

Shri Sai Satcharitra

Chapters XVI & XVII (16 and 17)

These two Chapters relate the story of a rich gentleman, who wanted Brahma-Jnana, quickly from Sai Baba.

Preliminary

The last Chapter described how Mr. Cholkar's vow of small offering was completed and accepted. In that story, Sai Baba showed that He would accept with appreciation any small thing offered with love and devotion, but if the same thing was offered with pride and haughtiness, He would reject it. Being Himself full of Sat-Chit-Anand (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) He did not care much for more outward formalities but if an offering was made in meek and humble spirit, the same was welcome and He accepted it with pleasure and avidity. In fact there is no person more liberal and benevolent than a Sadguru, like Sai Baba. He cannot be compared to the Chintamani jewel (the Philosopher's stone which satisfies desires), the Kalpataru (the Celestial Tree which fulfills our desires) or the Kamadhenu (the Celestial Cow which yields what we desire), for they give us only what we desire; but the Sadguru gives us the most precious thing that is inconceivable and inscrutable (The reality). Now let us hear, how Sai Baba disposed of a rich man, who came to Him and implored Him to give him Brahma-Jnana.

These was a rich gentleman (unfortunately his name and whereabouts are not mentioned) who was very prosperous in his life. He had amassed a large quantity of wealth, houses, field and lands, and had many servants and dependents. When Baba's fame reached his ears, he said to a friend of his, that he was not in want of anything, and so he would go to Shirdi and ask Baba to give him Brahma-Jnana which, if he got, would certainly make him more happy. His friend dissuaded him, saying, "it is not easy to know Brahman, and especially so for an avaricious man like you, who is always engrossed in wealth, wife and children. Who will, in your quest of Brahma-Jnana, satisfy you that won't give away even a paisa in charity?"

Not minding his friend's advice, the fellow engaged a return-journey tanga and came to Shirdi. He went to the Masjid, saw Sai Baba, fell at His Feet and said, "Baba, hearing that you show the Brahman to all who come over here

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without any delay, I have come here all the way from my distant place. I am much fatigued by the journey and if I get the Brahman from You, my troubles will be well-paid and rewarded." Baba then replied, "Oh, My dear friend, do not be anxious, I shall immediately show you the Brahman; all My dealings are in cash and never on credit. So many people come to Me, and ask for wealth, health, power, honor, position, cure of diseases and other temporal matters. Rare is the person, who comes here to Me and asks for Brahma-Jnana. There is no dearth of persons asking for wordly things, but as persons interested in spiritual matters are very rare, I think it a lucky and auspicious moment, when persons like you come and press Me for Brahma-Jnana. So I show to you with pleasure, the Brahman with all its accompaniments and complications."

Saying this, Baba started to show him the Brahman. He made him sit there and engaged him in some other talk or affair and thus made him forget his question for the time being. Then He called a boy and told him to go to one Nandu Marwari, and get from him a hand-loan of Rs. five. The boy left and returned immediately, saying that

Nandu was absent and his house was locked. Then Baba asked him to go to Bala grocer and get from him, the said loan. This time also, the boy was unsuccessful. This experiment was repeated again twice or thrice, with the same result.

Sai Baba was, as we know, the living and moving Brahman Incarnate. Then, some one may ask - "Why did He want the paltry sum of five rupees, and why did He try hard to get it on loan? Really He did not want that sum at all. He must have been fully knowing, that Nandu and Bala were absent, and he seems to have adopted this procedure as a test for the seeker of Brahman. That gentleman had a roll or bundle of currency notes in his pocket, and if he was really earnest, he would not have sat quiet and be a mere onlooker, when Baba was frantically trying to get a paltry sum of Rs. five. He knew that Baba would keep His word and repay the debt, and that the sum wanted was insignificant. Still he could not make up his mind and advance the sum. Such a man wanted from Baba the greatest thing in the world, viz., the Brahma-Jnana! Any other

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man, who really loved Baba, would have at once given Rs. five, instead of being a mere onlooker. It was otherwise with this man. He advanced no money nor did he sit silent, but began to be impatient, as he was in a haste to return and implored Baba saying- "Oh Baba, please show me the Brahman soon." Baba replied - "Oh my dear friend, did you not understand all the procedure that I went through, sitting in this place, for enabling you to see the Brahman? It is, in short this. For seeing Brahman one has to give five things, i.e. surrender five things viz. (1) Five Pranas (vital forces), (2) Five senses (five of action and five of perception), (3) mind, (4) intellect and (5) ego. This path of Brahma-Jnana of self-realization is 'as hard as to tread on the edge of a razor'.

Sai Baba then gave rather a long discourse on the subject, the purport of which is given below

Qualifications for Brahma-Jnana or Self-Realization

All persons do not see or realize the Brahman in their life-time. Certain qualifications are absolutely necessary. (1) Mumuksha or intense desire to get free. He, who thinks that he is bound and that he should get free from bondage and works earnestly and resolutely to that end; and who does not care for any other things, is qualified for the spiritual life. (2) Virakti or a feeling of disgust with the things of this world and the next. Unless a man feels disgusted with the things, emoluments and honors, which his action would bring in this world and the next, he has no right to enter into the spiritual realm. (3) Antarmukhata (introversion). Our senses have been created by God with a tendency to move outward and so, man always looks outside himself and not inside. He who wants self-realization and immortal life, must turn his gaze inwards, and look to his inner Self. (4) Catharsis from (Purging away of) sins. Unless a man has turned away from wickedness, and stopped from doing wrong, and has entirely composed himself and unless his mind is at rest, he cannot gain self-realization, even by means of knowledge. (5) Right Conduct. Unless, a man leads a life of truth, penance and insight, a life of celibacy, he cannot get God-realization. (6) Preferring Shreyas, (the Good) to Preyas (the Pleasant). There are two sorts of things viz., the Good and the Pleasant; the former deals with spiritual affairs,

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and the latter with mundane matters. Both these approach man for acceptance. He has to think and choose one of them. The wise man prefers the Good to the Pleasant; but the unwise, through greed and attachment, chooses the Pleasant.

