend the gist or essence of the Upanishad, he was not satisfied with his performance. He therefore consulted some learned men regarding his doubts and difficulties and discussed with them at great length. They did not solve them nor did they give him any rational and satisfactory explanation. So Das Ganu was a little restless over this matter.

[SadGuru only competent and Qualified to Explain](#)

As we have seen, this Upanishad is the quintessence of the Vedas. It is the science of self-realization, it is the scythe or weapon, which can rend asunder the bondage of life and death, and make us free. Therefore, he thought, that he who has himself attained self-realization, can only give him the true or correct interpretation of the Upanishad. When nobody could satisfy Das Ganu, he resolved to consult Sai Baba about this. When he got an opportunity to go to Shirdi, he saw Sai Baba, prostrated himself before Him, and mentioned his difficulties about the Ishavasya Upanishad and requested Him to give the correct solution. Sai Baba blessed him and said- "You need not be anxious, there is no difficulty about the matter, the mind-servant of Kaka (Kakasaheb Dixit) will solve your doubts at Vile Parle, on your way home". The people, who went present then and heard this, thought that Baba was joking and said, "How could an illiterate maid-servant solve the difficulties of this nature", but Das Ganu thought otherwise. He was sure, that whatever Baba spoke must come true, Baba's word was the decree of the Brahma (Almighty).

[Kaka's Moidservant](#)

On fully believing in Baba's words, he left Shirdi and came to Vile Parle (a suburb of Bombay), and stayed with Kakasaheb Dixit. There the next day, when Das Ganu was enjoying his morning nap (some say when he was engaged in worship), he heard a poor girl singing a beautiful song in clear and melodious tones. The subject matter of the song was a crimson coloured Sari, how nice it was, how fine was its embroidery, how beautiful were its ends and borders etc. He liked the song so much that he came out, and saw that it was being sung by a young girl, the sister of Namya, who was a servant of Kakasaheb. The girl was cleaning vessels, and had only a torn rag on her person. On seeing her impoverished condition, and her jovial temperament, Das Ganu felt pity for her and when Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan next day gave him a pair of dhotars, he requested him to give a sari to the poor little girl also. Rao Bahadur bought a good Chirdi (small Sari) and presented it to her. Like a starving person getting luckily good dishes to eat, her joy knew no bounds. Next day she wore the new Sari, and out of great joy and merriment, whirled, danced round and played 'Fugadi' with other girls and excelled them all. The Day following, she kept the new Sari in her box at home and came with the old and torn rags, but she looked as merry as she did the previous day. On seeing this, Das Ganu's pity was transferred into admiration. He thought that the girl being poor had to wear a torn rag, but now she had a new Sari which she kept in reserve and putting on the old rag, strutted herself, showing no trace of sorrow or dejection. Thus he realized that all our feelings of pain and pleasure depend upon the attitude of our mind. On thinking deeply over this incident, he realized that a man ought to enjoy whatever God has bestowed on him in the firm conviction that He besets every thing, from behind and before, and on all sides and that whatever is bestowed on him by God must be for his good. In this particular case, the impoverished condition of the poor girl, her torn rag and the new Sari, the donor, the dance and the acceptance were all parts of the Lord and pervaded by Him. Hence, Das Ganu got a practical demonstration of the lesson of the Upanishad - the lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens, is ordained by God, and is ultimately good for us.

Unique Method of Teaching

From the above incident, the reader will see that Baba's method was unique and varied. Though Baba never left Shirdi, He sent some to Machhindragad, some to Kolhapur or Sholapur for practising sadhanas. To some He appeared in His usual form, to some He appeared in waking or dreaming state, day or night and satisfied their desires. It is impossible to describe all the methods that Baba used in imparting instructions to His Bhaktas. In this particular case, He sent Das Ganu to Vile Parle, where he got his problem solved, through the maidservant. To those, who say that it was not necessary to sent Das Ganu outside and that Baba could have personally taught him, we say that Baba followed the right or best course, or how else could Das Ganu would have learnt a great lesson, that the poor maid-servant and her Sari were pervaded by the Lord.

Now we close the Chapter with another beautiful extract about this Upanishad.

The Ethics of the Ishavasya Upanishad

"One of the main features of the Ishavasya Upanishad, is the ethical advice it offers, and it is interesting to note that the ethics of the Upanishad are definitely based upon the metaphysical position advanced in it. The very opening words of the Upanishad tell us that God pervades every thing. As a corollary from this metaphysical position, the ethical advice it offers is, that a man ought to enjoy whatever God bestows on him in the firm belief, that as He pervades everything, whatever is bestowed on him by God must be good. It follows naturally, that the Upanishad should forbid us from coveting another man's property. In fact, we are fittingly taught here a lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens, it is divinely ordained and it is hence good for us. Another moral advice is, that man must spend his life-time always in doing action, specially the karmas enjoined in the Shastras, in a mood of believing resignation to His will. Inactivity, according to this Upanishad, would be the canker of the soul. It is only when a man spends his lifetime on doing actions in this manner that he can hope to attain the ideal of Naishkarmya. Finally, the text goes on to say that a man, who sees all beings in the Self and sees the Self as existing in all beings; in fact, for whom all beings and everything that exists have becomes the Self - how can such a man suffer infatuation? What ground would such a man have for grief? Loathfulness, infatuation and grief verily proceed from our not being able to see the Atman in all things. But a man, who realizes the oneness of all things, for whom everything has become the Self, must ipso facto, cease to be affected by the common foibles of humanity. (Page 169-170 of The Creative Period by Messrs. Belvalkar and Ranade).

