

Appendix A - My Gurudev: Bhau Maharaj

Shirdi Che Sai Baba - Dr. Keshav Bhagwant Gavankar

APPENDIX-A

MY GURUDEV: BHAU MAHARAJ

Saint Tukaram Maharaj, in one of his Abhangas, has said, “When you pay your humble obeisance at the feet of great persons or Saints, your desires get burnt and your mind becomes pure. Just a few particles of dust adhering to the sole of the Saints are sufficient to burn Vasanas (desires) to ashes, when you come in contact with that sacred dust. Even if you casually happen to touch it, all your desires will be finished and you will start reciting Ram-Nama with true love”. Tukaram further adds, “Those who come in proximity of Saints, get ultimate peace and bliss. Then they understand the importance of being in close contact with Saints”.

Saints themselves are immersed in divine love and bliss. Jiva is in constant search of bliss (Ananda). When he is one with his own Self, he finds God. In the word ‘Swarupa’, Swa means Jiva, and rupa means love.

God is ‘Prabhu’, which means ‘self proven’. My Moksha guru was a saint, to fit in the above description. He was very compassionate and loving. He had concern for the whole human race. He had a tremendous fervour about the spiritual progress of all human beings. He knew, human birth was the only chance to get rid of the cycle of birth and death. So he wanted everybody not to miss this opportunity.

My guru’s name was Brahmibhut (Late) Trimbak Vitthal Samant, a great saint. For me he was ‘Mauli’, my mother. He was from Kurla, a suburb of Mumbai. He was also known as Bhau Maharaj. Saints also could not escape worldly affairs howsoever detached they were. My guru was a medical doctor by profession. He was in Government service, as a Vaccinator. Continuous touring from town to town was a part of his job. He met different people from different places. So he had judged the people overall and sensed the correct flavour of the circumstance, then.

My guru was a devotee of God Ganesh. In his prayers he used to say, “Oh! Ganesh”, you are the Principal Deity in this Kali-age, who will protect us. You are my mother, father, my friend and even my spouse. For me You are the life, the knowledge, the wealth and You are the heaven and Moksha (Liberation). Whatever Karma (actions) I do with my body, mind or intellect, I offer it to You. Let me offer, whatever knowledge I gain, at Your Lotus feet. You are the One, who has become many with Your Yogashakti. Jivas are not free, but they are Your servants. Universe is nothing but Your ‘play’, Your favourite game.

Ganraya (Ganesh), You bestow the intellect upon us. I am aware of the dualities You have created; such as sin and merit, truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, wealth and poverty, respect and insult and many others. I know that when one out of the two is asked for, the other will automatically come with it. Such is the association between them. So

I do not want anything out there. What I want is an opportunity to serve at Your Lotus feet. Bestow devotion and love in my heart.

“Gajanana, I pray, let every Jiva happy. Remove all calamities, save all and guide all”. Such a noble person my guru was Dr. T.V. Samant alias Bhau Maharaj. He was born 1888 to mother Rakhumabai father, Govindpant. He was adopted by his paternal uncle Vitthalpant. Trimbak became a doctor and joined Govt. service. In those days small-pox was a threatening disease. Dr. Samant had to travel a lot and vaccinate children. He got married only because the elders in the family insisted. But he did not break his vow of celibacy. His wife died after months of their marriage. He never thought of re-marriage and totally devoted his life to Ganesh-worship. He received the fruits of his devotion in this life itself. When he was passing through the forest near Tryambakeshwar, Lord Ganesh gave him darshan the form of Ganu Maharaj. He gave him a single-lettered ‘Mantra’ for chanting.

Though a sain, my Gurudev was a common ‘Jiva’ like all of us and was not free from temporal pains and pleasures. Still one could get a motherly love even by glancing at him. Ever in my life I (the author) have leant on his support. His loving words are still echoing my ears. To respect the order of the elders, he got married but he was destined to live alone by Ganesh’s will. His parents also left him. He supported the family of his elder brother. But that too was not a pleasing experience. Apart from this worldly mire, he received the pleasure through the devotion towards Lord Ganesh. He experienced Lord’s grace and love. To attain His grace and love one has to go through hardships and tough tests. One cannot enjoy the taste of a fruit of good Karmas (actions) if made available easily. When a Jiva struggles for completion of any work, his affinity towards work and his life-force are expressed as a by-product of success.

