

XXV

26th September, 1936.

Mr. Kolambo, i.e. D.V.Sambhare, Gowd Saraswat, aged 57, Ville Parle says:

Baba was smoking his *chilim* and passing it round among those near. I am a *bidi* smoker. I was some distance away from them being seated near the steps. I felt a desire to have a puff or two out of that chilim. As soon as the thought struck me, Baba called out “you boy come here. Why keep yourself so far! Come near. Have a smoke”, and offered me the chilim. I joined the group and drew a few puffs I was glad alike to see his knowledge of my desire and his kindness in graciously offering his chilim to me.

Besides smoking, I had a more dangerous habit, the habit of drinking. Baba came to me in a dream on 1-2-1917 and sat on my chest and said Boy! What are you doing? I promised to abstain from drink. From the very next day I rigorously abstained from touching any liquor. On 15-2-1917 came a test. The manager of my office was giving a send off to his children and I was of the party invited. He insisted on my taking a peg of whisky and soda. I pleaded that the doctor had advised me to abstain. I did not mention Baba's name in such lighthearted company. He did not mind the objection and was still insisting. Then came miraculous help. The electric lights went out and my manager went away to find out how the accident happened. Just then my neighbour, the “misty” drank off my glass and I was counted by the manager who returned to me, soon after as having complied with his request.

Baba's dakshina demands were often associated with a moral, e.g., putting down boastfulness, cupidity, evasion of obligations etc. Some months after the above incident I was at Shirdi. Baba did not ask me for any dakshina at all though he was asking others for it. I concluded that my having corrected my vice was, in his eyes, the great merit which was recognised or rewarded, by immunity from paying dakshina. I was at the wada boasting of this immunity in the presence of

friends. At once came a call from Baba and when I went to the mosque. Baba asked me for 2 rupees dakshina and I paid it. There was another devotee who had gone to Shirdi, who had a balance of 18 rupees odd with him. He had handed it over to me in secret with the view that he might truthfully tell Baba that he had no money if Baba should ask him for dakshina. This man was at the Masjid when I went to the Masjid and paid my 2 rupees. Baba turned to him and asked for 2 rupees dakshina and in order to prevent his evasive excuses, added "Take it from this man (pointing to me) and give it". The man's device had been found out. He got 2 rupees from the deposit with me and paid it. That man is (N.V) a proprietor of a press, Mugbat, Bombay. This was some time before Baba passed away.

We were there a few days before Baba passed away. When we went to take leave, we had no anticipation of the coming catastrophe. But Baba evidently knew of it. He said "You are coming from Bombay. You must go on hearing me speak. I should go on hearing you speak. But you are going away. Well well, (i.e., with hesitation). Go, You are going to reach your destination tomorrow noon." Any how leave was given that evening and we started by that night's train via Kopergaon, hoping as usual to reach Bombay (via Manmad) by 7.30 or 8 a.m. But when we reached Manmad we learnt that the engine of a train had gone out of order and there was a consequent delay of some four hours. As we reached Bombay, it struck twelve noon. Baba's anticipation or prediction was fulfilled. Baba passed away a few days later and we could then see why he was rather hesitating to give us leave. That was the final parting.

Some fourteen years ago, one night Baba came to me in a dream and said "Boy, you speak of me to others as your Guru. Have I given you prasad, i.e. initiation?" Then he made me wash my hands, and gave me a Maharatta sloka to repeat. I repeated it very well in my dream. This was my initiation. But when I woke, I remembered nothing of the sloka and even now I cannot recall the sloka. Two years ago, I completed my fifty fifth year. According to the rules of our company, one should retire at 55. So I was getting ready to be relieved. But at that time, I had a dream. Our big boss, the director, came

in the dream, to me and made me understand that I should not bother about leaving the company. Up to this time none has asked me to retire.

I have responsibilities to my family as I have 4 or 5 daughters and a son. Baba looks after all my affairs. I do not pray to him for anything. He knows what I require and it is up to him to give us what we need, if that be his wish. Why trouble him with requests, as though he either did not know what we want, or knowing it would not give what is good unless pestered with requests? We are content to let him do his will for us; and we are happy.