

Chapter 14

Ruttonji Wadia of Nanded - Saint Moulisaheb - Dakshina Mimansa.

In the last Chapter, we described how Baba's word and grace cured many incurable diseases. Now, we shall describe, how Baba blessed Mr. Ruttonji Wadia with an issue.

The life of this Saint is naturally sweet in and out. His various doings, eating, walking and His natural sayings are also sweet. His life is Bliss incarnate. Sai gave it out as a means of His devotee's remembrance to Him. He gave them various stories of duty and action, which ultimately led them to true religion. His object may be that people should live happily in this world, but they should be ever cautious and gain the object of their life, viz. self-realization. We get human body as a result of merits in past births and it is worth-while that with its aid, we should attain devotion and liberation in this life. So we should never be lazy, but always be on the alert to gain our end and aim of life.

If you daily hear the Leelas (stories) of Sai, you will always see Him. Day and night you will remember Him in your mind, When you assimilate Sai in this way, your mind will lose its fickleness and if you go on in this manner, it will finally be merged in pure Consciousness.

Ruttonji of Nanded

Now let us come to the main story of this Chapter. In Nanded, in the Nizam state, there lived a Parsi mill-contractor and trader, by name Ratanji Shapurji Wadia. He had amassed a large amount of money and had acquired fields and lands. He had got cattle, horses and conveyances and was very prosperous. To all outward appearances he looked very happy and contented, but inwardly, and really he was not so. Providential dispensation is such, that no one in this world is completely happy and rich; Ruttonji was no exception to this. He was liberal and charitable, gave food and clothing to the poor and helped all in various ways. The people took him to be a good and happy man, but Ruttonji thought himself miserable as he had no issue, male or female, for a long time. As Kirtan (singing glories of the Lord) without love or devotion, music of singing without rhythmical accompaniments, Brahmin without the sacred thread, proficiency in all arts without commonsense, pilgrimage without repentance and ornamentation without a necklace, are ugly and useless, so is the house of a man or house-holder without a male issue. Ruttonji always brooded on this matter and said in his mind, "Would God be ever pleased to grant me a son?" He thus looked morose, had no relish for his food. Day and night, he was enveloped with anxiety whether he would ever be blessed with a son. He had a great regard for Dasganu Mahajati. He saw him and opened his heart before him. Dasganu advised him to go to Shirdi, take Baba's darshan, fall at His Feet and seek His blessing and pray for issue. Ruttonji liked the idea, and decided to go to Shirdi. After some days he went to Shirdi, took Baba's darshana and fell at His Feet. Then opening a basket, he took out a beautiful garland of flowers and placed it around Baba's neck and offered Him a basket of fruits.

With great respect he then sat near Baba, and prayed to Him saying- "Many persons who find themselves in difficult situations come to You, and You relieve them immediately. Hearting this, I have sought anxiously Your Feet; please, therefore, do not disappoint me." Sai Baba then asked him for Dakshina of Rs. five which Ruttonji intended to give, but added, that He has already received Rs. 3-14-0 from him, and that he should pay the balance only. Hearing this, Ruttonji was rather puzzled. He could not make out what Baba meant. That was the first time, he thought, that he went to Shirdi and how was it that Baba said that He had formerly got Rs. 3-14-0 from him? He could not solve the riddle. But he sat at Baba's Feet and gave the balance of the Dakshina asked for, explained to Baba fully, as to why he came and sought His help, and prayed that Baba should bless him with a son. Baba was moved and told him not to be worried, and that that time his bad days had ended. He then gave him Udi, placed His hand on his head and blessed him saying that Allah (God) would satisfy his heart's desire.

Then after taking Baba's leave, Ruttonji returned to Nanded and told Dasganu everything that took place at Shirdi. He said that everything went on well there, that he got Baba's darshan and blessing with Prasad, but there was one thing which he could not understand. Baba said to him that he had got Rs.3-14-0 before. Please explain as to what Baba meant by this remark. He said to Dasganu, "I never went to Shirdi before, and how could I give Him the sum to which Baba referred?" To Dasganu also, it was a puzzle, and he pondered much over it for a long time.

