

B. V. DEV

B. V. Dev was at the close of his life a trustee of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan. He went to see Sri Sai Baba for the first time in about 1910 being drawn through Chandorkar. Chandorkar was the Deputy Collector under whom he was the *Mamlatdar*. His brother wrote to him that Chandorkar had faith in Sai Baba and consequently Dev might try to derive information and contact through the Deputy Collector. When Chandorkar gave him some of his experiences and advised him to go to see Sri Sai Baba, Dev wondered whether he should not also like Chandorkar wait for a call from Sri Sai Baba. That implied some degree of egotism that if a Deputy Collector was worth a call, he, as *Mamlatdar*, also was worth a call. But later he gave up that absurd attitude, for it was not the official position of Nana Chandorkar that merited the call. It was the previous contact of four *janmas* with Baba and the great work of an apostle that he was to be entrusted with, that made Baba send for him. Similar reasons could not apply to B.V. Dev. Anyhow being pressed by Chandorkar and finding that a visit to Baba would be productive only of good, he made up his mind to go. His first impression of Baba was fairly good. He had his own ways of viewing spiritual matters and he was a good student of sacred literature especially in Marathi. He was studying Eknath's and Jnaneswar's books, making fairly good progress in spirituality, as ordinarily understood. But there was something very peculiar in his case. *Jnaneswari* is used as *pothi*, a daily *parayana* book by most people and they succeeded in effecting one complete *parayanam* within a specified period, the reading going on from day to day. In Sri. B. V. Dev's case, however, on the first occasion, on the second and also on the third, whenever he began the *parayana* of *Jnaneswari*, obstacles of various sorts sprang up, and he could not finish the reading in a continuous fashion. He was very puzzled and also disgusted. There must be some unseen reason behind the obstacle. What it could be, he could not guess. This was one of the things, which brought him nearer to Baba. When he went to Shirdi with *Jnaneswari*, he was anxious to get Baba's aid for overcoming the unseen obstacle. He gave Baba the *Jnaneswari* with one rupee so that the book might be returned to him for study.

Baba: Why one rupee? Bring Rs. 20.

Dev brought and gave Rs. 20, but still Baba said nothing about *Pothi*. That night Dev was trying to talk to Balakram Manker, who derived much spiritual benefit from Baba and asked him to narrate his experience with Baba, showing how he got into His Grace. Balakram Manker put off the narration till the next evening. Next day Baba asked Dev, "Give me Rs. 20." Dev paid it and went back and was

talking to Balakram. Balakram was just beginning his narration. Just then Baba sent for Dev and Dev went.

Baba: What are you talking? With whom and where?

B. V. Dev: At Dixit wada I was talking with Balakram about your greatness and fame.

Baba: Fetch Rs. 25.

Dev fetched and paid Rs. 25 to Baba.

Baba: Sit here in Mosque.

Baba then suddenly grew angry and said, "Why are you stealing my rag? Is it your way to steal and that despite your grey hairs? I will kill you with a hatchet". Baba's asking dakshina and his sudden anger might ordinarily be supposed to act as shock to his mind, but in whatever way they were intended to operate, Baba did not make it clear at once. Dev was benefitted and did not know what the rag was and what the anger would lead to. After ten minutes of such fiery anger, Dev was sent back. Half an hour later, Baba sent for Dev and all the others came to the *Masjid*. Then Baba addressing Dev, said, "*Tambye Bhav*, have I wounded you by talking of the rag? If there is theft, it has to be mentioned. There is no other go. Be it so. God will look to everything." Then he asked Dev for Rs. 12 dakshina, which Dev procured and paid.

Baba to Dev: What are you doing?

Dev: Nothing.

Baba: Go on reading *Pothi* daily in the morning at the *wada*. When I wished to give you a nice lace shawl in its entirety why do you go and steal a tatter?

Dev then began reading *Jnaneswari* as *Pothi* and thereafter there were no more obstacles. This was a sure proof to him of Baba's controlling powers and there was no necessity for him thereafter to enquire about the experience of others. Dev realised that such personal experiences formed a full lace shawl given by Baba and picking up secondhand information from others of their experiences of Baba amounted to stealing rags of Baba.

Though Dev succeeded in reading *Jñaneswari* without obstacle, he had made no progress in understanding its meaning. Baba then appeared in his dream and asked. "Do you understand the meaning of what you read?"

Dev with tears: "No. How can I understand unless you grant it by your grace?"

Baba: "You are reading too hastily. Sit by my side and read."

Dev: "What shall I read?"

Baba: "*Adhyatma*."

Dev went in and brought *Adhyatma Ramayana*. Then dream ended and Dev woke up.

