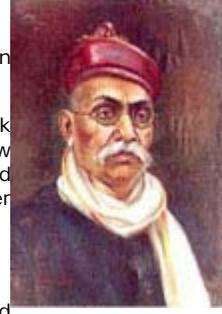


Chapter 18

How Hemadpant was Accepted and Blessed

Stories of Mr. Sathe and Mrs. Deshmukh - Encouraging Good Thoughts to Fruition-Variety in Upadesh-Teachings Readings Slander, and Remuneration for Labour.

In the last two Chapters, Hemadpant described, how a rich gentleman, aspiring for quick Brahma-Jnana, was treated by Baba, and now in these two Chapters, he describes how Hemadpant, himself, was accepted and blessed by Baba, how Baba encouraged good thoughts and fructified them; and gives His teachings regarding Self-improvement, slander and remuneration for labour.



Preliminary

It is a well-known fact, that the Sadguru looks first to the qualifications of his disciples; and then gives them suitable instructions, without unsettling their minds in the least, and leads them on towards the goal of self-realization. In this respect, some say that what the Sadguru teaches or instructs, should not be divulged to others. They think that their instructions, become useless, if they are published. This view is not correct. The Sadguru is like a monsoon cloud. He pours down profusely, i.e., scatters widely his nectar-like teachings. These, we should enjoy and assimilate to our heart's content; and then serve others with them, without any reserve. This rule should apply, not only to what he teaches in our waking state, but to the visions he gives us in our dreams. To quote an instance: Budhakowshik Rishi composed his celebrated Ram-raksha stotra, which he had seen in his dream.

Like a loving mother forcing bitter but wholesome medicines down the throats of her children for the sake of their health, Sai Baba imparted spiritual instructions to His devotees. His method was not veiled or secret, but quite open. The devotees who followed His instructions got their object. Sad-gurus like Sai Baba open our (eyes of the) intellect and show us the divine beauties of the Self, and fulfill our tender longings of devotion. When this is done, our desire for sense-objects vanishes, twin fruits of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion or non-attachment) come to our hands; and knowledge sprouts up even in the sleep. All this we get, when we come in contact with Saints (Sad-guru), serve them and secure their love. The Lord, who fulfills the desires of His devotees, comes to our aid, removes our troubles and sufferings, and makes us happy. This progress or development is entirely due to the help of the Sadguru, who is regarded as the Lord Himself. Therefore, we should always be after the Sad-guru, hear His stories, fall at His Feet and serve Him. Now we come to our main story.

Mr. Sathe

There was a gentleman named Mr. Sathe, who had attained some publicity many year ago during Crowford Regime, which was put down by Lord Reay, the then Governor of Bombay. He suffered severe losses in trade. Other adverse circumstances gave him much trouble, and made him sad and dejected. Being restless, he thought of leaving home; and going out to a distant place. Man does not generally think of God, but when difficulties and calamities overtake him, he turns to Him and prays for relief.

If his evil actions have come to an end, God arranges his meeting with a Saint, who gives him proper directions regarding his welfare. Mr. Sathe had similar experience. His friends advised him to go to Shirdi, where so many people were flocking to get Sai Baba's darshan, for getting peace of mind and the satisfaction of their wants. He liked the idea, and at once came to Shirdi in 1917. Seeing Baba's Form, which was like Eternal Brahma, Self-luminous, Spotless and Pure, his mind lost its restlessness and became calm and composed. He thought, that it was the accumulation of merits in his former births, that brought him to the Holy Feet of Baba. He was a man of strong will. He at once started to make a parayana (study) of Guru-charitra. When the reading was finished in the saptaha (seven days), Baba gave him a vision that night. It was to this effect: Baba with Guru-charitra in His hand was explaining its contents to Mr. Sathe, who was sitting in front and listening carefully. When he woke up, he remembered the dream and felt very happy. He thought that it was extremely kind of Baba. Who awakens souls like his that are snoring in ignorance, and makes them taste the nectar of Guru-charitra. Next day, he informed Kakasaheb Dixit of this vision, and requested him to consult Sai Baba regarding its meaning or significance -- whether one saptah (week's) reading was sufficient or whether he should begin again. Kakasaheb Dixit, when got a suitable opportunity, asked Baba - "Deva (Oh God), what did you suggest to Mr. Sathe by this vision? Whether he should stop or continue the saptaha? He is a simple devotee, his desire should be fulfilled and the vision explained to him, and he should be blessed." Then Baba replied - "He should make one more saptah of the book; if the work be studied carefully, the devotee will become pure and will be benefited, the Lord will be pleased and will rescue him from the bondage of the mundane existence."