Some time afterwards it struck him that Ruttonji had received some days ago a Mahomedan Saint, by name Moulisaheb, in his house and had spent some money for his reception. This Moulisaheb was coolie-saint wellknown to the people of Nanded. When Ruttonji decided to go the Shirdi, this Molisaheb accidentally came to Ruttonji's house. Ruttonji knew him and loved him. So he gave a small party in his honour. Dasganu got from Ruttonji the yadi or memo of expenses of this reception, and everybody was wonderstruck to see, that the expenses amounted to exactly Rs.3-14-0, nothing more, nothing less. They all came to know, that Baba was omniscient, that thought He lived in Shirdi, He knew what happened outside far away from Shirdi. In fact He knew the past, present and future, and could identify Himself heart and soul with anybody. In this particular instance how could He know the reception given to Moulisaheb, and the amount spent therefore, unless He could identify Himself with him, and be One with him?

Ruttonji was satisfied with this explanation and his faith in Baba was confirmed and increased. In due time afterwards, he was blessed with a son and his joy knew no bounds. It is said that he had in all a dozen (12) issues out of which only four survived.

In a foot-note towards the end of this Chapter, it is stated that Baba told Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe, after the death of his first wife, to remarry and that he would get a son. R.B. Sathe married second time. The first two issues by this wife were daughters and he, therefore, felt very despondent. But the third issue was a son. Baba's word did turn out true and he was satisfied.

Dakshina - Mimansa

Now we shall close this Chapter with a few remarks about Dakshina. It is a well-known fact that Baba always asked for Dakshina from people who went to see Him. Somebody may ask a question, "If Baba was a Fakir and perfectly non-attached, why should he ask for Dakshina and care for money?" We shall consider this question broadly now.

First for a long time, Baba did not accept anything. He stored burnt matches and filled His pocket with them. He never asked anything from anybody--whether he be a devotee or otherwise. If anybody placed before Him a pice or two, He purchased oil or tobacco. He was fond of tobacco, for He always smoked a bidi or Cholim (an earthen pipe). Then some persons thought that they could not see the Saints empty-handed, and they, therefore, placed some copper coins before Baba. If a pice was placed before Him. He used to pocket it; if it was a two pice coin, it was returned immediately. Then after Baba's fame had spread far and wide, people began to flock in numbers; and Baba began to ask Dakshina from them. It is said in the Shruti (veda) that Puja of the Gods is not complete, unless a golden coin was offered. If a coin was necessary in the Puja of the Gods, why should it be not so in the Puja of the Saints also? Ultimately, the Shastras laid it down that, when one goes to see God, King, Saint or Guru, he should not go empty-handed. He should offer something, preferably coin or money. In this connection we may notice the precepts recommended by the Upanishads. The Brihadaranyak Upanishad says that the Lord Prajapati advised the Gods, men and demons by one letter "Da". The Gods understood by this letter that they should practice (1) "Dama" i.e. self-control; the men thought or understood that they should practice (2) "Dana" i.e. charity; the demons understood that they should practice (3) "Daya" i.e. compassion. To men Charity or giving was recommended.

The teacher in the Taittiriya Upanishad exhorts his pupils to practise charity and other virtues. Regarding charity he says, "Give with faith, give with magnanimity, i.e. liberally, give with modesty, with awe and with sympathy. In order to teach the devotees the lesson of charity and to remove their attachment to money and thus to purify their minds, Baba extracted Dakshina from them; but there was this peculiarity, as Baba said, that He had to give

back hundred times more of what He received. There are many instances, in which this has happened. To quote an instance, Mr. Ganpatrao Bodas, the famous actor, says in his Marathi autobiography, that on Baba's pressing him often and often for Dakshina, he emptied his money-bag before Him. The result of this was, as Mr. Bodas says, that in later life he never lacked money, as it came to him abundantly.