Chapter 21

Stories of (1) V.H. Thakur (2) Anantrao Patankar and (3) Pandharpur Pleader.

In this Chapter, Hemadpant relates the stories of Vinayak Harishchandra Thakur, B.A., Anantrao Patankar of Poona, and a pleader from Pandharpur. All these stories are very interesting which if very carefully read and grasped, will lead the readers on to the spiritual path.

Preliminary

It is a general rule, that it is our good luck in the form of accumulation of merits in past births that enables us to seek the company of Saints and profit thereby. In illustration of this rule, Hemadpant gives his own instance. He was a resident Magistrate of Bandra, A suburb of Bombay, for many years. A famous Mahomedan Saint named Pir Moulana was living there and many Hindus, Parsis and many others who followed different religion used to go to him and take his darshan. His Mujavar (priest) by name Inus pressed Hemadpant many a time, night and day, for going to see him, but for some reason or other he was not able to see him. After many years his turn came and he was called to Shirdi where he was permanently enlisted in Sai Baba's Darbar. Unfortunate fellows do not get this contact of the Saints. It is only the fortunate ones that get it.

Institution of Saints

There have been institutions of Saints in this world, from time immemorial. Various Saints appear (incarnate) themselves in various places to carry out the missions allotted to them, but though they work in different places, they are, as it were, one. They work in unison under the common authority of the Almighty Lord and know full well what each of them is doing in his place, and supplement his work where necessary. An instance illustrating this is given below.

Mr. Thakur

Mr. V.H.Thakur, B.A., was a clerk in the Revenue Department and he once came to a town named Vadgaum near Belgaum (S.M. Country) along with a Survey party. There he saw a Kanarese Saint (Appa) and bowed before him. The Saint was explaining a portion from the book "Vichar-Sagar" of Nischaldas (a standard work on Vedanta) to the audience. When Thakur was taking his leave to go, he said to him, "you should study this book, and if you do so, your desires will be fulfilled, and when you go to the North in the discharge of your duties in future, you will come across a great Saint by your good luck, and then he will show you the future path, and give rest to your mind and make you happy".

Then, he was transferred to Junnar, where he had to go by crossing Nhane Ghat. This Ghat was very steep and impassible, and no other conveyance, than a buffalo was of use in crossing it. So he had to take a buffalo-ride through the Ghat, which inconvenienced and pained him much. Thereafter, he was transferred to Kalyan on higher post, and there he became acquainted with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He heard much about Sai Baba from him and wished to see Him. Next day, Nanasaheb had to go to Shirdi, and he asked Thakur to accompany him. He could not do so as he had to attend the Thana Civil Court for a civil case. So Nanasaheb went alone. Thakur went to Thana, but there the case was postponed. Then, he repented for not accompanying Nanasaheb. Still he left for Shirdi and when he went there, he found that Nanasaheb had left the place the previous day. Some of his other friends, whom he met there, took him to Baba. He saw Baba, fell at His Feet and was overjoyed. His eyes were full of tears of joy and his hair stood on end. Then after a while the omniscient Baba said to him - "The path of this place is not so easy as the teaching of the Kanarese Saint Appa or even as the buffalo-ride in the Nhane Ghat. In this spiritual path, you have to put in your best exertion as it is very difficult". When Thakur heard these significant signs and words, which none else than he knew, he was overwhelmed with joy. He came to know, that the word of the Kanarese Saint had turned true. Then joining both hands and placing his head on Baba's Feet, he prayed that he should be accepted and blessed. Then Baba said - "What Appa told you was all right, but these things have to be practised and lived. Mere reading won't do. You have to think and carry out what you read, otherwise, it is of no use. Mere book-learning, without the grace of the Guru, and self-realization is of no avail". Thakur read the theoretical portion from the work 'Vichar Sagar', but the practical way was shown to him at Shirdi. Another story given below will bring out this truth more forcibly.

Anantrao Patankar

One gentleman from Poona, by name Anantrao Patankar wished to see Baba. He came to Shirdi, and took Baba's darshan. His eyes were appeased, he was much pleased. He fell at Baba's Feet; and after performing proper worship said to Baba - "I have read a lot, studied Vedas, Vedants and Upanishads and heard all the Purnas, but still I have not got any peace of mind; so I think that all my reading was useless. Simple ignorant devout persons are better than myself. Unless the mind becomes calm, all book learning is of no avail. I have heard, from many people, that you easily give peace of mind to so many people by your mere glance, and playful word; so I have come here; please take pity on me and bless me". Then Baba told him a parable, which was as follows:-

Parable of Nine Balls of Stool (Nava-vidha Bhakti)

"Once a Soudagar (merchant) came here. Before him a mare passed her stool (nine balls of stool). The merchant, intent on his quest, spread the end of his dhotar and gathered all the nine balls in it, and thus he got concentration (peace) of mind".