When Dev found that his completion of *Jñaneswari* was evidently a *chamatkar* of Baba, by which he overcome the unseen obstacles to the completion of his *parayana* of *Jñaneswari*, he understood that this *chamatkar* of Baba was a full lace shawl while the stories about Baba's lilas which he would glean from Mankar would be second hand stories of other people's experiences. Baba occasionally gave him hints for his spiritual progress. But it was not always that Dev could understand them correctly. Baba asked Dev once, "*Bhav*, give me *dakshina*" B.V. Dev gave one guinea.

Baba: Give more.

Baba, after getting four guinea said, "Though four were given by you, Baba has got only one."

Dev: "Baba I have given four."

Baba: "Yes, but I have only one. You will know."

The obvious interpretation is, though the devotee surrenders his fourfold *Antahkarana Manas, Buddhi, ahamkara* and *Chitta*, Baba receives only the *Jiva* and all multiplicity when it reached God – Baba, becomes one. So, the mind must surrender multiplicity unto the *Guru* God to attain unity.

Baba helped B.V.Dev to surrender himself more and more and derive Baba's help at every stage and hence, B.V.Dev in his turn become a

means of spreading Baba's glory. Though not quite on the large scale in which Chandorkar did work for Baba. Dev also absorbed Baba's magnetism through Chandorkar and also directly, and communicated Baba's magnetism to others. But it is not always easy to make people derive full faith in Baba. A *karnam* under B.V.Dev, having learnt about Dev's attachment to a great *Satpurusha* called Sai Baba, came to him to get Baba's help to decide an important question for himself and his family. That *karnam* had his own Guru who for his own purposes wished to get a new image to replace the *karnam's* former image and have a grand installation ceremony, hoping to derive considerable pecuniary profits from the proposed ceremony. So, while the priest of the *karnam* insisted on it, the *karnam* himself had some doubts and came to Dev and through him consulted Baba as to whether the new image should be brought and installed. Baba was consulted, and gave his opinion that the new image should not be brought in. The consultation was through Shama. The *karnam*, being very anxious to get his priest's advice confirmed, wanted to ask Baba, "What would happen if the new image was brought?" Baba gave a story. He said he and a companion had gone together and he told his companion not to buy an animal. In spite of his advice, that animal was bought and brought to the village, and at once an epidemic of plague broke out as the result of the animal coming in. Baba left it there. The *karnam*, not fully impressed by Baba's All-knowing character, tried to please his *Guru* and brought in the new image. At once an epidemic broke out and the *karnam's* own wife was attacked first. The *karnam* asked his *Guru* to help him, but that *Guru* wanted half the property of the *karnam* to be made over immediately to the priest, and was trying in various ways to deprive the *karnam* of his property. The *karnam* woke up. He went to Dev and mentioned how things had turned out. Then on Dev's advice he removed the new idol and reinstalled the old idol. By Baba's grace he was saved from further harm.

Dev's services for Baba were mainly through Sai *Sansthan* and through his researches into matters connected with Sai Baba and the *Sansthan*. These researches he made after great trouble. For instance, he made researches into the ancient history of Shirdi and into the meaning of certain words and phrases. These articles appeared in the Sai Lila Masik which was the organ of the Shirdi Sai *Sansthan*, of which he was a member, and signed them with the pseudonym, *Babache bal* that is, child of Baba. He had a very good command of Marathi and even in Sanskrit his proficiency enabled him to compose brilliant verses which have appeared from time to time in Sai Lila Masik. He took very active interest in promoting the welfare of the *Sansthan*, and spent a very large part of his time at Shirdi. He had a good physique

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and could endure thirst, hunger or troubles for long periods. He had assisted various enquiries into matters on Sai and enabled them to become staunch Sai *bhaktas*. In the statement he has given to the author, some hints may be found of the way in which he helped the Sai *Sansthan*. He worked to the last as a trustee of the *Sansthan*, and he passed away dying in harness so to speak. He has written a good deal in Marathi and these would be appreciated by those who know that language. The accuracy of some interpretations he has given to Baba's Sayings has appeared, however, to the author to be doubtful but one cannot be positive in these cases. Taking first the conclusion in Baba's Charters and Sayings in paragraph 245 mentioned earlier, the interpretation given to Baba's statement is the author's and not Mr. Dev's for Mr. Dev thought that he should keep Baba's teachings secret and did not reveal how he interpreted Baba's statement that he gave four. Baba received only one. Dev's services have now been continued by his son Sri. S.B. Dev, who is now also a trustee of the *Sansthan*, doing yeoman service for Baba.