At this time, Hemadpant was present there. He was shampooing Baba's Legs. When he heard Baba's words, he thought in his mind as follows - "What! Mr. Sathe read for a week only and got a reward; and I am reading it for forty years with no result! His seven days' stay here becomes fruitful while my seven years' stay (1910 to 1917) goes for nothing. Like a Chatak bird I am ever waiting for the Merciful Cloud (Baba) to pour its nectar on me; and bless me with His instructions." No sooner did this thought cross his mind, Baba knew it then and there. It was the experience of the Bhaktas that Baba read and understood all their thoughts, and that He suppressed the evil thoughts and encouraged the good ones. Reading Hemadpant's mind Baba at once asked him to get up, go to Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande), get from him Rs. 15/- as Dakshina, sit and chitchat with him for a while and then return. Mercy dawned in Baba's mind, and so he issued this order. And who could disobey Baba's order?

Hemadpant immediately left the Masjid and came to Shama's house. He had just bathed, and was wearing a dhotar. He came out and asked Hemadpant - "How is it that you are here now? It seems that you have come from the Masjid. Why do you look restless and dejected? Why are you alone? Please sit and rest, while I shall just do my worship and return: in the meanwhile you please take pan-vida (leaves and betel nuts etc.) let us then have a pleasant chat." After saying his, he went inside and Hemadpant sat alone in the front varandah. He saw in the window a wellknown Marathi book named 'Nath-Bhagwat.' This is a commentary by the Saint Ekanath, on the eleventh Skandha (chapter) of the bigger Sanskrit work, the Bhagwat.

At the suggestion or recommendation of Sai Baba, Messrs. Bapusaheb Jog and Kakasaheb Dixit read daily in Shirdi, BhagwadGeeta with its Marathi commentary named Bhawartha-Deepika or Jnaneshwari (A dialogue between Krishna and His friend devotee Arjuna) and Nath Bhagwat (A dialogue between Krishna and His servant devotee Uddhava) and also Ekanath's othe big work, viz. Bhawartha Ramayana. When devotees came to Baba and asked Him certain questions. He sometimes answered them in part, and asked them to go and listen to the readings of the above-mentioned works, which are the main treatises of Bhagwat Dharma. When the devotees went and listened, they got full and satisfactory replies to their questions. Hemadpant also used to read daily some portions of the book Nath-Bhagwat.

That day, he did not complete the daily portion of his reading, but had left it unfinished in order to accompany certain devotees, who were going to the Masjid. When he took up the book from Shama's window and casually opened, it, he found, to his surprise, that the unfinished portion turned up. He thought that Baba sent him very kindly to Shama's house for enabling him to complete his daily reading. So he went through the unfinished portion and completed it. As soon as this was over, Shama, after doing his worship came out, and the following conversation took place between them.

Hemadpant :- I have come with a message from Baba. He has asked me to return with Rs. 15/- as Dakshina from you, also to sit with you for a while and have a pleasant chitchat and then return to the Masjid with you.

Shama (with surprise):- I have no money to give. Take my 15 Namaskaras (bows) in lieu of rupees as Dakshina, to Baba.

Hemadpant:- Alright, your Namaskaras are accepted. Now let us have some chitchat. tell me some stories and

Leelas of Baba, which will destroy our sins.