Mr. Patankar could not make out the meaning of this story; so he asked Ganesh Damodar, alias Dada Kelkar, "What does Baba mean by this?" He replied - "I too do not know all that Baba says and means, but at His inspiration I say, what I come to know. The mare is God's grace and the nine balls excreted are the nine forms or types of Bhakti, viz., (1) Shrivana (Hearing); (2) Kirtana (Praying); (3) Smarana (Remembering); (4) Padasevana (resorting to the feet); (5) Archana (Worship); (6) Namaskara (Bowling); (7) Dasya (Service); (8) Sakhyatva (Friendship); (9) Atmanivedana (surrender of the self). These are the nine types of Bhakti. If any of these is faithfully followed, Lord Hari will be pleased, and manifest Himself in the home of the devotee. All the sadhanas, viz. Japa (vocal worship), Tapa (penance), Yoga practice and studying the scriptures and expounding them are quite useless unless they are accompanied by Bhakti, i.e., devotion. Knowledge of the Vedas, or fame as a great Jnani, and mere formal Bhajan (worship) are of no avail. What is wanted is Loving Devotion. Consider yourself as the merchant or seeker after the truth and be anxious and eager like him to collect or cultivate the nine types of devotion. Then you will attain stability and peace of mind".

Next day, when Patankar went to Baba for saluation, he was asked whether he collected the 'nine balls of stool'. Then he said that he, being a poor fellow, should first be graced by Baba, and then they will be easily collected. Then Baba blessed and comforted him, saying that he would attain peace and welfare. After hearing this, Patankar became overjoyed and happy.

The Pandharpur Pleader

We shall close this Chapter with short story showing Baba's omniscience and His using it for correcting people and setting them on the right path. Once a pleader from Pandharpur came to Shirdi, went to the Masjid, saw Sai Baba, fell at His Feet and, without being asked, offered some Dakshina, and sat in a corner eager to hear the talk, that was going on. Then Baba turned His face towards him and said - "How cunning the people are! They fall at the feet, offer Dakshina, but inwardly give abuses behind the back. Is not this wonderful?" This cap (remark) fitted the pleader and he had to wear (take) it. None understood the remark. The pleader grasped it, but kept silent. When they returned to the Wada, the pleader said to Kakasaheb Dixit - "What Baba remarked was perfectly right. The dart (remark) was aimed at me; it was a hint to me, that I should not indulge in reviling or scandalizing others (calling by names). When the subjudge or munsiff of Pandharpur (Mr. Noolkar) came and stayed here for the improvement of his health, a discussion about this matter was going on in the barroom at Pandharpur (as it ever happens in many a bar-room). It was said or discussed there whether the ailments, from which the sub-judge suffered were, ever likely to be got rid of without medicines, by merely going after Sai Baba, and whether it was proper for an educated man, like the sub-judge, to

have recourse to such methods. The sub-judge was taken to task, i.e. he was criticised, as also Sai Baba. I also took some part in this affair; and now Sai Baba showed the impropriety of my conduct. This is not a rebuke to me, but a favour, an advice that I should not indulge in any scandal or slander of others; and not interfere unnecessarily in others' affairs".

Shirdi is about 100 Koss (Koss=3 miles) distant from Pandharpur; still Baba by His omniscience knew what transpired there in the barroom. The intervening places -- rivers, jungles and mountains - were not a bar to His all-perceiving sight and He could see or read the hearts of all. There was nothing secret or veiled from Him. Everything, far or near, was plain and clear to Him as broad as daylight. Let a man be far or near, he cannot avoid the all-pervading gaze of Sai Baba. From this incident, the pleader took the lesson that he should never speak ill of others, nor unnecessarily criticize them. This evil tendency was completely got rid of, and he was set on the right path.

Though the story refers to a pleader, still it is applicable to all. All should, therefore, take this lesson to heart and profit thereby.

Sai Baba's greatness is unfathomable, so are His wonderful Leelas. His life is also such; for He is Para-Brahman (Lord God) incarnate.

Chapter 22

Rescues from Serpent-bites - (1) Balasaheb Mirikar (2) Bapusaheb Booty (3) Amir Shakkar (4) Hemadpant - Baba's Opinion Regarding Killing of Serpents.

Preliminary

How to meditate on Baba? No one has been able to fathom the nature or the form of the Almighty. Even the Vedas and the thousand-tongued Shesha are not able to describe it fully; but the devotees cannot but know and look at the form of the Lord, for they know that His Feet are the only means of their happiness. They know no other method of attaining the supreme goal of life, except meditating on the Holy Feet. Hemadpant suggests an easy way of devotion and meditation as follows:-

As the dark fortnight of every month wears out gradually, the moonlight also wanes in the same degree and on the newmoon day, we do not see the moon at all, nor do we get her light. Therefore, when the bright fortnight begins, people are very anxious to see the moon. On the first day, the moon is not seen and on the second day also she is not clearly visible. Then the people are asked to see the moon through an opening between the two branches of a tree, and when they begin to see through this aperture eagerly and after concentratedly, the distant small crescent of the moon comes, to their great delight, within their ken. Following this clue, let us try to see Baba's Light. Look at Baba's posture, how fine it is! He is sitting with His legs folded, the right leg held across the left knee. The fingers of His left hand are spread on the right-foot. On the right toe are spread His two fingers-the index and middle ones. By this posture Baba means to say, as it were-if you want to see My Light, be egoless and most humble and meditate on My toe through the opening between the two branches-index and middle

fingers-and then you will be able to see My Light. This is the easiest means of attaining devotion.

