

Chapter 14 - Chanak Leela

Shirdi Che Sai Baba - Dr. Keshav Bhagwant Gavankar

CHAPTER 14

CHANAK-LEELA

He who is the Creator of this world, can easily appear in this world with a name and form. Is anything impossible for Him? Physical eyes can see only physical world. Paramatma is Divine. To see His Divine form, Divine vision is necessary. He cannot be perceived by the mind. But when the heart is pure and free from all doubts then His presence can be sensed and be known. To appear and disappear is His Leela, which is constantly going on. In His reign, this strange pattern is observed since eternity. He is the One Who pervades every object and every atom but still remains invisible. Then the question arises; what is the proof of His existence?

Saints know the 'Language of Reality'. They say that one must experience that Reality, i.e. God, as long as one is in the human body. He must have tremendous fervour for it. He should toss and turn. Boiling stage of a liquid cannot be reached without fire. One must have that fire and yearning in his heart for experiencing God. If it is absent he will remain deprived. That is why human body is important. Experience cannot be had without body. Body is an instrument. It is also the medium for experience. Parameshwar is present in every iota of the world. Common man knows it but cannot comprehend it. So he gets deluded. Spirituality is hard to practise, at the same time it is very easy too. So is the path of devotion. When one comprehends it and walks along, it is very easy. Baba used very unusual method of imparting spiritual knowledge to the inquisitive people. Through jokes and banters He used to teach them. They always used to wait for such lighter but pregnant moments.

Sunday was a day of bazaar in Shirdi. All kinds of small and big traders would set up their shops on the roadside. All people would buy the necessary household items for the week on Sunday itself. One Sunday, Annasaheb Dabholkar was sitting in Dwarkamai massaging Baba's feet. Being holiday and bazaar day, lots of people had come for Baba's darshan. Dabholkar was full of concentration at the work he was doing. Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande), Shrimant Buti, Vamanrao and Kakasaheb Dixit also were present there. All wished to serve Baba. Just then Shama asked, "Annasaheb, how these grains of puffed gram (Chana, in Marathi) are stuck in the sleeve of your coat?" Annasaheb looked in the direction pointed by Shama Deshpande. When he moved his hand some grains slid down from his sleeve. People around picked them up. They wondered how so many grains were held in the shallow grooves of the folds of coat. It became a matter of joke and banter. Annasaheb also wondered as to how those grains came there. He thought, 'I have been massaging Baba's feet for quite a long time but never sensed anything about it. From where have they come? While all were wondering and discussing Baba said, "He has a bad habit of eating the things alone. It's a bazaar day; he must have got the grams from there and eaten them secretly. I know how they came there."

Annasaheb felt awkward. He said, "I never eat secretly. You are unnecessarily blaming me. I have not gone to the bazaar today; then how can I purchase anything? If I have some eatables, I always distribute among the persons around; and never eat before that". Baba said, "Yes, I know you distribute whatever you have. But if there is nobody next to you then what do you do? At least you must remember Me in that case. Am I not always with you? At least you should offer it to Me. Is it not?" Baba Himself created a story of those puffed gram seeds, and taught the great principle in an easy way. Before you start eating anything, offer it to God with a prayer and sanctify, then eat it.

Anna Dabholkar has written few verses regarding this event in Sai Sat Chatitra, Chapter 24. He remembered the story of Sudama which underlines the same principle. Summary of it is given below. In ancient days, Balaram and Krishna were learning under Guru Sandipani. Accompanied by Sudama both were sent to the forest to bring cut wood for fuel. They were given some puffed gram seeds for eating, if hungry. In forest, Krishna felt weary and sleepy. So he slept in Sudama's lap. Seeing Him asleep, Sudama started eating the seeds. Krishna asked him, "What are you eating? I can hear some sound of it".

Sudama cunningly said, "No! I am not eating anything. My teeth are chattering because of cold. I cannot even chant the Vishnu-Sahastra Nama properly. It is that sound you have heard". Krishna told him, Dada, I had a dream once. A person was eating something which was meant for someone else. When asked about it he said, 'should I eat soil, if not this?' The other person said, "Ok, let it happen so.." Krishna continued, "I am just telling you my dream. I know you will not eat without sharing with Me". That time Sudama was unaware of Krishna's Divinity. Otherwise he would not have done that mistake. In future Sudama had to suffer from extreme poverty even when he had a friend like Krishna. When Sudama offered a fistful of puffed rice (Pohe) to Krishna, the Lord made him rich. Those who have a habit of eating alone, without sharing, should learn a lesson from this story. Baba, in this Kali Yuga has given the same precept in a lighter vein. Ishavasya Upanishad says, "Tena Tyaktena Bhunjithaha". First offer to the Lord and then eat the things as Prasadam.

END OF CHAPTER 14

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