

10. 9th Chapter from Sai Satcharitra

Live Experiences of the Tarkhad Family with Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi

I have opened up in front of you the treasure trove of the experiences of Tarkhad family and I am sure after reading through the same your faith in Baba must have doubled up. Now we will move towards the experiences as given in Sai Satcharitra.

I would like to draw your attention to chapter No. 9 from Sai Satcharitra. Of course here I presume that our readers are knowledgeable about this holy book and they have read the same at least once. If one has not done so then my humble request is please do so, which describes in great detail the life of Shirdi Sai Baba and an account of various Leela's he depicted to his devotees during his life span in Shirdi. The 9th chapter of this holy book is dedicated mostly to Tarkhad family i.e. my grandmother my grandfather Ramchandra Atmaram Tarkhad alias Babasaheb Tarkhad and my father Jyotindra Ramchandra Tarkhad. As described earlier the Tarkhad family was staunch Prarthanasamajist and they did not believe in Murti Pooja. For that matter they did not believe in God. However their destiny led them to come in contact with Shirdi Sai Baba and then it was a great transformation. As such Sai Baba's famous Aarati states that he is capable of converting an atheist into firm believer in God (NASTIKANAH TU LAVISHI NIJABHAJANI). in case of Tarkhad Family this happened practically:

The writer of Sai Satcharitra, Late Shri Annasaheb Dabholkar states in this 9th chapter that Babasaheb Tarkhad was very lucky to have a son like my father who was a good worshipper. My father used to get up at 4 a m in the morning and after taking bath he would perform Baba's Aarati by applying sandalwood paste to Baba's Photo In their Mandir at home. He used to light a silver lamp (NIRANJAN) in which the one paisa coin given by Baba was placed. Also there was a regular offering of sugar candy as prasad, which they all would eat during their lunch. After the Pooja father and son would leave for their textile Mill at Byculla. With Baba's grace in those days my grandfather was earning Rs.5000/- and my father Rs.2000/- as salaries per month. Once my grandfather developed an urge to send cotton bails to Baba so that he can make Kaffanis out of it for his personal use. He suggested to Jyotindra to go to Shirdi along with his mother and deliver the offerings to Baba. But Jyotindra was rather reluctant because who will perform the pooja at home? Then my grandfather took upon himself and gave him the assurance that he will carry out the ritual as practiced by Jyotindra and there will be no let up on that count. With that assurance my father along with his mother left for Shirdi. Next two days passed properly but on the third day my grandfather forgot to keep sugar candy during the pooja time. He realized this only in the afternoon when there was no prasad in his plate. He immediately got up and wrote a letter to Jyotindra in Shirdi requesting him to seek pardon from Baba for his grave mistake.

There in Shirdi at the same time one interesting thing happened. After the afternoon Aarati in Dwarkamai when my grandmother and my father went to Baba to seek his blessings Baba told my grandmother " Oh mother! I am very hungry today. As usual I went to Bandra, and I found the door was locked but no one can stop me as I entered from the narrow gap in the door but was totally disappointed as I could not find anything for lunch & I had to return on an

empty Stomach." My grand mother could not understand what Baba was saying but my father instantly realized that his father must have forgotten to offer prasad to Baba during Morning Pooja time. He requested Baba to pardon his father for the grave mistake and asked for his permission to leave for Mumbai instantly. Baba did not permit and said to stay for some more days. My father was any way restless and he wrote a letter to his father stating the details of what Baba had uttered. The two letters crossed each other and on receiving them and going through them both father and son were in tears. They realized the depth of Baba's love for them. On the other hand Baba reminded them that he is very much present in that Photo frame and he accepts their daily offerings unflinching.

Once while they were in Shirdi when my grandmother was about to take her lunch, a dog came there and started wagging its tail. My grandmother offered him a piece of Chapati, which the dog ate with relish and moved away from there. Little later a pig laden with muck all over the body came there. Normally looking at that ugly creature one would not be able to gulp the food down once throat but my grandmother was a very kind hearted and God fearing person. She offered the piece of Chapati to that ugly pig also. The pig ate that piece and went away. Then later that day when they visited Dwarkamai and they went closer to Baba he said to her "Oh mother, today you have fed me with your own hands and the feeding was so sumptuous that I am still continuing to belch. " My grandmother was surprised hearing that. She told Baba that "Baba you are mistaken I have never given you food in Shirdi, as such I do not cook any food over here. Infact I myself eat the food in one of the restaurants over here run by Mr. Saguna and pay for it." Then Baba told her "Oh mother this afternoon when you were taking your lunch did you not offer food to a dog followed by an ugly looking pig? That food has reached me." Then my grandmother told him "Baba this means you take the tests of your devotees by entering in the form of creatures." Baba then told her "Oh mother, please continue to be kind to these creatures and God will continue to bless you. God will see to it that there is never dearth of food in your house."