Now let us turn for a moment to Baba's life. Shirdi had become a place of pilgrimage on account of Baba's stay. People from all quarters began to flock there, and both the rich and the poor began to be benefited in more ways than one and in some form or other. Who can describe Baba's boundless love and His wonderful natural knowledge and His all-pervasiveness? Blessed is he, who could experience one or all of these. Sometimes Baba observed long silence, which was, in a way, His dissertation on Brahman; at other times He was Consciousness-Bliss Incarnate, surrounded by His devotees. Sometimes He spoke in parables, and at other times indulged in wit and humour. At times, He was quite unambiguous (clear) and at times He seemed enraged. Sometimes He gave His teachings in a nutshell, at other times He argued at length. Many a time He was very plain. In this way, He gave varied instructions to many, according to their requirements. His life was, therefore, inscrutable, beyond the ken of our mind, beyond our intellect and speech. Our longing to see His face, to talk with Him and hear His Leelas was never satisfied; still we were overflowing with joy. We can count the showers of rain, encircle (tie) the wind in a leather bag, but who can gauge or measure His Leelas? Now we deal here with one aspect of them, viz. how He anticipated or forestalled the calamities of His devotees and warded them off in time.

Balasaheb Mirikar

Balasaheb Mirikar, son of Sirdar Kakasaheb Mirikar was Mamlatdar of Kopergaon. He was going on tour to Chitali. On the way he came to Shirdi to see Sai Baba. When he went to the Masjid and prostrated himself before Baba, usual conversation regarding health and other matters commenced, when Baba sounded a note of warning as follows:-"Do you know our Dwarakamayi?" As Balasaheb did not understand he kept quiet, Baba continued - "This is our Dwarakamayi, where you are sitting. She wards off all dangers and anxieties of the children, who sit on her lap. This Masjidmayi (its presiding Deity) is very merciful, she is the mother of the simple devotees, whom she will save in calamities. Once a person sits on her lap, all his troubles are over. He, who rests in her shade, gets Bliss". Then Baba gave him Udi, and placed His protecting hand on his head. When Balasaheb was about to depart, He again said- "Do you know the "Lamba Bava" (long gentleman), Viz. serpent?" And then closing the left arm like fist He brought it near the right elbow, and moving His left arm like the hood of a serpent, He said- "He is so terrible, but what can he do to the children of Dwarakamayi: When the Dwarakamayi (its presiding deity) protects, what can the serpent do?"

All who were present there were curious to know the meaning of all this and its reference to Mirikar, but none had the courage to ask Baba about this. Then Balasaheb saluted Baba and left the Masjid with Shama. Baba called Shama back and asked him to accompany Balasaheb, and enjoy the Chitali trip. Shama came to Balasaheb, and told him that he would go with him according to Baba's wish. Balasaheb replied that he need not come, as it would be inconvenient. Sharma returned to Baba and told Him what Balasaheb said to him. Babas said, "Alright, do not go. We should mean well and do well. Whatever is destined to happen, will happen".

In the meanwhile Balasaheb thought over again, and calling Shama asked him to accompany him. Then Shama going again to Baba and taking His leave started with Balasaheb in the tanga. They reached Chitali at 9 P.M. and encamped in the Maruti temple. The office-people had not come; so they sat quiet in the temple, talking and chitchating. Balasaheb was sitting on a mat reading a newspaper. His Uparani (upper dhotar) was spread across his waist and on a part of it a snake was sitting unobserved. It began to move with a rustling sound, which was heard by the peon. He brought a lantern, saw the snake and raised an alarm- 'serpent, serpent'. Balasaheb was frightened and began to quiver. Shama was also amazed. Then he and others moved noiselessly and took sticks and clubs in their hands. The snake got down slowly from the waist and it moved away from Balasaheb; it was immediately done to death. Thus this calamity,

which was prophesied by Baba, was averted and Balasaheb's love for Baba was deeply confirmed.

Bapusaheb Booty

A great astrologer named Nanasaheb Dengale told one day Bapusaheb Booty, who was then in Shirdi, "To-day is an inauspicious day for you, there is a danger to your life". This made Bapusaheb restless. When they, as usual, came to Masjid, Baba said to Bapusaheb- "What does this Nana say? He foretells death for you. Well, you need not be afraid. Tell him boldly "Let us see how death kills." Then later in the evening Bapusaheb went to his privy for easing himself where he saw a snake. His servant saw it and lifted a stone to strike at it. Bapusaheb asked him to get a big stick, but before the servant returned with the stick, the snake was seen moving away and soon disappeared. Bapusaheb remembered with joy Baba's words of fearlessness.

Amir Shankar

Amir Shankar was a native of the village Korale, in Kopergaon Taluka. He belonged to the butcher caste. He worked as a commission agent in Bandra, and was well-known there. He once suffered from Rheumatism, which gave him much pain. He was then reminded of God, and so, he left his business and went to Shirdi, and prayed to Baba to relieve him from his malady. Baba then stationed him in the Chavadi, which was then a damp unhealthy place, unfit for such a patient. Any other place in the village, or Korale itself would have been better for Amir, but Baba's word was the deciding factor and the chief medicine. Baba did not allow him to come to the Masjid, but fixed him in the Chavadi, where he got very great advantage. Baba passed via Chavadi every morning and evening; and every alternate day Baba went to the Chavadi in a procession and slept there. So Amir got Baba's contact very often easily. Amir stayed there for full nine months, and then, somehow or other, he got a disgust for the place. So one night he stealthily left the place and came to Kopergaon and stayed in a Dharmashala. There he saw an old dying Fakir, who asked him for water. Amir brought it and gave it to him. As soon as he drank it, he passed away. Then Amir was in a fix. He thought that if he went and informed the authorities, he would be held responsible for the death as he was the first and sole informant, and knew something about it. He repented for his action, viz. leaving Shirdi without Baba's leave, and prayed to Baba. He then determined to return to Shirdi, and that same night he ran back, remembering and muttering Baba's name on the way, and reached Shirdi before daybreak, and became free from anxiety. Then he lived in the Chavadi in perfect accordance with Baba's wishes and orders, and got him cured. One night it so happened that Baba cried at midnight- "Oh Abdul, some devilish creature is dashing against the side of My bed". Abdul came with a lantern, examined Baba's bed but found nothing, Baba asked him to examine carefully all the place and began to strike ground with His satka. Seeing this Leela of Baba, Amir thought that Baba might have suspected some serpent had come there. Amir could know by close and long contact the meaning of Baba's words and actions. Baba then saw near Amir's cushion something moving. He asked Abdul to bring in the light, and when he brought it, he saw the coil of a serpent there, moving its head up and down. Thereupon the serpent was immediately beaten to death. Thus Baba gave timely warning and saved Amir.

