



## CHAPTER XLI

### *Story of the Picture – Stealing the Rags and Reading of Dnyaneshawari*

As stated in the last chapter, we continue here the story of the picture.

Nine years after the incident described in the last chapter, Ali Mohammed met Hemadpant again, and related to him the following story.

One day, while wandering in the streets of Mumbai he bought the picture from a street-hawker, then, he got it framed and set it on a wall in his house, at Bandra (suburb of Mumbai). As he loved Baba, daily he took darshan of it. Three months before he gave the picture to Hemadpant, he was suffering from an abscess or swelling on his leg, for which an operation was performed and he was convalescing in the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Noor Mohammed Peerbhoy in Mumbai. For three months, his house in Bandra was closed and nobody was living there. Only the pictures of the Baba Abdul Rehman, Moulanasahab Mohammed Hussain, Sai Baba, Baba Tajuddin and a few other saints (living) were there. The wheel of time did not even spare these. He was lying sick and was suffering in Mumbai. Why should the pictures suffer there (in Bandra)? All the pictures met their end; but how Sai Baba's picture escaped it, nobody had been able to explain to me up till now. It shows the all-pervasiveness, omnipresence of Sai and His inscrutable power. The story goes like this :

He had a small picture of Saint Baba Abdul Rehman from Mohammed Hussain Thariyatopan many years ago. He gave it to his brother-in-law Noor Mohammed Peerbhoy, and it was lying on his table for eight years. Once, Peerbhoy took it to a photographer and got it enlarged to life-size and distributed copies of the same amongst his relations and friends including Ali Mohammed, who fixed it up in his Bandra house. Noor Mohammed was a disciple of saint Abdul Rehman, and when he went to present the picture to his Guru in an open darbar held by him, the Guru got wild and ran to beat him and drove him out. He felt sorry and dejected. He also thought that he spent so much of money, and incurred his Guru's displeasure and wrath as his Guru, Baba Abdul Rehman did not like image-worship. He took the enlarged

picture of Baba Rehman with him to Apolo Bunder, and after hiring a boat, took it and immersed it in the sea. He requested the friends and relations to return their copies and after getting them (6 in all) back, had them immersed in Bandra sea. At this time Ali Mohammed was in his brother-in-law's house. He was told by him that his suffering would come to an end, if he would soon immerse the pictures of the other saints also in the sea. On hearing this Ali Mohammed sent Mehta (his manager) to his Bandra house, and got all the pictures of the saints in the house to be thrown into the sea.

When Ali Mohammed returned home after two months, he was surprised to find Sai Baba's picture on the wall as before. He did not understand, how Mehta took away all the pictures except this. He immediately took it out and kept it in his cupboard, fearing that if his brother-in-law saw it, he would do away with it. While he was thinking, how it should be disposed off and who would keep it with care, Sai baba Himself as it were, suggested to him that he should see and consult Moulana Ismu Mujavar and abide by his opinion. He met the Moulana and told him everything. After much consultation, they both decided that the picture should be presented to Annasaheb (Hemadpant) and that, he would protect it well. Then, they both went to Hemadpant and presented him the picture in the nick of time.

This story shows, how Baba knew all past, present and future, and how skillfully He pulled the wires and fulfilled desires of His devotees. The following story shows that, Baba liked very much those who took real interest in spiritual matters and that, He removed all their difficulties and made them happy.

### **Stealing the Rags and Reading of Dnyaneshwari**

Mr. B.V. Dev, who was Mamlatdar of Dahanu (Thana district), wished for a long time to read Dnyaneshwari – (the well-known Marathi commentary on the Bhagawad-Gita, by Dnyaneshwar), along with other scriptures. He could read daily one chapter of the Bhagawad-Gita, but when he took Dnyaneshwari in hand, some difficulties cropped up and he was precluded from reading it. He took three months' leave, went to Shirdi, and thence to his home at Poud for rest. He could read other books there but when he opened Dnyaneshwari, some evil or stray thoughts came crowding up in his mind and stopped him in the effort. Try as much as he could, he was not able to read even a few lines of

the book with ease. So, he resolved in his mind that when Baba would create love for the book, and would order him to read it, he would begin and not till then. Then, in the month of February 1914, he went with his family to Shirdi. There, Jog asked him, whether he reads Dnyaneshwari daily. Dev replied that, he was desirous of reading it, but he was not successful and that, only when Baba would order him to read it, he would commence. Jog then advised him to take a copy of the book and present it to Baba, and start the reading after it was consecrated and returned by Him. Dev replied that, he did not want to resort to this device, as Baba knows his heart. Would He not know his desire and satisfy it by giving him a clear order to read?