Shama:- Then sit here for a while. Wonderful is the sport (Leela) of this God (Baba). You know it already. I am a village rustic, while you are an enlightened citizen. You have seen some more Leelas since your coming here. How should I describe them before you? Well, take these leaves, betel nut and chunam and eat the pan-vida; while I go in, dress myself and come out.

In a few minutes Shama come out and sat talking with Hemadpant. He said - "The Leela of this God (Baba) is inscrutable; there is no end to His Leelas. Who can see them? He plays or sports with His Leelas, still He is outside of (unaffected by) them. What do we rustics know? Why does not Baba Himself tell stories? Why does He send learned men like you to fools like me? His ways are inconceivable. I can only say, that they are not human." With this preface Shama added, - "I now remember a story, which I shall relate to you. I know it personally. As a devotee is resolute and determined, so is Baba's immediate response. Sometimes Baba puts the devotees to severe test; and then gives them 'Upadesh' (instructions).

As soon as Hemadpant heard the word 'Upadesh', a flash of lightning crossed, through his mind. He at once remembered the story of Mr. Sathe's Guru-charitra reading and thought that Baba might have sent him to Shama, in order to give peace to his restless mind. However, he curbed this feeling, and began to listen to Shama's stories. They all showed how kind and affectionate Baba was to His devotees. Hemadpant began to feel a sort of joy while hearing them. Then Shama began to tell the following story.

Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh

There was an old woman by name Radhabai, She was the mother of one Khashaba Deshmukh. Hearing Baba's fame, she came to Shirdi with the people of Sangamner. She took Baba's darshan and was much satisfied. She loved Baba intimately and resolved in her mind, that She should accept Baba as her Guru, and take some Upadesh from Him. She knew nothing else. She determined to fast herself unto death, so long as Baba did not accept her, and give her any Upadesh or Mantra. She stayed in her lodging and left off taking any food or water for three days. I was frightened by this ordeal of the old woman, and interceded with Baba on her behalf. I said, "Deva, what is this You have started? You drag so many persons here. You know that old lady. She is very obstinate and depends on You entirely, She has resolved to fast unto death, if You don't accept and instruct her. If any thing worse happens, people will blame You, and say that Baba did not instruct her, and consequently she met her death. So take some mercy on her, bless her and instruct her." On seeing her determination, Baba sent for her, changed the turn of her mind by addressing her as follows:-

"Oh mother, why are you subjecting yourself to unnecessary tortures and hastening your death? You are really My Mother and I am your child. Take pity on Me and hear Me through. I tell you My own story, which if you listen carefully, will do you good. I had a Guru. He was a great Saint and most merciful. I served him long, very long; still he would not blow any Mantra into My ears. I had a keen desire, never to leave him but to stay with and serve him; and at all costs receive some instructions from him. But he had his own way. He first got my head shaved and asked Me two pice as Dakshina. I gave the same at once. If you say that as My Guru was perfect, why should he ask for money and how should he be called desireless? I replied plainly that he never cared for coins. What had he to do with them? His two pice were (1) Firm Faith and (2) Patience or perseverance. I gave these two pice or things to him, and he was pleased.

"I resorted to My Guru for 12 years. He brought Me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He was full of love nay, he was love incarnate. How can I describe it? He loved Me most. Rare is a Guru like him. When I looked at him, he seemed as if he was in deep meditation, and then we both were filled with Bliss. Night and day, I gazed at him with no thought of hunger and thirst. Without him, I felt restless. I had no other object to meditate, nor any other thing than My Guru to attend. He was My sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. This is one pice Dakshina. Saburi (Patience or perseverance) is the other pice. I waited patiently and very long on My Guru and served him. This Saburi will ferry you across the sea of this mundane existence. Saburi is manliness in man, it removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways, and casts aside all fear, and ultimately gives you success. Saburi is the mine of virtues, consort of good thought. Nishtha (Faith) and Saburi (Patience) are like twin sisters, loving each other very intimately."