Hemadpant (Scorpion and Serpent)

(1) At Baba's recommendation Kakasaheb Dixit was daily reading the two works of Shri Eknath Maharaj, viz., Bhagwat and Bhawartha Ramayana and Hemadpant had the good fortune to be one of the audience when the reading of the works was going on. Once when a portion from the Ramayana relating to Hanuman's testing Rama's greatness, according to his mother's instructions, was being read, all the listeners were spell-bound. Hemadpant was one of them. A big scorpion (none knew where it came from), jumped and sat on the right shoulder of Hemadpant, on his Uparani (upper dhotar). First it was not noticed, but as the Lord protects those, who are intent on hearing His stories, he casually cast a glance over his right shoulder and noticed it. It was dead silence, not a bit moved here or there. It seemed as if, it also

enjoyed the reading. Then by the Lord's grace, Hemadpant without disturbing the audience, took the two ends of his dhotar, folded them, and brought them together, enclosing the scorpion within. Then he went out, and threw it in the garden. (2) On another occasion some persons were sitting in the upper floor of Kakasaheb's Wada, just before nightfall, when a serpent crept through a hole in the window frame and sat coiled up. A light was brought. Though it was first dazzled, yet it sat still and only moved its head up and down. Then many persons rushed there with sticks and cudgels, but as it sat in an awkward place, no blow could be dealt. But hearing the noises of men, the serpent went out hastily through the same hole. Then all the persons there felt relieved.

Baba's Opinion

One devotee named Mukhtaram, and then said that it was good that the poor creature escaped. Hemadpant challenged him saying that serpents should better be killed. There was a hot discussion between them - the former contending that serpents, and such creatures, should not be killed, the latter that they should be. As night came on, the discussion came to an end, without any decision being arrived at. Next day, the question was referred to Baba, who gave His settled opinion as follows:- "God lives in all beings and creatures, whether they be serpents or scorpions. He is the Great Wirepuller of the world, and all beings, serpents, scorpions etc., obey His command. Unless He wills it, nobody can do any harm to others. The world is all dependent on Him, and no one is independent. So we should take pity and love all creatures, leave off adventurous fights and killings and be patient. The Lord (God) is the Protector of all.

Chapter 23

Yoga and Onion - Shama Cured of Snake - Bite - Cholera Ordinance Broken - Ordeal of Guru-Bhakti.

Preliminary

Really this Jiva (human soul) transcends the three qualities, viz. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, but being deluded by Maya, he forgets his nature which is 'Existence-knowledge-bliss', and thinks that he is the doer and enjoyer and thus entangles himself in endless miseries and does not know the way of deliverance. The only way of deliverance is Loving Devotion towards the Guru's feet. The great Player or Actor Lord Sai has delighted His Bhaktas and transformed them into Himself (His nature).

We regard Sai Baba as an incarnation of God for reasons already stated, but He always said that He was an obedient servant of God. Though an incarnation He showed the people the way, how to behave satisfactorily and carry out the duties of their respective stations (Varnas) in this life. He never emulated others in any way, nor asked others to have something done for Him. For Him, Who saw the Lord in all movable and immovable things of this world, humility was the most proper thing. None He disregarded or disrespected; for He saw Narayan (Lord) in all beings, He never said, "I am God," but that He was a humble servant and He always remembered Him and always uttered - "Allah Malik" (God is the sole proprietor or Owner).

We do not know the various kinds of Saints, how they behave, what they do and eat etc. We only know, that by God's grace they manifest themselves in this world to liberate the ignorant

and bound souls. If there be any store of merits on our account, we get a desire in listening to the stories and Leelas of the Saints, otherwise not. Let us now turn to the main stories of this Chapter.

Yoga and Onion

Once it so happened, that a sadhak of Yoga came to Shirdi with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He had studied all the works on Yoga, including the Yoga-sutras of Patanjali, but had no practical experience. He could not concentrate his mind and attain samadhi even for a short time. He thought that if Sai Baba were pleased with him, He would show him the way to attain samadhi for a long time. With this object in view he came to Shirdi, and when he went to the Masjid he saw Sai Baba eating bread with onion. On seeing this, a thought arose in his mind - 'How can this man, eating stale bread with raw onion, solve my difficulties and help me?' Sai Baba read his mind and said to Nanasaheb - "Oh Nana, he who has the power to digest onion, should eat it and none else". Hearing this remark, the yogi was wonder-struck and then he fell at Baba's Feet with complete surrender. With pure and open mind, he asked his difficulties and got their solution from Baba. Thus being satisfied and happy, he left Shirdi with Baba's Udi and blessings.

