

Part 1 - Chapter 22 - Transformation

Shirdi Che Sai Baba - Dr. Keshav Bhagwant Gavankar

CHAPTER 22

TRANSFORMATION

All the happenings in the world and nature always take place according to God's will. Common Jivas are crushed in the stone-grinders of calamities and difficulties. At the same time calamities and adversities become the cause of their upliftment and spiritual progress. How could the world be without crisis and calamities? Birth and death are the two catastrophes, though not unexpected. For those who cannot escape the cycle of birth and death, calamities are inevitable. It is a proven proposition that the world is full of sorrow. Every Jiva has to face the sorrow, though nobody wants it. He looks around for pleasures. So he runs after desires. He tries to find different subjects for gratification of senses and becomes a slave to their powers.

Those who are new on the path of spirituality, assume that they can reach God through toil, penance as well as hard Sadhanas. But it is not so. God does not expect you to undergo hardships and labour. What He wants from you is only one thing, LOVE! Love God to the fullest extent, more than anything else. Pleasure of loving God is unparalleled. One who has tasted it, loses interest in all other things which are not concerned with God. His attention is focused only on God. This is the real path of love and devotion. Leaving this path aside, however one may get involved in the futile exercise of Sadhanas or according to the principles of Brahmo-Samaj one may discard the idea of idol worship, he will still remain deprived of love and devotion. When one chooses to go by the opposite path, how will he reach the destination?

Once Jiva develops an inclination towards God-love, he becomes ready to do anything to experience the sweetness of that love. Mother loves her child so much that she is ready to even sacrifice her own life for it. Love in her heart gives her that courage. This is the characteristic of true love. Love pulls the person to its subject and takes him away from everything else. Love teaches sacrifice. Heart full of love is ready even to sacrifice one's life. Love helps to conquer oceans of calamities. Love makes mind firm and determined. Love makes life noble. When inclination rises to full heights, it is love and the next step is devotion. And what is love? Love is God. God is Love personified. When the heart is full of love, Jiva is in the proximity of God. If he is aware of it then spirituality is pleasure and happiness. Without love, i.e. without God world is full of sorrow. There is sweetness in love and devotion and in this sweetness lies the bliss which is necessary for Shanti i.e. calmness or tranquility of the mind.

Let us listen to the story of transformation of a friend of Mr. Tarkhadkar, in the light of devotion. Let us assume his name to be 'Mitra'.

Mitra was a follower of 'Brahmo-Samaj, which did not believe in idol worship (Saguna-Upasana). So he was devoid of love and devotion. He always used to argue with

Tarkhadkar over the subject. By chance he happened to hear the Kirtans (singing and talking about the glory of God) of Shri Dasganu Maharaj. They were full of love and devotion. When Dasganu used to describe the attributes of Sai Baba his throat would be choked with utter devotion. Tears would flow down his cheeks in ecstasy. Therefore Mitra became eager to have darshan of Sai Baba.

On 6th September 1910, R. H. Tarkhadkar together with Mitra and others, set out from Dadar for Shirdi and next day they reached there. In the morning they went for darshan. When Mitra saw the calm and the loving face of Sai he felt very happy and his mind had a favourable impression of His darshan. At the same time the mind raised many doubts. He thought, 'I am not clever enough to understand whether Baba is a saint (Satpurush) or not. Then am I not deceiving myself as well as Him by offering coconut and burning camphor with incense stick?

This question was hanging about in his mind constantly. Suddenly Baba asked, "Who kept this coconut?" Somebody said "Mitra kept it" Baba told him to pick it up as 'Prasadam". When he did so, he spoke in his mind, "Baba, I do not understand anything. But You have obliged me by giving Prasadam. Therefore I am transferring each and every burden of mine to You. Now You take care of all the things". Intuitively Baba could know what he spoke mentally. He loudly said to him, "OK, I will". Mitra was surprised. He picked up courage and asked, "Baba, can I ask You a question?"

When Baba nodded affirmatively, he asked, "Do You look at everybody with the same view point, with an equal eye? Does everybody get Your equal grace?" Baba thundered back, "What a foolish question. The question itself shows a lack of intelligence. But listen, My grace is equal on all; understand?"

All were amused by the question and Baba's answer. They all roared with laughter. But Mitra did not take it in bad sense. On the contrary, he was relieved with the thought that there was somebody behind him to take care of him. He felt alive and became carefree with this ray of hope. Since then Mitra developed a strong faith in idol-worship. He thought he should have a chosen deity like all others, so that he can worship, meditate and contemplate on it.

When he was engrossed in his thoughts and Aarti was going on, his eyes casually turned towards an opposite window of a school building across the road. He RadhaKrishna-Aai used to light petromax in that window. He saw a very beautiful woman adorned with a nice sari and ornaments constantly staring at him. He had never seen such a beauty before. He had seen the ornaments that were in possession of Shrimant Gaikwad Sarkar but those worn by the woman were more attractive and more precious. Mitra was astonished well as happy glancing at her. Next moment he felt that to stare at a woman like that, was against decency and good morals. So he turned away his eye and looked at Baba. Baba instantly caught his eye. He knew, Baba was also looking at him with love and a peculiar eyes. Mitra was abashed and decided not to look in that direction again. Aarti was still going on. He wiped out the incidence about the beautiful woman from his mind successfully. But when his eyes were casually running over aimlessly, he caught the sight of the woman again. He was surprised. He swiftly looked at Baba who was observing him lovingly. With efforts he kept eyes away from the window. But the thoughts were lingering in his mind as to why beautiful and rich woman preferred to live in the rural area like Shirdi.

During his next two trips to Shirdi, he again saw the same woman in the same window. While talking to a friend, Balakram Mankar in Mumbai, Mitra told him about the woman. To his

surprise, Balakram said that he has also had seen her. They confirmed it by giving details each other. Balakram said, “She was actually Annapurna-Mata (Goddess of food) in flesh and blood”. After a short period of time, Balakram left his house in Mumbai and came to stay at Baba’s lotus Feet, to serve Him forever. He cut off all the family ties with a determined mind. Mitra said that Balakram used to hate women. But when he had Annapurna’s darshan, he started respecting them.

Before coming to Baba, Mitra was a follower of Brahmo-Samaj. These Prarthana-Samajists, did not believe in idol-worshipping. Rather than offering flowers etc. to a stone or metallic idol they preferred mental-worship (Manaspuja). In Manaspuja one could remember one’s chosen God and revise and confess the sins before Him; then one can pray and ask for the pardon as well as His grace. Brahmo-Samaj had the following beliefs:

[1] In every religion, there is truth. But no dharma consist of the whole truth.

[2] If we come across many schools of thoughts, we are exposed to many explanations of one principle. Then our intellect works on it and tries to compare. The discriminative power then helps us to choose between good and bad. Thus our intellect develops power to discriminate and elucidate.

[3] When the discrimination power is attained one can find out the common truth given in all the religions, and becomes ready to accept and respect it. At the same time he learns to reject untruth

[4] When he reaches that stage, he adopts and follows only those principles which are favourable to his spiritual progress.

Before coming to Baba, Mitra was a Brahmo-Samajist and believed in the above precept. But later he was completely transformed after coming in Baba’s proximity.

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