

Chapter 8 - Why Did You Come To A Muslim?

Shirdi Che Sai Baba - Dr. Keshav Bhagwant Gavankar

CHAPTER 8

Why Did You Come To A Muslim?

No other fortune is greater than to remain in the company of Saints. Company of Saints is 'Satsang'. All desires of man may get fulfilled, his goals may be reached, and everything may be achieved by great efforts, in this material world. But to come in contact with a saint, to stay in His company, to receive His guidance in worldly and spiritual matters are the things which cannot be accomplished even after ceaseless efforts. We cannot make a list of the gains we get out of Satsang; but the most important gain is, our life gets changed for the better.

To be in Satsang proves that we have had that opportunity in last lives and will be getting the same in the next births too. All the relations including mother, father, brother or a friend, do bring love and happiness in our life. But these relations have their own limitations. Through Satsang such a close and deep relation is established between a saint and a disciple that their intimacy cannot be compared with any other relationship.

Saints are Godly persons. It is very difficult to recognize a true saint. Sai Baba was not a saint but more than a saint, An Avatar. How was it then, possible for anybody to know Him so easily? Shri Hari Vinayak Sathe was a Deputy Collector in Kheda district. A Gujarati Brahmin named Megha, was working under him. He could not recite a simple Gayatri Mantra (Incantation). But he was a steadfast devotee of Lord Shiva. He would never even glance at any other deity. Sathe gave him the duty of worshipping Shiva-Linga in the temple, in a town which was near Shirdi. Meanwhile Sathe happened to come in the fold of Sai Baba and he became His ardent devotee. He constructed one building in Shirdi, for the convenience of large number of visiting devotees, who came to Shirdi from outside (Famous Sathe-wada).

Sathe then decided to put Megha in Baba's service and informed him the same. Megha got nervous and was not ready to go. He had heard that Baba was a Muslim. To leave the duty of worshipping Shiva and to serve a Muslim were two opposite things according to him. So both the things did not fit simultaneously in his mind. Knowing his dilemma Sathe tried to convince him and told him about Baba's Avatarhood. Not fully but partially convinced Megha arrived in Shirdi. As soon as he entered the masjid, Dwarkamai, Baba rose to His feet with a stone in hand for hurting Megha and shouted, "Do not come up the stairs. I will not permit you to enter this place. Why at all have you come to a Muslim?" Megha understood that Baba had read mind clearly. He had also heard Baba's anger never true. It was His way expressing love. Serving Baba Megha lived in Shirdi as per the orders of his superior, Mr. Sathe. But one day stupidity took charge of his mind. He thought, "Why should I fetch water and arrange for bath of this Muslim?. The same day he resigned from the service and went to his native village. There he fell ill.

After recovery he went to the same Shiva Temple to express his gratitude to God Shiva. To his utter surprise, he saw Sai Baba in place of the Shiva-Linga. There was no Shiva. Constantly he saw Sai Baba's image before his eyes. He realized his mistake. With sincere repentance he prayed to Baba, though away from Him. Megha was then transformed completely. So much he yearned for Baba's darshan that everywhere he saw Baba. He came back to Shirdi. He understood that Baba was none other than his revered Shiva. With this feeling he offered his obeisance to Sai Baba. Baba asked him to recite Gayatri-Purashcharan in order to cleanse his body. Megha obeyed His order and Baba Himself carried out the completion ceremony. For him Baba and God Shankar became one and the same. He constantly recited 'Namah Shivaya'. In conversation with others, he would refer to Baba as Shankar or Bholanath. He brought a big photograph of Sai Baba. He used to sit before it for the maximum time. Constantly he was immersed in Sai if delirious due to some intoxication. He forgot his thirst and hunger. With daily discipline he kept worshipping Baba's photo, considering Him to be Shiva.

After a year or so, Megha was drawing a sketch of trident (Trishul) on the wall near Baba's photo, using red lead (Shendur). On seeing this, Sathe Rao asked him why he was doing so. He said, "When I got up in the morning I heard Baba's voice. He was saying, 'Trishul nikalo' (draw trident). He repeated it thrice. Actually Baba was not physically present there. Main doors too were locked. I was sure that it was His voice only. I went to masjid Dwarkamai masjid and asked Him if it was His command. He said, "Yes; go and draw the trident". That is why I am drawing this".

Next day one of the devotees gave a Shiva-Lingam to Sai Baba. Just then Megha entered the masjid. Baba gave the Shiva-Lingam to him and asked him to worship it everyday. He came back happily and showed it to Sathe. Inscrutable were the Leelas of Sai Baba. Asking Megha to draw a trident on one day and giving him Shiva-Lingam on the next day, were not mere coincidences. It was His plan. He always allowed, rather encouraged His devotees to worship their favourite deities. Along with the Shiva, Megha had started to worship the deities in other temples also. One day the Khandoba temple was not open, when Megha reached there. So he came to Baba to offer Him worship as usual. But Baba said, "You have not worshipped one of the deities. Then do not perform My Puja (worship)".