Shama Cured of Snake-Bite

Before Hemadpant begins the story, he says about the Jiva that it can be very well compared with a parrot, and that they both are bound, the one in the body and the other in a cage. Both think that their present bound state is good for them. It is only when a Helper, i.e., Guru comes and by God's grace opens their eyes and liberates them from their bondage, that their eyes are opened to a greater and larger life, compared to which their former limited life is nothing.

In the last Chapter, it was shown how Baba anticipated the calamity that was to befall on Mr. Mirikar and rescued him from it. Now let the readers hear a story grander than that. Once Shama was bitten by a poisonous snake. His little finger of the hand was stung and the poison began to spread into the body. The pain was also severe and Shama thought that he would pass off soon. His friends wanted to take him to the God Viroba, where such cases were often sent, but Shama ran to the Masjid -- to His Viroba (Sai Baba). When Baba saw him, He began to scold and abuse. He got enraged and said - "Oh vile Bhaturdy (Priest) do not climp up. Beware if you do so" and then roared - "Go, Get away, Come down." Seeing Baba thus red with wrath, Shama was greatly puzzled and disappointed. He thought that the Masjid was his home and Sai Baba his sole Refuge, but if he was driven away like this, where should he go? He lost all hope of life and kept silent. After a time Baba became normal and calm when Shama went up and sat near. Then Baba said to him - "Don't be afraid, don't care a jot, the Merciful Fakir will save you, go and sit quiet at home, don't go out, believe in Me and remain fearless and have no anxexity". Then he was sent home. Immediately afterwards, Baba sent Tatya Patil and Kakasaheb Dixit to him with instructions to the effect, that he should eat what he liked, should move in the home, but should never lie down and sleep. Needless to say that these instructions were acted upon and Shama got all right in a short time. The only thing to be remembered in this connection is this - the words of Baba (or the five syllabled Mantra, viz, 'Go, Get away, Come down') were not addressed to Shama- as it apparently looked - but they were a direct order to the snake and its poison not to go up and circulate through Shama's body. Like others well versed in Mantrashastra, He had not to use any incantation, charged rice or water etc. His words only were most efficacious in saving the life of Shama.

Any one, hearing this story and other similar ones, will beget firm faith in the Feet of Sai Baba, and the only way to cross the ocean of Maya is to remember ever the Feet of Baba in the heart.

Cholera Epidemic

Once, Cholera was raging virulently in Shirdi. The residents were much frightened and they stopped all communication with the outside people. The panchas of the village assembled together and decided upon two ordinances as a remedy to check and put down the Epidemic. They were (1) No fuel-cart should be allowed to come in the village, and (2) No goat should be killed there. If anybody disobeyed these ordinances, they were to be fined by the village-authorities and panchas. Baba knew that all this was mere superstition, and therefore, He cared two pence for the Cholera-ordinances. While the ordinances were in force, a fuel-cart came there, and wanted to enter the village. Everybody knew that there was dearth of fuel in the village, still the people began to drive away the fuel-cart. Baba came to know of this. He came to the spot and asked the cartman to take the fuel-cart to the Masjid. None dared to raise his voice against this action of Baba. He wanted fuel for His Dhuni and so He purchased it. Like an Agnihotri keeping his sacred fire alive throughout his life, Baba kept His Dhuni ever burning all day and night; and for this He always stocked fuel. Baba's home, i.e. the Masjid was free and open to all. It had no lock and key; and some poor people removed some wood from there for their use. Baba did not grumble about this. Baba saw that the Almighty pervaded the whole universe, and so He never bore enmity or ill will to anybody. Though perfectly detached. He behaved like an ordinary householder to set an example to the people.

Ordeal of Guru-Bhakti

Let us now see, how the second Cholera-ordinance fared with Baba. While it was in force, somebody brought a goat to the Masjid. It was weak, old and about to die. At this time Fakir Pir Mohamad of Malegaon alias Bade Baba was near. Sai Baba asked him to behead it with one stroke, and offer it as an oblation. This Bade Baba was much respected by Sai Baba. He always sat on the right hand of Sai Baba. After the chilim (pipe) was first smoked by him, it was then offered to Baba and others. After the dishes were served, at the time of taking meals at noon, Baba respectfully called Bade Baba and made him sit on His left side, and then all partook of food. Baba paid him also daily Rs.50/- out of the amount collected as Dakshina. Baba accompanied him hundred paces whenever he was going away. Such was his position with Baba. But when Baba asked him to behead the goat, he flatly refused, saying "Why it should be killed for nothing?" Then Baba asked Shama to kill it. He went to Radha-Krishna-Mai and brought a knife from her and placed it before Baba. Knowing the purpose for which the knife was taken, she recalled it. Then Shama went to bring another knife, but stayed in the Wada, and did not return soon. Then came the turn of Kakasaheb Dixit. He was 'good gold' no doubt, but had to be tested. Baba asked him to get a knife and kill the goat. He went to Sathe's Wada and returned with a knife. He was ready to kill it at Baba's bidding. He was born in a pure Brahmin family and never in his life knew killing. Though quite averse to do any act of violence, he made himself bold to kill the goat. All the people wondered to see that Bade Baba, a Mahomedan was unwilling to kill it while this pure Brahmin was making preparations to do so. He tightened his dhotar and with a semicircular motion raised his hand with the knife and looked at Baba for the final signal. Baba said - "What are you thinking of? Go on, strike". Then, when the hand was just about to come down, Baba said - "Stop, how cruel you are! Being a Brahmin, you are killing a goat?" Kakasaheb obeyed and kept the knife down and said to baba - "Your nectarlike word is law unto us, we do not know any other ordinance. We remember You always, meditate on Your Form and obey You day and night, we do not know or consider whether it is right or wrong to kill, we do not want to reason or discuss things, but implicit and prompt compliance with Guru's orders, is our duty and dharma".