(7) Control of the mind and the senses. The body is the chariot and the Self is its master; intellect is the charioteer and the mind is the reins; the senses are the horses and sense-objects their paths. He who has no understanding and whose mind is unrestrained, his senses unmanageable like the vicious horses of a charioteer, does not reach his destination (get realization), but goes through the round of births and deaths; but he who has understanding and whose mind is restrained, his senses being under control, like the good horse of a charioteer, reaches that place, i.e., the state of self-realization, when he is not born again. The man, who has understanding as his charioteer (guide) and is able to rein his mind, reaches the end of the journey, which is the supreme abode of the all-pervading, Vishnu (lord).

(8) Purification of the mind. Unless a man discharges satisfactorily and disinterestedly the duties of his station in life, his mind will not be purified and, unless his mind is purified, he cannot get self-realization. It is only in the purified mind that Viveka (discrimination between the Unreal and the Real), and Vairagya (Non-attachment to the unreal) crop up and lead on the self-realization. Unless egoism is dropped, avarice got rid of, and the mind made desireless (pure), self-realization is not possible. The idea that 'I am the body' is a great delusion, and attachment to this idea is the cause of bondage. Leave off this idea and attachment therefore, if you want to get to the Self-realization.

(9) The necessity of a Guru. The knowledge of the self is so subtle and mystic, that no one could, by his own individual effort ever hope to attain it. So the help of another person-Teacher, who has himself got self-realization is absolutely necessary. What others cannot give with great labor and pains, can be easily gained with the help of such a Teacher; for he has walked on the path himself and can easily take the disciple, step by step on the ladder of spiritual progress.

(10) and lastly the Lord's Grace is the most essential thing. When the Lord is pleased with any body, He gives him Viveka and Vairagya; and takes him safe beyond the ocean of mundane existence, "The Self cannot be gained by the study of Vedas, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. He, whom the Self

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chooses, by him It is gained. To him the Self reveals Its nature", says the Katha Upanishad.

After the dissertation was over, Baba turned to the gentleman and said - "Well sir, there is in your pocket the Brahma (or Mammon) in the form of fifty-times five (Rs.250/-) rupees; please take that out." The gentleman took out from his pocket the bundle of currency notes, and to his great surprise found, on counting them, that there were 25 notes of 10 rupees each, Seeing this omniscience of Baba, he was moved and fell at Baba's Feet and craved for His blessings. Then Baba said to him, "Roll up your bundle of Brahma viz. Currency notes. Unless you get rid completely of your avarice or greed, you will not get the real Brahma. How can be, whose mind is engrossed in wealth, progeny and prosperity, expect to know the Brahma, without removing away his attachment for the same? The illusion of attachment or the love for money is a deep eddy (whirlpool) of pain full of crocodiles in the form of conceit and jealousy. He, who is desireless, can alone cross this whirlpool. Greed and Brahma are as poles asunder, they are eternally opposed to each other. Where there is greed, there is no room for thought or meditation of the Brahma. Then how can a greedy man get dispassion and salvation? For a greedy man there is no peace, neither contentment, nor certainty (steadiness). If there be even a little trace of greed in mind, all the Sadhanas (spiritual endeavors) are of no avail. Even the knowledge of a well-read man, who is not free from the desire of the fruit or reward of his actions, and who has got no disgust for the same, is useless and can't help him in getting self-realization. The teachings of a Guru are of no use to a man, who is full of egoism, and who always thinks about the sense-objects. Purification of mind is absolutely necessary; without it, all our spiritual endeavors are nothing, but useless show and pomp. It is, therefore, better for one to take only what he can digest and assimilate. My treasury is full, and I can give anyone, what he wants, but I have to see whether he is qualified to receive what I give. If you listen to Me carefully, you will be certainly benefited. Sitting in this Masjid, I never speak any untruth."

When a guest is invited to a house, all the members of the household and other friends and relations that happen to be present, are entertained, along

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with the guest. So all those that were present in the Masjid at this time, could partake of the spiritual feast, that was served by Baba for the rich gentleman. After getting Baba's blessings, one and all, including the gentleman left the place quite happy and contented.

Special Characteristic of Baba

There are many Saints, who leaving their houses, stay in forest, caves or hermitages and remaining in solitude, try to get liberation or salvation for themselves. They do not care for other people, and are always self-absorbed. Sai Baba was not of such a type. He had no home, no wife, no progeny, nor any relations, near or distant. Still, He lived in the world (society). He begged His bread from four or five houses, always lived at the foot of the (Neem) tree, carried on worldly dealings, and taught all the people how to act. and behave in this world. Rare are the Sadhus and Saints who, after attaining God-vision, strive for the welfare of the people. Sai Baba was the foremost of these and, therefore, says Hemadpant.

"Blessed is the country, blessed is the family, and blessed are the chaste parents where this extraordinary, transcendent, precious and pure jewel (Sai Baba) was born."

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all