

XXV

18th September, 1936.

Shama Rao Jayker, aged 70, painter, Ville Parle, says:

I was at Shirdi in 1916-17 and even earlier, I went and stayed with others. But, when they left Shirdi, I continued to stay. When I was with others I was getting money and

so Baba asked me for dakshina and I paid. After others left I had no money. Baba did not then ask me for dakshina. Baba knew of my condition without being told.

When I was a boy of 16, a Brahmachari gave me Siva Mantra, (i.e.) initiated me into it. Later, a sanyasi gave me a Sakti Mantra to add to it and form its compliment. When I went to Baba, I had thus my initiation and my *mantra*. His advice to every one is to keep to what he has already his guru, his mantra and his course jo karita aale techa karabut Baba gave us a lot of fine ethical teaching (e.g.): Be pure and truthful. Treat all people properly’.

I knew some of the people at Shirdi. I never went to Radhakrishna Ayi, as there was no need for me to do. I knew Nana Wali. He was dangerous man. Sai Baba warned me not to move with him. First, I had move with Nana Wali. Dr.Pillai also had done so. But once he heat Dr.Pillai, and we left Nana. He was not worshipping Baba, but treated him with some consideration, Baba would beat him and warn him not to do mischief.

During the eight months of my stay at Shirdi, I heard a lot of *goshitis* (i.e.) talks of Baba. But, I do not remember any now. Baba, so far as I know, did not give any *advaitic* teaching to any. People went to him for the most part for plain matter-of-fact requests (e.g.) health, wealth etc., and he dealt with them.

Baba is looking after me and I am content. I lost two sons. But, he keeps us alright. It is not for money that we should go to him-though he gives us money also, when he thinks fit. He used to say that the walls of his Masjid were really gold. He wanted people to come and take away car-loads of that wealth; and his regret was that none came to take it away.

17th October, 1936.

I went to Baba for the first time, as Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan wanted me to give him a lifelike oil painting of Baba. So I had to go and actually see Baba. I went and had a good look at him. He also was looking at me. Then Baba’s

leave had to be obtained before an oil painting could be made of him. So Shama (i.e.) Madhav Rao Deshpande went and asked him for permission. Then Baba replied, "Why should I, a poor fakir, have an oil painting of me? You, Shama, you may get a portrait of yourself". Ultimately, Madhav Rao came and told me that Baba's leave for the painting had been obtained from Baba. Instead of painting one picture, as ordered. I painted three. Then, Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan took two and the third was taken to Baba, touched by him and handed over to H.S.Dixit. There, in his bungalow, it is still kept and worshipped.

One more big-sized picture I painted of Baba. That was left unused for some years and is now kept in the Mosque, and serving to assist or augment the devotion of numerous people who go and look at it.

Baba has been very kind to me. But, I have been guilty of neglecting Baba and all things. I have been so peculiarly indifferent in my temperament, I cannot carry things through. Baba knows this well enough. Once, I was wishing to worship silver *padukas* of Baba, after receiving them from his own hands. So I got a small silver pair of padukas prepared and took them to Baba. He looked at them and me. He received them. But, instead of giving them to me, he sloped his palms (on which the padukas were placed) downwards and they fell down. I picked them up and hoped to worship them. But, that very evening, I gave out my clothing for wash with the silver padukas inside a shirt-pocket. They were lost to me and I never got them back. Baba knew how I would lose things and so did not give the padukas into my hands, to worship-but allowed them to slip off his hands, showing evidently how they were going soon to slip off mine.

On one occasion, I had lent Rs. 4,000 to a very rich Moslem *purda* lady without issue. It was essential for me to recover the sum as I have a large family of 8 sons to support. But, the lady never sent me the money. I went to Baba, hoping to have his sympathy and aid for recovering the money. But, Baba said to me then 'apalyala te haramache nako' (i.e.) Let us have nothing to do with such evil or ill-fated wealth'. I did not get back my money. Two or three years later, I was told she had lost all her wealth.

Ever since I went to Baba, his photo or picture is always with me: where ever I may go to live, Baba has been protecting us (i.e.) me and my family in remarkable ways of which I shall mention only a few instances.

