

II

19TH OCTOBER, 1936

SANTA CRUZ

Baba's kindness to my family was, I repeat, very great. When my wife begot "Babu", she resolved to make Baba, her father-in-law's household God. It is our custom for a lady that begets a child, when she goes to her husband's house, to fill up one end of her cloth with some wheat, coconut and fruits, tie them into a knot and unburden herself of these before her father-in-law or his Gods, i.e., domestic Images. My wife tied up these articles and carried these, and also Babu when he was four months old, to Sai Baba at Shirdi. Baba readily received the articles on a plate and took up Babu in his arms. He then endearingly addresses Babu thus "Babu kote gela hotos mala kayakas hotas kay" i.e., **"Babu, where had you been? Were you vexed with, or weary of me?"**. To mark the joyous arrival of Babu at Shirdi, Baba pulled out two rupees from his own pocket, got burfi (sweets) for that amount and distributed it exactly, as they do, on the occasion of a son's birth. This was in 1912.

On this occasion, Baba pointed to the village wall stone arch and said **"Whoever rebuilds this, will get blessings."** My wife asked him for permission to rebuild it and he gave it. Then I paid Rs.600 to N.Chandorkar to rebuild it. On this occasion, Baba said "Babu's bungalow is beautiful and ready". I guessed that Baba meant that I should buy the Bungalow I now live in. So within two months, I got a lease of it and occupied it and in six months thereafter I bought it. Baba's words thus were fulfilled by my purchase and Babu had a beautiful bungalow in 1913.

Babu was again taken to Baba for his first birthday and again commemorated it, by buying Rs.2 worth of sweets (Burfi) and distributing it to all. On this occasion, Baba asked very significantly about Babu "Has he no brother and no sister?" My wife, with some degree of bashfulness answered "You gave us this Babu only". In fact, we had a daughter at that time. Baba's words were construed as a blessing that we would get one more son and one more

daughter. That is exactly what happened. To commemorate Babu's first birthday at Shirdi, a grand dinner was prepared at Madhav Rao Deshpande's residence and all were invited. That was a Thursday. Bala Saheb Bhate excused himself from attending it on the ground that on a Thursday his rule was to avoid dining out. But when he went to Baba that day, Sai Baba asked him;

S.B: Have you dined at Bhao's (i.e., Pradhan's place?)

B.B: Baba, today is Thursday.

S.B: What if?

B.B: I do not dine out on Thursdays. That is my rule.

S.B: To please whom do you observe this rule?

B.B: To please you.

S.B: Then I tell you to go and dine at Bhao's.

Though it was 4 p.m. Balasaheb Bhate came up to me, told me what Baba had said and dined with us.

Next my wife had a dream here at Santa Cruz of Baba's appearing before her and receiving *pada pooja* from her, Mr. N.G.Chandorkar interpreted it to mean that Baba wanted her to start regular Pada Pooja of Baba at home and so bade her go to Shirdi with two silver *padukas*. She did so. When she went up to Baba, the latter who was sitting with legs folded stretched out his legs of his own accord and said "Place the Padukas on thee and do Pooja". Then my wife placed each of Padukas on each foot of Baba and worshipped them. Baba then said to Nana Saheb "nanahine maje pav paha kapun nele" i.e., "See, Mother has cut off and carried away my feet: and himself picked up the two padukas and handed them over to my wife. Ever since that date, she is daily worshipping these padukas.

Eversince my first visit , I was having my dinner at the Mosque with Baba. Baba with his own hand stuffed all food into our plates and cups in such large quantity. Instead of throwing away such valuable prasad I asked my niece to come up and take take away about three fourth of what was served to me and that sufficed to feed my family. Yet what I ate warded off all hunger or appetite for a night meal. Baba almost

invariably gave desert (i.e., fruits &c) at the end of the meal. But when I went up with Babu, Baba noticed that Babu did not care for cooked food and served mangoes and fruits first, so that Babu might have a full meal. When other children were born, I would take the three children with me including Babu, to the Mosque to dine with Baba.