"My Guru never expected any other thing from Me. He never neglected Me, but protected Me at all times. I lived with him, and was sometimes away from him; still I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected Me by his glance, just as the tortoise feeds her young ones, whether they are near her or away from her on the other side of the river bank, by her loving looks. Oh mother, My Guru never taught Me any Mantra, then how shall I blow any Mantra in your ears? Just remember that Guru's tortoise-like loving glance gives us happiness. Do not try to get Mantra or Upadesh from anybody. Make Me the sole object of your thoughts and actions; and you will, no doubt, attain Paramartha (the spiritual goal of life). Look at Me whole-heartedly, and I in turn look at you similarly. Sitting in this Masjid, I speak the truth, nothing but the truth. No Sadhanas, nor proficiency in the six Shastras, are necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully, that Guru is the sole Actor or Doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks him to be Hari, Hara and Brahma (Trimurti) Incarnate."

Instructed in this way, the old lady was convinced; she bowed to Baba and gave up her fast.

Hearing this story carefully and attentively, and marking its significance and appropriateness, Hemadpant was most agreeably surprised. Seeing this wonderful Leela of Baba, he was moved from top to toe, he was overflowing with joy, his throat was choked, and he was not able to utter a single word. Shama, on seeing him in this condition asked him, - "What is the matter with you, why are you silent? How many innumerable Leelas of Baba shall I describe!" Just at that time the bell in the Masjid began to ring, proclaiming that the noon-worship and Arati ceremony had begun. Therefore, Shama and Hemadpant hurried to the Masjid. Bapusaheb Jog had just started the worship. Women were up in the Masjid, and men were standing below in the open courtyard and they were all loudly singing the Arati in chorus to the accompaniment of drums. Shama went up, pulling Hemadpant with him. He sat to the right and Hemadpant in front of Baba. On seeing them, Baba asked Hemadpant to give the Dakshina brought from Shama. He replied that Shama gave Namaskaras in lieu of Rupees and that he was there in person. Baba said, "Alright, now let Me know whether you both had a chitchat, and if so, tell Me all that you talked about." Not minding the sounds of the bell, the drum and the chorus songs, Hemadpant was eager to tell what they had talked and started to narrate it. Baba was also anxious to hear, and so He left the bolster and leaned forward. Hemadpant said all that they talked about was very pleasant, and that specially the story of the old lady was most wonderful and that on hearing it, he thought that His Leela was inexplicable, and under the guise of that story, He really blessed him. Baba then said - "Wonderful is the story. How were you blessed? I would like to know everything in detail from you, so tell Me all about it." Then Hemadpant related in full the story which he had heard a little while before, and which had made a lasting impression on his mind. Hearing this Baba was much pleased and asked him - "Did the story strike you and did you catch its significance?" He replied - "Yes, Baba the restlessness of my mind has vanished and I have got true peace and rest, and come to know the true path."

Then Baba spoke as follows:- "My method is quite unique. Remember well, this one story, and it will be very useful. To get the knowledge (realization) of the Self, Dhyana (meditation) is necessary. If you practice it continuously, the Vrittis (thoughts) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord, Who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. Meditate always on My formless nature, which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate on My Form from top to toe as you see here night and day. As you go on doing this, your Vrittis will concentrate on one point and the distinction between the Dhyata (meditator), Dhyana (act of meditation), Dhyeya (this meditated upon) will be lost and the meditator will be one with the Consciousness and be merged in the Brahman. The (mother) tortoise is on one bank of the river, and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk, nor warmth to them. Her mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing, but remember (meditate upon) their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a down-pour of nectar, the only source of sustenance and happiness. Similar is the relation, between the Guru and disciples."

When Baba uttered these last words, the chorus of the Arati songs stopped and all cried out loudly in one voice: "Victory be to our Sadguru Sai Maharaj, Who is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss." Dear readers, let us imagine, that we are at this time, standing amongst the crowd in the Masjid; and let us join them in this Jayajayakar.