By now Tarkhad family had developed lot of acquaintances with other Sai Devotees and some of them like Mr. Dabholkar, Mr. Purandare and Mr. Tendulkar who were staying at a closer distance from their place of residence at Bandra. They use to meet each other and then share their sweet experiences with Baba. Whenever they would plan to visit Shirdi they use to inform each other and if anyone wanted to send something to Baba then they would act as a courier for the devotee. Of course the intention behind was expressing pure devotion and love towards Baba. Once Mr. Purandare along with family were proceeding to Shirdi and my grandmother offered two Big Black Brinjals to Mrs. Purandare and requested her to make 'Bhareet' out of one Brinjal and 'Kacharya' (Fried Brinjal Slices) out of the other Brinjal and offer the same for His lunch. Mrs. Purandare on the first day prepared the 'Bhareet' and along with her other preparation offered the same in the plate for Baba's lunch. Baba ate the 'Bhareet' and expressed his desire to have 'Fried Brinjal slices'. Ms. Radhakrishnamai (devotee native) of Shirdi who use to look after the lunch arrangements of Baba was in a fix. She enquired with the ladies and learnt that Mrs. Purandare brought the Brinjal preparation. That was anyway not the season of Brinjals and hence the difficulty to obtain one in Shirdi. So Ms. Radhakrishnamai ran to Mrs. Purandare and enquired about the availability of Brinjals. She said that she had one and had planned to offer the "Fried Brinjal Slices" the next day. Then Ms Radhakrishnamai took away the Brinjal and hurriedly fried the slices for Baba as he was bent upon completing his lunch only after having them. Now this was purely an act of expressing the intense love towards His devotee and also confirming to the devotee in return the receipt of devotion from him/her. When Mrs. Purandare on returning to Bandra informed

my grandmother about this incident she was completely overwhelmed and thanked Baba from the bottom of her heart.

In the same way one evening Mr. Govindji (son of Mr. Balakram) visited Tarkhad's residence as he was proceeding to Shirdi that night. He was to perform the rites of the immersion of ashes of his late father at Nashik and then proceed to Shirdi. As he was in a dire hurry and my grandmother could not provide anything sizeable to send to Baba she managed to locate one 'Pedha' which was kept in the Prasad Pot in front of Baba's portrait in the 'Sandalwood Mandir'. She told him to offer the same although she was not internally happy because the 'Pedha' had already been offered as Prasad earlier. Besides Mr. Govindji was combining his visit for the immersion of ashes followed by the pilgrimage to Shirdi. Of course my grandmother kept aside all these illogical thoughts for her intentions bore divine love as was expressed by Shabari to Lord Rama when she had offered Him the tasted fruit of 'Bora'

When Govindaji reached Dwarkamai after completing all his other rituals he had completely forgotten about the Pedha. Baba asked him whether he had brought anything for him. Govindji replied in negative. Then Baba reminded him stating that someone had given him something to offer to him. Govindji was stone faced and was negative once again. Baba was now angry and literally shouted at him saying " Hay while leaving Mumbai my mother had given you something for me and where is it?" Now Govindji realized, he ran to his place of stay and brought the Pedha and gave it to Baba. The Pedha was instantly consumed by Baba and he told Govindji to inform the mother that it tasted very sweet.

Dear Sai devotee readers such instances of divine love have been very effectively depicted by Late Shri Annasaheb Dabholkar in the 9th chapter of Sai Satcharitra. My father when used to narrate this to us tears used to flow out through his eyes. I think which devotee not feel that way when he would get a return receipt from the Lord in such fashion. I for one feel "KAHAN GAVE WOH LOG?".(HATS TO THOSE PEOPLE) AND WHERE ARE THOSE DEVOTEES AND WHERE IS THAT KIND OF DEVOTION TO-DAY? BUT SAI BABA'S LOVE FOR HIS DEVOTEES IS OMNIPRESENT.

Source:

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