In 1916, we were living at Gajanan Rao's house at Mugabat, a part of Bombay. Baba's picture was kept in a room there. One night at about 2 a.m. thieves were trying to break into that house, beginning with the very room in which Baba's picture was kept. They had succeeded in pulling out by mere strength, 1 or 2 iron bars from the window of that room. Entry into the house thereafter would naturally have followed and the whole house would have been pillaged and robbed. But a barber was sleeping in the verandah in a totally different part of the house. It was usual for him to get up at 4 a.m. and to go round the house for answering calls of nature. On this occasion most strangely and without nay traceable reason, the man got up at 2 a.m and went round the house for his necessary purpose. The thieves seeing him began to run. He saw them and shouted out 'Thieves, Thieves' and every one got up. We found we had got up just in time to prevent the robbers entering inside the house. Every one concluded that Baba took care of the house and took care to nip out the intended robbery when it began in his own room.

In 1917, we were living at Poona in a dilapidated house, the ceiling and walls of which were crumbling. To prevent the falling of dust from the ceiling, cloth had been struck up under the ceiling. One night, in such a room, there was a picture of Baba with a kerosene lamp burning in front of it, and my one-year old child also sleeping close by. At dead of night, there was a sudden thud, The ceiling cloth had fallen, Loose bricks from some of the walls had fallen on the cloth and the debris came with the cloth on to the floor. As the ceiling cloth covered the whole ceiling, it might be expected to fall with the bricks on it, on the child and the lamp if not on Baba's picture. But Baba's providence willed it otherwise. The debris and the cloth fell within a foot of the child and the lamp and did not touch either the child or the lamp. If they had fallen on the child, it would have been crushed; if on the lamp, there would have been a choking fire on the child and other parts of the house might have been endangered. In 1917, we went and stayed for 10 months at Shirdi.

We put up at Baba Bhav's (i.e.) Sharadabai's house. A snake was living in a hole in the small portion in which we lived and we were in danger. One night, my son and others saw the reptile emerge from its hole and made short work of it.

In 1923, my son Surendra, then aged ten, had typhoid. In the course of his illness, he cried out one day, that gas was rising upward from his belly and pressing hard evidently against the diaphragm and heart etc. And he shouted 'Save me, Save me'. He had become extremely weak from the typhoid and I feared even to touch him-much more to press typhoid and I feared even to touch him-much more to press or massage him. I merely cried in a very loud voice 'Baba'. The upward pressure at once abated.

Baba's help to me spiritually consisted of direct oral advice or symbology in matters of dakshina etc. Once he told me "Jaise karale tai sa Bhogel" 'As you sow so you will reap'. On another occasion, he said looking at me, 'guru seva karove' (i.e.), 'We must serve the guru'. He did not, however, give me any mantropadesa. I had already in my twentieth year received that from a guru, and had uttered it for the prescribed period of 12 years and more. Baba's teachings were mostly on moral questions and conduct. He once said amidst a group of listeners Aapala aapan hovun paha jnala tyala vicharnayat kaya artha aahe 'we must see (things) for ourselves. What good is there is going about inquiring of his man and that man for his views and experiences? At the time this was Sai, there was a man amongst us who was going about asking people. 'Is Baba a siddha? Is he an avatar purusha etc.'. Baba evidently deprecated such inquiries when the inquirer had the opportunity of directly facing Baba, getting into contact with him and then deciding on every question for himself with more certainty than could be obtained from reports of others' experiences and views.

Once even about H.S.Dixit who was noted for his obedience to Baba. Baba made a remark. Baba called Dixit, asked him for dakshina of Rs. 30 when he had no money and sent him to Baba Saheb Jog to get the money. Even before H.S.Dixit left the compound of the Masjid, Baba referring to him said "He is unsteady". At that time Dixit had still his former habit of making inquiries and investigations about Baba instead of directly contacting Baba on every matter and

taking his decision upon the results of such contact. This was, of course, sometime prior to Baba's Samadhi. Things changed later on undoubtedly.