After the Arati ceremony was over, Prasad was distributed. Bapusaheb Jog advanced as usual, and after saluting Baba, gave into His hand a handful of sugar-candy. Baba pushed all this quantity into the hands of Hemadpant and said to him, "If you take this story to heart and remember it well, your state will be sweet as the sugar-candy, all your desires will be fulfilled and you will be happy." Hemadpant bowed before Baba and implored, "Do favour me like this, bless and protect me always." Baba replied - "Hear this story, meditate on it and assimilate its spirit. Then you will always remember and meditate on the Lord, Who will manifest Himself to you."

Dear readers! Hemadpant got Prasad of sugar-candy then; and we now get the Prasad of sugar-candy or nectar of this story. Let us drink it to our heart's content, meditate on it, and assimilate it, and be strong and happy by Baba's grace. Amen!

Towards the end of the 19th Chapter Hemapter Hemadpant had dealt with some other matters which are given below.

Baba's Advice Regarding our Behaviour

The following words of Baba are general and invaluable. If they are kept in mind and acted upon, they will always do you good. "Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them, with due respect. Shri Hari (God) will be certainly pleased, if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and your verandah to strangers for sitting and resting.

If anybody wants any money from you, and you are not inclined to give, do not give, but do not bark at him, like a dog. Let anybody speak hundreds of things against you, do not resent by giving any bitter reply. If you always tolerate such things, you will certainly be happy. Let the world go topsy-turvy, you remain where you are. Standing or staying in your own place, look on calmly at the show of all things passing before you. Demolish the wall of difference that separates you from Me; and then the road for our meeting will be clear and open. The sense of differentiation, as I and thou, is the barrier that keeps away the disciple from his Master, and unless that is destroyed the state of union or atonement is not possible, "Allah Malik" i.e. God is the sole Proprietor, nobody else is our Protector. His method of work is extra-ordinary, invaluable, and inscrutable. His will will be done and He will show us the way, and satisfy our heart's desires. It is on account of Rinaubandh (former relationship) that we have come together, let us love and serve each other and be happy. He, who attain the supreme goal of life, is immortal and happy; all others merely exist, i.e., live so long as they breathe".

Encouraging Good Thoughts of Fruition

It is interesting to note how Sai Baba encouraged good thoughts. You have to surrender yourself completely to Him with love, and devotion, and they you will see how, He helps you, off and on, in so many things. Some Saint has said, that when you get a good thought, immediately after awakening from sleep, and if you develop the same afterwards during the day, your intellect will be unfolded and your mind will attain calmness. Hemadpant wanted to try this.

On one Wednesday night before going to bed, he thought - "To-morrow is Thursday - an auspicious day and the place, viz. Shirdi, is so holy; so let me pass the whole day in remembering and chanting the Rama-nama, and then he slept. Next morning when he got up he remembered without any effort the name of Rama and was much pleased. He then, after finishing his morning duties, went to see Baba with flowers. When he left Dixit's Wada, and was just passing Booty's Wada (present Samadhi-mandir) he heard a beautiful song that was being sung nicely by one Aurangabadkar, in the Masjid before Baba. The song was Guru - kripanjani payo mere bhai" etc. by Ekanath, in which he says that he got collyrium in the form of Guru's grace which opened his vision and made him see Rama, in and out, in sleep, dream, and waking state and everywhere. There were so many songs; and why was this song particularly chosen by Aurangabadkar, a devotee of Baba? Is this not a curious coincidence arranged by Baba to feed the determination of Hemadpant to sing unceasingly Rama-nama, during the day?

All Saints agree on and lay stress upon the efficacy of uttering Rama's (God's) name, in fulfilling the ambitions of the Bhaktas and in protecting and saving them from all calamities.

Variety in Upadesh -- Slanderer Condemned

Sai Baba required no special place, nor any special time for giving instructions. Whenever any occasion demanded, He gave them freely. Once it so happened that a Bhakta of Baba, reviled another behind his back, before other people.