Then Baba said to Kakaseheb, that He would Himself do the offering and killing business. It was settled that the goat should be disposed of near a place called Takkya, where fakirs used to sit. When the goat was being removed to that place, it fell dead on the way.

Hemadpant closes the Chapter with a classification of disciples. He says that they are of three kinds: (1) First or best (2) Second or middling and (3) Third or ordinary. The best kind of disciples are those who guess what their Gurus want and immediately carry it out and serve

them without waiting for an order from them. The average disciples are those who carry out the orders of their Masters to a letter, without any delay, and the third kind of disciples are those, who go on postponing the carrying out of their orders and making mistakes at every step.

The disciples should have firm faith, backed up by intelligence and if they and patience to these, their spiritual goal will not be distant. Control of breath -- ingoing and outgoing, or Hath-Yoga or other difficult practices are not at all necessary. When the disciples get the above-mentioned qualities, they become ready for further instructions and the Masters then appear and lead them on, in their spiritual path to perfection.

In the next Chapter we will deal with Baba's interesting wit and humour.

Chapter 24

Baba's Wit and Humour - Chanak Leela - (1) Hemadpant (2) Sudama (3) Anna Chinchankar vs. Mavsibai.

Preliminary

To say that, we shall state such and such in the next or this Chapter, is a sort of egoism. Unless, we surrender our ego to the feet of our Sad-guru, we will not succeed in our undertaking. If we become egoless, then our success is assured.

By worshipping Sai Baba, we attain both the objects, worldly and spiritual, and are fixed in our true Nature, and get peace and happiness. Therefore, those who want to gain their welfare should respectfully hear Sai Baba's Leelas or stories and meditate on them. If they do this, they will easily attain the object of their life and get Bliss.

Generally, all people like wit and humour, but they do not like those jokes should be cut at their expense. But Baba's method was peculiar; when it was accompanied with gestures, it was very interesting and instructive, and the people, therefore, did not mind, if they were held up to the ridicule. Hemadpant gives his own instance below.

Chanak-Leela

In Shirdi, bazar was held every Sunday, and people from the neighbouring villages came there, erected booths and stall on the street, and sold their wares and commodities. Every noon, the Masjid was crowded more or less; but on Sunday, it was crowded to suffocation. On one such Sunday, Hemadpant sat in front of Baba, shampooing His Legs and muttering God's name. Shama was on Baba's left, Vamanrao to His right - Shriman Booty and Kakasaheb Dixit and others were also present there. Then Shama laughed and said to Annasaheb - "See that some grains seem to have stuck to the sleeve of your coat". So saying he touched the sleeve and found that there were some grains. Hemadpant straightened his left fore-arm to see what the matter was, when to the surprise of all, some grains of gram come rolling down and were picked up by the people who were sitting there.

This incident furnished a subject matter for joke. Everybody present began to wonder and said something or other as to how the grains found their way into the sleeve of the coat and lodged there so long. Hemadpant also could not guess how they found an entrance and stayed there. When nobody could give any satisfactory explanation in this matter, and everybody was wondering about this mystery, Baba said as follows: -

Baba - "This fellow (Annasaheb) has got the bad habit of eating alone. Today is a bazar-day and he was here chewing grams. I know his habit and these grams are a proof of it. What wonder is there in this matter?"

Hemadpant - "Baba, I never know of eating things alone; then why do you thrust this bad habit on me? I have never yet seen Shirdi bazar. I never went to the bazar today, then how could I buy grams, and how could I eat them if I had not bought them? I never eat anything unless I share it with others present near me".

Baba - "It is true that you give to the persons present; but if none be near-by, what could you or I do but do you remember Me before eating? Am I not always with you? Then do you offer Me anything before you eat?"

Moral

Let us mark and note carefully, what Baba has taught us, by this incident. He has advised us that before the senses, mind and intellect enjoy their objects, he should first be remembered, and if this be done, it is in a way an offering to Him. The senses etc. can never remain without their objects, but if those objects are first offered to the Guru, the attachment for them will naturally vanish. In this way, all the Vrittis (thoughts) regarding Desire, Anger, Avarice etc. should first be offered and directed to the Guru and if this practice be followed, the Lord will help you in eradicating all the Vrittis. When before enjoyment of the objects, you think that Baba is close by, the question whether the object is fit to be enjoyed or not will at once arise. Then the object that is not fit to be enjoyed will be shunned and in this way our vicious habits or vices will disappear and our character will improve. Then love for the Guru will grow and pure knowledge will sprout up. When this knowledge grows, the bondage of body - consciousness (we are the body) will snap and our intellect will be merged in spirit-consciousness (we are the spirit). Then we shall get Bliss and contentment. There is no difference between Guru and God. He who sees any difference in them, sees God nowhere. So leaving aside all ideas of difference, we should regard Guru and God as one, and if we serve our Guru as stated above, Lord (God) will be certainly pleased and purifying our minds He will give us self-realisation. To put the matter in a nutshell, we should not enjoy any object with our senses etc. without first remembering our Guru. When the mind is trained in this way, we will be always reminded of Baba, and our meditation on Baba will grow apace. The Sagun Form of Baba will ever be before our eyes and then devotion, non-attachment and salvation will all be ours. When Baba's Form is thus fixed before our mental vision, we forget hunger, thirst, and this samsar; the consciousness of worldly pleasures will disappear and our mind shall attain peace and happiness.