Baba strengthened my faith in him by showing me his *antarjnana* (i.e.) knowledge of every fact without being told of it or having direct sensual experience of it. Once I sat before him with only Rs.3 in my pocket. That was all the sum I had for my household experience. Baba was seated along with Kaka Dixit, Nana Saheb Nimonkar at the time and he had asked me. mala char dhave. I doubt if he said *Rupaya*. But, I took it that he wanted Rs.4 dakshina and took out my Rs.3 and placed it before him. Kaka looked at me suggestively as much to say "why give only 3 when 4 was asked for?" Baba at once answered "Where are 4? There were only 3" Baba knew the exact state of my pocket. As he knew also my straitened circumstances, the demand for 4 seemed to indicate his desire that I should develop resignation to fate, to face utter absence of pecuniary resources-with confidence on him, of course to remedy matters, when he thought fit, and to part with the last pie cheerfully when ordered by him to do it.

Here is another instance of his order depriving me of the last pie in my possession and leaving me absolutely helpless to meet domestic responsibilities coupled with his exhibition of his *antarjnana*. It was a day in Ashad 1917. I sat in the Sabha *Mantap* some 20 feet away from the main mosque where Baba sat. One Varde was talking with him. Varde told him that he wished to perform there and wanted permission. Baba accorded permission. Then Varde said he had no funds to perform it. Then Baba pointing to his finger to me said to Varde "Go and ask him". Varde came to me and reported that Baba had asked him to ask me for money for the expenses of Satyanarayana Pooja to be done there. Varde I knew barely as a devotee of Baba and was hardly anything more than an acquaintance. But, when he said Baba told him to get money from me. I at once agreed and asked him how much he required. Fancy what his reply was, He just asked for Rs.2.50. That was the exact sum that I had in my pocket and constituted my entire resources. This thought of asking for the entire amount with me must have been Baba's lila. I gave him the 2.50 at once. Then, Varde set about getting the necessary materials and made all the requi-

site arrangements. He brought small plantain plants and set them on both sides of Baba, to make a *chappar* or *pandal* and tried to use Baba himself for the God Lakshmi Narayana or Satya Narayana that has to be worshipped at this pooja. Baba objected and asked him to have his usual images or pictures and place his plants round them. But, Varde and other devotees went on insisting that Baba should himself as the Satya Narayana and Baba ultimately yielded.

Then, Satya Narayana *Pothi* was being read in the mantap below, while I sat with 1 or 2 by Baba's side in the mosque itself. My mind was very soon at war with itself and I was much perplexed. I love to hear Satya Narayan Pothi. But, Baba's own personality and neighbourhood that was a great fact and I could not decide which I should prefer. Again, I was hearing Pothi sitting up above the level where the reader of the Pothi sat. To sit on a higher level is improper for the hearer. So what should I do? I was greatly perplexed in my mind. Baba evidently read the conflict in my mind and told me suddenly "Go down and sit there" (i.e.) in the lower level, close to the Pothi reader. Baba made the election for me when I was unable to make it for myself.

Baba once showed us how concerned he was to save poor dumb creatures from unnecessary molestation; how powerful he was to cure serious ailments of such creatures and what a refuge or sanctuary he was to all creatures. I was on the veranda of Dixit Wada at Shirdi, one day. I saw a strange sight. Big dogs were running away from and being chased by a small white dog. It was clear that the small dog was rabid and that the bigger dogs were afraid of its bite. The villagers then took sticks in their hands and pursued the small dog with a view to smash it to death. When this chase was going on, I had moved on to the Mosque. The chasing party came up there. Suddenly, the small white dog ran up the steps of the Mosque and stood behind Baba. It seemed to feel that Baba was its sanctuary and that its assailants dared not attack it there. This indeed proved to be the fact. The men stood at a distance and waited for the dog to come out. Meanwhile, Baba abused them vigorously for their heartless cruelty to a poor dumb creature. They explained that the dog was mad that it should be killed. He abused them the more and asked them to get away. Myself and Dr.Pillai were

at the Mosque, fairly near Baba and the dog, and we were assured that the dog was mad and felt the we were in dangerous proximity to it. But ultimately the men went away and the dog was saved. I said then to Pillai that Baba had evidently out of consideration, cured the dog and saved its life. Baba, of course, knew the exact situation in respect of the dog, its rabid state, its possibilities of cure, and the way to save it.