Dev, then, saw Baba and offered one rupee as dakshina. Baba asked for Rs. 20/-, which he gave. At night, he met one Balakram and enquired from him, as to how he secured Baba's devotion and grace. Balakram told him that he would communicate everything next day after Arati. When Dev went for darshan the next day, Baba asked for Rs. 20/-, which he gave willingly. As the Masjid was crowded, Dev went aside and sat in a corner. Baba asked him to come closer and sit with a calm mind, which Dev did. Then, after the noon-Arati was over and the men dispersed, Dev saw Balakram again and asked him his previous experiences, what Baba told him and how he was taught meditation. While Balakram was going to reply, Baba sent one Chandru, a leper devotee, to call Dev to Him. When Dev went to Baba, the latter asked him, with whom and what he was talking. He said that he was with Balakram and heard from him His fame. Then, Baba asked again Rs. 25/- as Dakshina, which Dev gladly gave. Then, Baba took him inside and sitting near the post charged him saying, "You stole away My rags, without My knowledge." Dev denied any knowledge of the rags, but Baba asked him to make a search. He searched but found none. Then, Baba got angry and said, "There is nobody here, you are the only thief, grey-haired and old, you came here for stealing!" After this, Baba lost His temper, got terribly wild, gave all sorts of abuses and scoldings. Dev remained silent and apprehended that, he might get a beating also. After about an hour or so, Baba asked him to go to the Wada. He returned to the Wada and told Jog and Balakram all that had happened. Then, in the after-noon Baba sent for all of them and said that, His words might have pained the old man (Dev), but as he committed the theft, He took him to task. Then, Baba asked again for Rs. 12/-. Dev collected the amount, paid it and prostrated himself before

Him. Then, Baba said to him, "Go on reading the Pothi (Dnyaneshwari) daily, go and sit in the Wada, read regularly every day, and while reading, explain the portion read to all with love and devotion. I am sitting here, ready to give you the whole gold-embroidered Shela (valuable shawl), then, why go to others to steal rags! and why should you get into the habit of stealing?"

Dev, was much pleased to hear the words of Baba, for He directly asked him to start reading Pothi (Dnyaneshwari). He thought that, he got what he wanted and that, he could read the book with ease, thenceforth. He again prostrated himself before Baba and said that, he surrendered himself to Him, and that he should be treated as a child and be helped in his reading. He realized then, what Baba meant by 'stealing the rags'. What he asked Balakram constituted the 'rags', and Baba did not like his behaviour in this respect. As He was ready to answer all his questions, He did not like him to ask others and make unnecessary enquiries, and therefore, He scolded him. Dev thought that, He really did not 'scold' him but taught that, He was ready to fulfill his desires and there was no use asking others, in vain. Dev took these scoldings as blessings, and went home satisfied and contented.

The matter did not end here. Baba did not stop with only issuing an order to read. Within a year, He went to Dev and enquired about his progress. On 2nd April, 1914, on Thursday morning Baba gave him a dream. He sat on the upper floor and asked him, whether he understood the Pothi. "No", answered Dev. Baba said, "Then, when are you going to understand?" Dev burst into tears and said, "Unless, You shower Your grace, the reading is mere burden, and the understanding is still more difficult." Baba told, "While reading you make haste, read it before Me, in My presence." Dev asked – "What shall I read?" Baba said, "Read Adhyatma (spiritualism)." Dev went in to bring the book, when he opened his eyes he was fully awoken. We leave the readers to imagine, what ineffable joy and bliss Dev felt after this vision.

**Bow to Shri Sai – Peace be to all**