Sudama's Story

When the above story was being narrated, Hemadpant was reminded of similar story of Sudama, which illustrates the same principle and, therefore, it is given here.

Shri Krishna and His elder brother, Balarama, were living with a co-student, named Sudama, in the ashram of their Guru, Sandipani. Once Krishna and Balarama were sent to the forest for bringing fuel. Then the wife of Sandipani sent also Sudama for the same purpose with some quantity of grams for the three. When Krishna met Sudama in the forest, he said to him - "Dada, I want water as I am thirsty". Sudama replied - "No water should be drunk on an empty

stomach, so it is better to rest a while". He did not say that he had got grams with him and that He should take some. As Krishna was tired, He lay down for rest on the lap of Sudama and was snoring. Seeing this, Sudama took out the grams and began to eat. Then Krishna suddenly asked him - "Dada, what are you eating, whence is the sound?". He replied - "What is there to eat? I am shivering with cold and my teeth are chattering. I can't even repeat distinctly Vishnu-Sahastra-Nama". Hearing this, the Omniscient Krishna said - "I just dreamt a dream, in which I saw a man, eating things of another, and when asked about this, he said - "What earth (dust) should he eat?", meaning thereby that he had nothing to eat? The other man said - "Let it be so". Dada, this is only a dream. I know that you won't eat anything without Me; under the influence of the dream I asked you what you were eating?" If Sudama had known a bit of the Omniscient, Shri Krishna and His Leelas, he would not have acted, as he did. Therefore, he had to suffer for what he did. Though he was a chum of Shri Krishna he had to pass his later life in utter poverty. But when he later offered Krishna a handful of parched rice, earned by his wife with her own labour, Krishna was pleased and gave him a golden city to enjoy. Those who have the habit of eating things alone without partaking them with others should remember this story.

The Shruti also emphasizes this lesson, and asks us to offer things first to God and then enjoy them after he renounces them. Baba also has taught us the same lesson in His inimitable and humorous way.

[Anna Chinchanikar vs. Mavsibai](#)

Hemadpant, now describes another witty incident, in which Baba played a peace-maker's part. There was one devotee by name Damodar Ghanashyama Babare alias Anna Chinchanikar. He was simple, rough and straightforward. He cared for nobody, always spoke plainly and carried all dealings in cash. Though he looked outwardly harsh and uncompromising, he was good natured and guileless. So Sai Baba loved him. One day, like others serving Baba in their own way, this Anna was, one noon standing prone and was shampooing the left arm of Baba, which rested on the kathada (railing). On the right side, one old widow named Venubai Koujalgi whom Baba called mother and all others Mavsibai, was serving Baba in her own way. This Mavsibai was an elderly woman of pure heart. She clasped the fingers of both her hands round the trunk of Baba and was at this time kneading Baba's abdomen. She did this so forcibly that Baba's back and abdomen became flat (one) and Baba moved from side to side. Anna on the other side was steady, but Mavsibai's face moved up and down with her strokes. Once it so happened that her face came very close to Anna's. Being of a witty disposition she remarked - "Oh, this Anna is a lewd (bad) fellow, he wants to kiss me. Even being so old with grey hair he feels no shame in kissing me." These words enraged Anna and he pulled up his sleeves and said - "You say that I am an old bad fellow, am I quite a fool? It is you that have picked up a quarrel and are quarreling with me". All the persons, present there were enjoying this encounter between them. Baba Who loved both of them equally and wanted to pacify them, managed the affair very skillfully. Lovingly He said - "Oh Anna, why are you unnecessarily raising this hue and cry? I do not understand what harm or impropriety is there, when the mother is kissed?" Hearing these words of Baba, both of them were satisfied and all the persons laughed merrily and enjoyed Baba's wit to their heart's content.

[Baba's Characteristics -- His Dependency on Bhaktas](#)

Baba allowed His devotees to serve Him in their own way, and did not like any other persons interfering in this. To quote an instance, the same Mavsibai was on another occasion, kneading Baba's abdomen. Seeing the fury and force used by her, all the other devotees felt nervous and anxious. They said, "Oh mother, be more considerate and moderate, otherwise you will break Baba's arteries and nerves". At this Baba got up at once from His seat, dashed His satka on the ground. He got enraged and His eyes became red like a live charcoal. None dared to stand before or face Baba. Then He took hold of one end of the Satka with both hands and pressed it in the hollow of his abdomen. The other end He fixed to the post and began to press His

abdomen against it. The satka which was about two or three feet in length seemed all to go into the abdomen and the people feared that the abdomen would be ruptured in a short time. The post was fixed and immovable and Baba began to go closer and closer to it and clasped the post firmly. Every moment the rupture was expected, and they were all dismayed, did not know what to do, and stood dumb with wonder and fear. Baba suffered this ordeal for the sake of His Bhakta. The other devotees wanted only to give a hint to the Mavsibai to be moderate in her service and not cause any trouble or pain to Baba. This they did with good intention, but Baba did not brook even this. They were surprised to see that their well-intentioned effort had resulted in this catastrophe; and they could do nothing but to wait and see. Fortunately, Baba's rage soon cooled down. He left the satka and resumed His seat. From this time onward, the devotees took the lesson that they should not meddle with anybody but allow him to serve Baba as he chooses, as He was capable to gauge the merits and worth of the service rendered unto Him.

Chapter 25

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 devotee) 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.
