



CHAPTER XXV

*Damu Anna Kasar of Ahmednagar (1) Speculations
(2) Amraleela*

Preliminary

We begin this chapter with a prostration, with all our eight limbs, to Sai Baba, Who is an Ocean of Mercy, the God Incarnate, the Para Brahma and the great Yogeshwara (Lord of Yoga). Victory be unto Sai Baba, who is the crest-jewel of the saints, an Abode of all auspicious things, our Atmaram (Self) and the sole refuge of the devotees. We prostrate ourselves before Him, who has attained the aim and end of life.

Sai Baba is always full of mercy. What is wanted on our part, is whole-hearted devotion to Him. When a devotee has got firm faith and devotion, his wishes are soon fulfilled. When the desire arose in the mind of Hemadpant to write the life and Leelas of Sai Baba, He immediately got it written by him. When the order 'to keep the memos' was given, Hemadpant was inspired and his intellect got strength and boldness to undertake and finish the work. He was not as he says, qualified to write the work but the gracious blessings of Baba enabled him to complete the undertaking and thus, you have this Satcharita, which is a cistern, or a Somakant jewel, from which nectar, in the form of Sai Leelas, oozes out for the readers to drink to their hearts content.

Whenever, a devotee had complete and whole-hearted devotion to Sai Baba, all his calamities and dangers were warded off and his welfare attended to by Baba. The story of Damodar Savalaram Rasane Kasar of Ahmednagar (now of Poona), alias Damu Anna, illustrating the above statement, is given below.

Damu Anna

The readers are aware that a mention of this gentleman was made in the 6th chapter, regarding the celebration of Ram Navami festival in Shirdi. He went to Shirdi about the year 1895 A.D., when the Ram Navami Utsav – celebration began and since that time, he has been providing an ornamental flag, for that occasion every year. He also feeds the poor and the fakirs, who come there for the festival.

His Speculations : (1) Cotton trading

A Mumbai friend of Damu Anna wrote to him that, they should do some cotton-speculation business in partnership, which would bring them about two lakhs of rupees as profit. (Damu Anna says, in his statement, made about the year 1936. to Mr. B.V. Narsimha Swami that the proposal about speculating at Mumbai in cotton was from a broker, who was not to be a partner and that, he (Damu Anna) was to be the sole adventurer : vide P. 75 of the 'Devotees' Experiences', part II). The broker wrote, that the business was good and involved no risks, and that the opportunity should not be lost. Damu Anna was vacillating. He could not at once determine to venture into the speculation. He thought over this, and as he was a devotee of Baba, he wrote a detailed letter to Shama giving all the facts and requested him to consult Baba and take His advice in the matter. Shama got the letter next day, and when he went with it at noon to the Masjid and placed it before Baba, He asked Shama, what the matter was and what the letter was about. He replied that, Damu Anna of Nagar wanted to consult Him about something. Then Baba said, "What does he write, and what does he plan? It seems that he wants to reach the sky and he is not content with, what God has given him, read his letter!" Shama then said, "The letter contains what you have just said. Oh Deva, You sit here calm and composed and agitate the devotees and when they get restless, You draw them here, some in person and others through letters. If You know the contents of the letter, why do You then press me to read it?" Baba said, "Oh Shama, read it, I speak at random, and who believes Me."

Then, Shama read the letter and Baba heard it attentively and said feelingly, "The Sheth (Damu Anna) has gone mad, write to him in reply that, nothing is wanting in his house, let him be content with the half loaf (bread) he has and not bother himself about lakhs." Shama sent the reply, which Damu Anna was anxiously waiting for. After reading it he found that, all his hopes and prospects about lakhs of rupees as profit, were dashed to the ground. He thought that, he had done a mistake by consulting Baba. But, as Shama had hinted in the reply that, there was always much difference in seeing and hearing and that therefore, he should come to Shirdi personally and see Baba. He thought, it was advisable to go to Shirdi and consult Baba personally about the affair. So he went to Shirdi, saw Baba, prostrated himself before Him and sat shampooing His Legs. He had no courage to ask Baba openly about the speculation; but he thought in his mind that, it would be better, if some share in the business should be assigned to Baba, and

said in his mind that if Baba were to help him in this transaction, he would surrender some share of profits to Him. Damu Anna was thus thinking secretly in his mind, but nothing was veiled from Baba; everything, past, present and future, were clear to Him, A child wants sweets, but his mother gives bitter pills; the former spoil his health, while the latter improve it. So the Mother, looking to the welfare of her infant, coaxes and gives bitter pills. Baba, kind Mother as He was, knew the present and future prospects of His devotees and therefore, reading Damu Anna's mind, He openly spoke to him, "Bapu, I do not want to be entangled in any such wordly things (sharing profits)." On seeing Baba's disapproval, Damu Anna dropped the enterprise.