On leaving aside merits, he dwelt on the faults of his brother, and spoke so sarcastically, that the hearers were disgusted. Generally, we see that people have a tendency to scandalize others, un-necessarily; and this brings on hatred and ill-will. Saints see scandal, in another light. They say that there are various ways of cleansing or removing dirt, viz. by means of earth, water and soap etc., but a scandal-monger has got a way of his own. He removes the dirt (faults) of others by his tongue; so in a way of obliges the person, whom he reviles and for this he is to be thanked. Sai Baba had his own method of correcting the scandal-monger. He knew by his omniscience what the slanderer had done and when He met him at noon near the Lendi, Baba pointed out to him a pig that was eating filth near the fence and said to him - "Behold how, with what relish it is gorging dung. Your conduct is similar. You go on reviling your own brethren to your heart's content. After performing many deeds of merit, you are born a man, and if you act like this, will Shirdi help you in any way?" Needless to say, that the Bhakta took the lesson to his heart, and went away.

In this way Baba went on giving instructions whenever necessary. If these are borne in our minds and acted upon, the spiritual goal (realization) is not far off. There is a proverb which says - "If there be my Hari (Lord), He will feed me on my cot." This proverb is only true in respect of food and clothing, but if anyone trusting in this, sits quiet and does nothing in spiritual matters, he will be ruined. One has to exert himself to his utmost for attaining self-realization. The more he endeavours, the better for him.

Baba said that He was omnipresent, occupying land, air, country, world, light and heaven, and that He was not limited. To remove the misunderstanding of those, who thought that Baba was only His body - three cubits and a half in length, He incarnated Himself in this form and if any devotee meditated on Him day and night with complete self-surrender, he experienced complete union (without any difference) with Him like sweetness and sugar, waves and sea, eye and its luster. He, who wants to get rid of the cycle of births and deaths, should lead a righteous life, with his mind calm and composed. He should always engage himself in good actions, should do his duties and surrender himself, heart and soul to Him. He need not then be afraid of anything. He who trusts Him entirely, hears and expounds His Leelas and does not think of anything else, is sure to attain Self-realization. Baba asked many to remember His name and to surrender to Him, but to those, who wanted to know who they were ('Who am I' enquiry), He advised Shraavanam (study) and Mananam (meditation). To some, He advised remembering God's name, to others hearing His Leelas, to some worship of His Feet, to others reading and studying Adhyatma Ramayan, Jnaneshwari and other sacred scriptures. Some He made sit near His Feet, some He sent to Khandoba's temple, and some He advised the repetition of the thousands names of Vishnu and some the study of Chhandogya Upanishad and Geeta. There were no limit, nor restriction to His instructions. To some, He gave them in person. To others by visions in dreams. To one addicted to drink, He appeared in his dream, sat on his chest, pressed it and left him, after he gave a promise not to touch liquor anymore. To some, He explained some Mantras like 'Gurur Brahma' in dreams. To some devotee, who was practising Hath-Yoga, He sent word that he should leave off Hath-Yoga practices, sit quiet and wait (Saburi). It is impossible to describe all His ways and methods. In ordinary wordly dealings, He set examples by His actions, one of which is given below.

Remuneration for Labour

One day at noon, Baba came near Radha-Krishna-Mai's house and said - "Bring Me a ladder." Some men brought

it and set it against a house as directed by Baba. He climbed up on the roof of Vaman Gondkar's house, passed the roof of Radha-Krishna-Mai's house and then got down from the other corner. What object Baba had, none could know. Radha-Krishna-Mai was, at that time, shivering with Malaria. It may be to drive off that fever, that He may have gone there. Immediately after getting down, Baba paid Rupees two to the persons who brought the ladder. Somebody asked Baba, why he paid so much for this. He replied that nobody should take the labour of others, in vain. The worker should be paid, his dues promptly and liberally. If the principle taught by Baba, be followed, i.e. if the remuneration for labour be paid promptly and satisfactorily, the labourers will turn out better and both the labourers and their employers will be profited, and there will be no room for lockouts and strikes, no ill felling between labour and capital.

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all



Shri Sai Satcharitra