Guru Maharaj adored Ganesh and derived love and pleasure. He never yearned for ‘Siddhis’ (power of miracles). He was completely immersed in God’s Love. This is a proper definition of a ‘Saint’. If we happen to come across such a saint we recognize Saintliness, and stay in his vicinity, we can say that we have touched the dust of his feet. With the association of a saint our ego, which is the seed of all desires, is destroyed.

Those who are greedy for ‘Siddhis’ can never reach the stage of realization. Spiritually they are on the lower step of the ladder. They remain hanging in between like a bat, instead of rising higher. In case of Bhau Maharaj, even though miracles happened spontaneously, he never went after them. From his point of view, performing miracles was like an encroachment upon the sovereignty of the Almighty, Sri Ganesh. He used to quote Tukaram, “He who desires to take position of Vitthal and tries to become God, surely declines and degenerates”.

My guru advised only to love God whole heartedly. “A devotee can pray to God to get his wish fulfilled. But he cannot aspire for the doership, which is God’s supreme authority. There is an incredible pleasure in loving God. That way love pervades your life”. Love was the main point of his teachings.

In Kurla, my guru functioned as a guide to many aspirants. He elucidated on Bhagwat Dharma and developed interest in their minds. Many were drawn towards the path of devotion because of him. Every Thursday, there used to be a Bhajan, Namasankirtan (singing glory of The Lord), held in Kurla. Devotees from distant places used to come and attend the sessions. On the day of Sankashti Chaturthi (4th day after full moon night), over fifty persons used to be present for Mahaprasad (dinner after moon rise). ‘Sri Ganesh Jayanti’ (Birthday of Ganesh) was celebrated regularly, every year. Dhanwatkar buwa of Bhiwandi would perform an

interesting Kirtan, which was the most awaited item of the day. After his demise, Shantaram Bhau Jaywant took charge of the Kirtan-event.

As already mentioned, Bhau Maharaj was a medical doctor. People of all castes and creeds used to come to him for treatment. He knew astrology too. Devotees used to wait forming a queue, to know about their future. He never charged a single paisa for his consultation.

His sayings are worth remembering as they guide us in all times. He had said,

[1] “To forgive is surely a great attribute but only when you are dealing with the virtuous (sajjan) people. While dealing with unrighteous and wicked persons, forgiveness proves to be a great vice”.

[2] “If somebody is in need, you can help him and oblige. But if situation does not demand your obligation, do not offer it voluntarily. It goes in vain”.

[3] “In spirituality, Paraloka (upper world), is not far. It lies in your spiritual heart”.

[4] “There are and will be many sculptors who can create replicas of other objects. But to create innumerable objects with an amazing variety, not a single is like another, is only possible for the Creator of the Universe”.

My Guru, Bhau Maharaj, asked Mr. Shripad Narayan Satghar, to write a ‘Siddhi-Vinayak-Stotra’ (a collection of verses as prayers to God Ganesh) which, when chanted, would free all the people from the calamities in life.

S. N. Satghar politely expressed his inability, saying, “Bhau, how can I write a Stotra? I do not know how to write poems or I haven’t studied its metres or Vruttas. I have never written a single line of poetry before. I am a lawyer, M.A., L.L.B. You can ask me anything about Law. But what you are telling me is really beyond my capacity”.

Gurudev told him to take a pen, sit before the idol of Lord Ganesh and start writing. To his own astonishment, when Satghar started writing, he wrote total eleven chapters containing 1740 verses, in ‘Ovi Vrutta...’ (A popular metre of poetry used by many great Saints. e.g. Dnyaneshwar).

The Composition is famous by the name “SriSiddhi-Vinayak-Stotra and Ganesh-Prabhav”. Curious devotees are requested to go through this sacred book without fail. In 1947, my Gurudev left his body and merged into Lord Ganesh. Let his remembrance be in the heart of everyone.

END OF APPENDIX A

© Author – Dr. Keshav Bhagwant Gavankar (Annasahib Gavankar) – Explicit Rights To Publish To Shirdi Sai Baba Books.com (Member of SaiYugNetwork.com)

Source: <https://shirdisaibababooks.com/shirdi-che-sai-baba-in-english/>