There were also secondary meanings of Dakshina, in many cases, in which Baba did not want any pecuniary amount. To quote two instances - (1) Baba asked Rs.15/- as Dakshina from Pro. G.G.Narke, who replied that he did not have even a pie. Then Baba said, "I know you have no money; but you are reading Yoga-Vashistha. Give Me Dakshina from that." Giving Dakshina in this case meant - `Deriving lessons from the book and lodging them in the heart where Baba resides'. (2) In the second case Baba asked a certain lady (Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad) to give Rs.6/- as Dakshina. The lady felt pained, as she had nothing to give. Then her husband explained to her that Baba wanted six inner enemies (lust, anger, avarice etc.) to be surrendered to Him. Baba agreed with this explanation.

It is to be noted, that though Baba collected a lot of money by Dakshina, He would distribute the whole amount the same day, and the next morning He would become a poor Fakir as usual. When Baba took His Mahasamadhi, after receiving thousands and thousands of Rupees as Dakshina for about ten years, He had only a few Rupees in His possession.

In short, Baba's main object in taking Dakshina, from His devotees was to teach them the lessons of Renunciation and Purification.

Post-script

Mr. B. V. Deo of Thana, retired Mamlatdar, and a great devotee of Baba, has written an article on this subject (Dakshina) in "Shri Sai Leela" magazine, Vol.VII, P.6-26, in which he says amongst other things, as follows:-

"Baba did not ask Dakshina from all. If some gave Dakshina without being asked, He sometimes accepted it; and at other times He refused it. He asked it from certain devotees only. He never demanded it, from those devotees, who thought in their minds that Baba should ask them for it, and then they should pay it. If anybody offered it against His wish, He never touched it, and if he kept it there, He asked him to take it away. He asked for small or big amounts from devotees, according to their wish, devotion and convenience. He asked it, even from women and children. He never asked all the rich for it, nor from all the poor."

"Baba never got angry with those from whom He asked Dakshina, and who did not give it. If any Dakshina was sent, through some friend, who forgot to hand over the same to Baba, He reminded him somehow of it and made him pay it. On some occasions, Baba used to return some sum from the amount tendered as Dakshina, and ask the donor to guard it or keep it in his shrine for worship. This procedure benefited the donor or devotee immensely. If anybody offered more than he originally intended to give, He returned the extra amount. Sometimes, He asked more Dakshina from some, than what they originally intended to give and, if they had no money, asked them to get or borrow from others. From some, He demanded Dakshina three or four times a day."

"Out of the amount collected as Dakshina, Baba spent very little for His own sake, viz., for buying Chilim (clay pipe) and fuel for His Dhuni (sacred fire), and all the rest, He distributed as charity in varying proportions to various persons. All the paraphernalia of the Shirdi Sansthan was brought, by various rich devotees at the instance and suggestion of Radha-Krishna-Mai. Baba always used to get wild and scolded those, who brought costly and rich articles. He said to Mr. Nanasahab Chandorkar, that all His property consisted of one koupin (codpiece), one stray piece of cloth, one Kafni and a tumrel (tinpot), and that all the people troubled Him by bringing all these unnecessary, useless and costly articles."

Woman and wealth are the two main obstacles in the way of our Pramatha (spiritual life); and Baba and provided in Shirdi two institutions, viz., Dakshina and Radha-Krishna-Mai. Whenever they came to Him, He demanded Dakshina from them, and asked them to go to the 'SCHOOL' (Radha-Krishna-Mai's house). If they stood these two tests well, i.e. if they showed that they were free from attachment for woman and wealth, their progress in spirituality was rapid and assured by Baba's grace and blessings.

Mr. Deo has also quoted passages from the Gita and Upanishads; and shown that charity given in a holy place and to a holy personage, conduces to the donors' welfare to a great degree. What is more holy than Shirdi and its Presiding Deity -- Sai Baba?

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all