My last visit to Baba was in May, 1918. I had taken with me Rs.3,800 and overstayed my intended period, on account of Baba's insistence. Baba's unuttered but evident practice with those whom he loved was to deplete their resources. "Ysyaugrahamicchmi tasyavith Haraham" **"I take away the wealth of those I love"**. So when I returned from Shirdi after the month's stay, my money was reduced to minus Rs.1200. Infact I had borrowed that sum from an acquaintance, a veterinary Doctor of Poona and returned it to him after coming home.

An incident relating to Babu's illness as an infant ought chronologically to be placed before this. When Babu was 3 or 4 years old, he had serious illness. We had Madhava Bhat, a learned and pious (and on the whole well-to-do) Telugu priest at home who was greatly attached to the family and carried on Mantra Japa and Pooja in our house for our benefit. He noticed Babu's serious illness with concern. He had first no sympathy with our worship of Baba. He fancied that Babu's illness was due to our worshipping a Moslem Saint viz SaiBaba but he dared not give utterance to his thought. One night he had a dream. He saw a figure (which from the photo we had, he recognised to be Sai Baba) sitting on the top of the staircase, holding a baton (sota) in one hand. That figure (Baba) told him "What do you mean? I am the Lord of this house". The priest kept this dream to himself for a time (He had asked us to go and make a vow to Datta for the child's cure but he had been told that Baba was Datta himself).

Later Babu's condition was much worse than before. The priest noted with concern. He ran up at once to Baba's photo and loudly prayed thus "if the child should improve sufficiently by 4 p.m. so as to be brought downstairs, then I will agree that you are Datta". Within a short time of this prayer, the child's temperature was getting lower and by 4

p.m. he wanted to be carried down for amusement and his mother took him downstairs. Madhav Bhat was converted and felt that Sai Baba was really Datta. And he vowed he would pay him a dakshina of Rs.120 and paid it. The Pandit wanted to get a son and vowed he would pay Rs.108 if he got one. He got one and then paid Rs.108 to Baba. But at that very time, the Pandit vowed he would pay Rs.1,008 if my (i.e., Pradhan's) ambition should be achieved. When Mr. Deshpande referred to the gift of Rs.108 as large, Baba belittled it and said, "He is giving me much more" evidently referring to the vow of Rs.1,008.

Baba gave some words of advice to my wife (1) e.g., "If anyone talks ten words at us, let us reply with one word if we reply at all. (2) i.e., Do not quarrel or vie with any one not to be outdone. Early during the 32 days of my last stay with Baba, 1918, all of us escorted him with umbrella and all paraphernalia to the Lendi, we all left him there and retreated. But me alone he recalled to himself and put his palm over my head and said **"Bhav, will you do what I ask you to do?"** I said 'yes'. Then he said **"Pay me Rs.100. Bring it in a bag and deliver it to me at the Masjid quietly"**. In this way he made me give him all the sums I brought and the extra sums I borrowed. Then he made some signs which were not clear. They seemed to mean "Even if the heavens tumbledown on you, do not fear. I am with you". Baba at my first visit said that for the previous six years, he had been smoking the *chilm* that I had given him. I could not make out his meaning.

Sri Buty's second marriage to place at Shirdi in 1916 and I was present.

When we left Shirdi Baba said, tuyiyakar, vamoyeyin i.e., that he would accompany us. Physically and with a visible body he did not accompany us. But our journey was pleasant and free from danger. That indicated that he accompanied us with his invisible body and warded off all danger and trouble. After Baba blessed me and passed away, I had the following benefits. I was appointed 2nd class magistrate of South Salesette from 1920-26 and as a J.P. since 1926. I was elected fro Thana as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council and sat during 1921-23. I was made a Rao Bahadur in 1927.