(2) Grain Dealing

Then he thought of trading in rice, wheat and other grains. Baba read this thought also and said to him, "You will be buying at five seers and selling at seven seers a rupee!" So this business was also given up. The rise in the prices of grains was kept up for some time and Baba's prophecy seemed to be falsified; but in a month or two, there was abundant rain everywhere and the prices suddenly fell down and therefore, those, who stored grains suffered a severe losses. Damu Anna was saved form this fate. Needless to say, that the cotton speculation, which was conducted by the broker with the help of another merchant, also collapsed with severe loss to the adventurers. After seeing that, Baba had saved him from two severe losses in cotton and grain speculations, Damu Anna's faith in Baba grew stronger and he remained a true devotee of Baba till His passing away.

Amra-leela (Mango miracle)

Once a parcel of about 300 good mangoes was received at Shirdi. It was sent from Goa by one Mamlatdar, named Rale to Sai Baba, in the name of Shama. When it was opened, all the mangoes were found to be in a good condition. They were given in Shama's charge and only four were retained and placed in the Kolamba (pot) by Baba. He said, "These four fruits are for Damu Anna, let them lie there!"

This Damu Anna had three wives. According to his statement, mentioned above, he had not three, but two wives only. He had no issue. He consulted many astrologers and himself studied astrology to some extent and found that, as there was a 'Papi' (inauspicious) planet in his horoscope there was no prospect of any issue to him in this life.

But, he had great faith in Baba. When he went to Shirdi, two hours after the receipt of the mango parcel, for worshipping Baba, He said, "Though other people are looking for the mangoes, they are Damya's. He whose they are, should 'eat and die'." Damu Anna, on hearing these words, was first shocked, but on Mhalsapati (a Shirdi devotee) explaining to him that, death meant the death of the ego and to have it at Baba's Feet was a blessing. Damu Anna said that, he could accept the fruits and eat them. But Baba said to him, "Do not eat yourself, but give them to your younger wife. This Amra-leela (mango miracle of 4 mangoes) will give her four sons and four daughters." This was done, and in due course it was found Baba's words turned out true and not those of the astrologers.

Baba's speech established its efficacy or greatness, while He was living in the flesh, but it did the same even after His passing away. Baba said, **"Believe Me, though I pass away, My bones in My tomb would be speaking, moving and communicating with those, who would surrender themselves whole-heartedly to Me. Do not be anxious that, I would be absent from you. You will hear My bones speaking and discussing your welfare. But remember Me always, believe in Me heart and soul and then, you will be most benefitted."**

Prayer

Hemadpant closes this chapter with a prayer. "Oh Sai Sadguru, the wish fulfilling tree of the bhaktas, we pray, let us never forget and lose sight of Your feet; we have been troubled with the ins and outs (births and deaths) in this sansar; now free us from this cycle of births and deaths. Restrain us from the outgoing of our senses to their objects and introvert us, and bring us face to face with the Atma (self). As long as this outgoing tendency of the senses and the mind is not checked, there is no prospect of self-realization. Neither son, nor wife, nor friend, will be of any use in the end. It is only, You, Who will give us salvation and bliss. Destroy completely our tendency for discussions and other evil matters, let our tongue get a passion for chanting Your name. Drive out our thoughts, and make us forget our bodies and do away with our egoism. Make us ever remember Your name and forget all other things. Remove the restlessness of our mind and make it steady and calm. If You just clasp us, the darkness of night, of our ignorance, will vanish and we shall live happily in Your light. That, You made us drink the nectar of Your leelas and awakened us from our slumber, is due to Your grace and our store of merits in past births."

Note : In this connection the following extract from Damu Anna's statement, mentioned above, is worth perusal (page 76).

"Once, when I sat at His Feet along with many others, I had two questions in my mind and He gave answers to both.

(1) There are so many crowding to Sai Baba. Do they all get benefit from Him?

To this, He replied orally, "Look at the mango tree in blossom. If all the flowers become fruit, what a splendid crop it would be. But do they? Most fall off (either as flowers or as unripe fruits) by wind etc. very few remain."

(2) The second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how am I to fare then? To this, Baba answered that, **He would be with me, whenever and wherever I thought of Him.** That promise He had kept up before 1918, and has been keeping up after 1918. He is still with me. He is still guiding me. This was about 1910-11, when brothers separated from me and my sister died, and there was a theft and police enquiry, all these incidents made me very disturbed.

When my sister died, my mind was much upset. I did not care for life and enjoyments. When I went to Baba, He pacified me with His Upadesh and made me eat a feast of Pooran Poli at Appa Kulkarni's house.

There was a theft in my house. A thirty year old friend of mine stole my wife's jewel-box, including her auspicious Nath (nose-ring). I wept before Baba's photo. The next day, the man returned the jewel-box and asked for pardon."

Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all