Megha told Him that the temple was closed. That was why he had come earlier to Him. Baba said, "Go there now; you will find the temple open". The temple was open when Megha again went there. He finished the 'Puja of Khandoba', only then Baba accepted the worship from him. Megha served Baba in all possible ways. He used to fetch a pot full of water from the river Godavari for Baba's bath. He would go to the nearby forest to collect special types of leaves (as Tulsi, Bel etc.) for worship. One day he requested Baba that he would bathe Him. ("I will offer you Sachaila-Snana")

Baba said, "Why Sachaila-Snana? In the whole body, head and feet are important from the point of worship. So you put water on My head and feet only. That is sufficient". But Megha insisted and the God had to submit to the love of His devotee. Brilliance of inner conscience appears in the temple of love and devotion. When unending flow of constant contemplation springs up, the whole body mind and intellect get charged with Pranik energy. Atma gets immersed in bliss and swings with bliss. It is a worship of love and devotion. It is Madhur-Bhakti.

Megha's mind tendencies and his whole being blossomed like a lotus. In that state of mind he happily started bathing Sai Baba. He emptied the whole pot which he got filled from the Godavari river, on Baba's head. With his one hand he was ringing the bell as it is a customary ritual in the temples while worshipping the deity. But Megha saw that Baba's whole body, except His feet and head, was completely dry even when plenty of water was poured over Him. Megha was astonished. He experienced the Prasadam of love and bliss. All the eight signs of ecstasy were visible in him. Sudden perspiration, rising of body-hair (goose-flesh), stillness, choking of throat, subtle trembling, feeling nerveless, uncontrolled flood of tears and dissolution of the existence; all these states he went through, in a moment. With these 'Ashta Satwik-Bhava' he fell at the feet of Sai Baba. The person (Megha), who had deluded feeling and thought, that how and why should he serve a Muslim, was completely transformed. The pendulum of his thoughts had reached the opposite end and he had become a devout devotee of Sai Baba.

One sad day when Megha breathed his last, Baba Himself came and touched his cold body with warmth and affection. He was in tears but immediately He gathered and consoled Himself, "Dheeraha na shochati". (Brave and noble people do not grieve) According to this saying of Kanthopanishad, Baba became calm and balanced.

Noble people do not grieve and if sometimes they slightly lose their poise, they do not need anybody's advice or consolation. They themselves abandon the grief. But who would call Baba a noble man? He was the Lord, Lord of the Universe! The Lord had come to Shirdi to serve His devotees and to love and guide them by showering His unlimited grace. The next day after Megha's death, Baba said to Kaka Dixit, "Gone! He has gone to the abode of God. Kaka, listen, death is the only true friend of man. It constantly accompanies him. Both are the passengers of life. The journey of death begins at the very moment a baby takes it's first breath."

On the decided fixed day death stands before us and that is the last day of our life. When the journey 'ends', we say that death 'has come'. Actually, it is always with us. But we are unaware. Why one should be afraid of death when it is our true friend? To get rid of this fear is the basic aim of the spiritual practice. Death is not a total destruction or annihilation; neither of the body nor of the Atma. Because, constituents of the body which are taken from the five elements merge into their original sources; and Atma is the Principal which neither wears, tears, nor dies.

Nainam Chhindanti Shastrani..... (Refer: Bhagwad Gita 2/23)

The journey of Atma never ends till it does not merge into Param-Atma i.e. God, the Ultimate, The Lord of the Universe. From the time infinite, the journey of Atma is ceaselessly in progress. Bhagwan Shri Krishna tells Arjuna, in Bhagwad Gita, "When one goes through the turmoil of many many births and purifies himself eventually, then only the journey comes to an end".

Death means the beginning of the next new birth. When one thing perishes the other emerges from it. Immortality is created from death. The life is perpetual because of death. Jiva has a fear of death in his mind but unknowingly his love for immortality is hidden in death, which manifests itself through that fear. Death is a period of rest. Before resting one must carry out his duties, do Karmas with no expectation of returns. The nature of Karma (action) does not decide whether it is higher or lower. But the intention behind that Karma

and loyalty to it are the two important things. To live our life means to be loyal to our Karma, to get acquainted with death and to get free from its fear. Passing through innumerable births and doing Sat-Karmas (good, sacred actions) if a Mumukshu (he who wills to get Moksha) observes patience and loyalty, and if he is immersed in uninterrupted Namasmara (Chanting God's name), then only he finally rests in the arms of the Mother of the Universe. Saint Tukaram has said, "Accept my last and final Namaskar. I am going to my native place, the final abode of eternal Joy and Peace."

END OF CHAPTER 8

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