

Sai Satcharitra

Sai Satcharitra - Chapter XX

Das Ganu's Problem Solved by Kaka's Maid-Servant

In this Chapter, Hemadpant describes, how Das Ganu's problem was solved by Kakasaheb Dixit's maid-servant.

Preliminary

Sai (Lord) was originally formless. he assumed a form for the sake of Bhaktas. With the help of the actress Maya, He played the part of the Actor in the big drama of the universe. Let us remember and visualize Shri Sai. Let us go to Shirdi, and see carefully the programmes, after the noon-Arati. After the Arati ceremony was over, Sai used to come out of the Masjid, and standing on its edge, distribute udi to the devotees with very kind and loving looks. The Bhaktas also got up with equal fervour, clasped His Feet, and standing and staring at Him, enjoyed the shower of Udi. Baba passed handfuls of Udi into the palms of the devotees and marked their foreheads with Udi with His fingers. The love He bore for them in His heart was boundless. Then He addressed the Bhaktas as follows:- "Oh Bhau, go to take your lunch; you Anna, go to your lodgings; you Bapu, enjoy your dishes". In this way He accosted each and every devotee and sent them home. Even now, you can enjoy these sights if you bring into play your imagination. You can visualize and enjoy them. Now bringing Sai before our mental vision, let us meditate on Him, from His Feet upwards to His face, and prostrating before Him humbly, lovingly and respectfully, revert to the story of this Chapter.

Ishavasya Upanishad

Das Ganu once started to write a Marathi commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad. Let us first give a brief idea of this Upanishad, before proceeding further. It is called a 'Mantropanishad', as it is embodied in the Mantras of the Vedic Samhita. It constitutes the last or the 40th Chapter of the Vajasaneyi Samhita (Yajurveda) and it is, therefore, called Vajasaneyi Samhitopanishad.

Being embodied in Vedic Samhitas, this is regarded as superior to all other Upanishads, which occur in the Brahmanas and Aranyakas (explanatory treatises on Mantras and rituals). Not only this, other Upanishads are considered to be commentaries on the truths mentioned briefly in the Ishavasya Upanishad. For instance, the biggest of the Upanishads, viz, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, is considered by Pandit Satwalekar to be a running commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad.

Profesor R.D. Ranade says:- "The Ishopanishad is quite a small Upanishad; and yet it contains many hints which show an extraordinarily piercing insight. Within the short compass of 18 verses, it gives a valuable mystical description of the Atman, a description of the ideal sage, who stands unruffled in the midst of temptations and sorrows; and adumbration of the doctrine of Karma-Yoga as later formulated, and finally a reconciliation of the claims of knowledge and works. The most valuable idea, that lies at the root of the Upanishad, is that of a logical synthesis between the two opposites of knowledge; and work, which are both required according to the Upanishad to be annulled in a higher synthesis". (page 24 of the Constructive Survey of the Upanishad Philosophy). In another place he says that "The poetry of the Ishopanishad is a Commixture of moral, mystical and metaphysical (ibid, Page 41)".

From the brief description given above about this Upanishad, any one can see how difficult it is to translate this Upanishad in a vernacular language, and brief out its exact meaning. Das Ganu translated it in Marathi 'Ovi'metre, verse by verse, but as he did not comprehend the gist or essence of the Upanishad, he was not satisfied with his performance. He therefore consulted some learned men regarding his doubts and difficulties and discussed with them at great length. They did not solve them nor did they give him any rational and satisfactory explanation. So Das Ganu was a little restless over this matter.

SadGuru only competent and Qualified to Explain

As we have seen, this Upanishad is the quintessence of the Vedas. It is the science of self-realization, it is the scythe or weapon which can rend asunder the bondage of life and death, and make us free. Therefore, he thought, that he who has himself attained self-realization, can only give him the true or correct interpretation of the Upanishad. When nobody could satisfy Das Ganu, he resolved to consult Sai Baba about this.

When he got an opportunity to go to Shirdi, he saw Sai Baba, prostrated himself before Him, and mentioned his difficulties about the Ishavasya Upanishad and requested Him to give the correct solution. Sai Baba, blessed him and said- "You need not be anxious, there is no difficulty about the matter, the mind-servant of Kaka (Kakasaheb Dixit) will solve your doubts at Vile Parle, on your way home". The people who went present then and heard this, thought that Baba was joking and said, "How could an illiterate maid-servant solve the difficulties of this nature", but Das Garu thought otherwise. He was sure, that whatever Baba spoke, must come true, Baba's word was the decree of the Brahma (Almighty).

Kaka's Maid-Servant

On fully believing in Baba's words, he left Shirdi and came to Vile Parle (a suburb of Bombay), and stayed with Kakasaheb Dixit. There the next day, when Das Ganu was enjoying his morning nap (some say when he was engaged in worship), he heard a poor girl singing a beautiful song in clear and melodious tones. The subject matter of the song was a crimson coloured Sari, how nice it was, how fine was its embroidery, how beautiful were its ends and borders etc. He liked the song so much that he came out, and saw that it was being sung by a young girl, the sister of Namya, who was a servant of Kakasaheb. The girl was cleaning vessels, and had only a torn rag on her person. On seeing her impoverished condition, and her jovial temperament, Das Ganu felt pity for her and when Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan next day gave him a pair of dhotars, he requested him to give a sari to the poor little girl also. Rao Bahadur bought a good Chirdi (small Sari) and presented it to her. Like a starving person getting luckily good dishes to eat, her joy knew to bounds. Next day she wore the new Sari, and out of great joy and merriment, whirled, danced round and played 'Fugadi' with other girls and excelled them all. The Day following, she kept the new Sari in her box at home and came with the old and torn rags, but she looked as merry as she did the previous day. On seeing this, Das Ganu's pity was transferred into admiration. He thought that the girl being poor had to wear a torn rag, but now she had a new Sari which she kept in reserve and putting on the old rag, strutted herself, showing no trace of sorrow or dejection. Thus he realized that all our feelings of pain and pleasure depend upon the attitude of our mind. On thinking deeply over this incident, he realized that a man ought to enjoy whatever God has bestowed on him in the firm conviction that He besets every thing, from behind and before,

and on all sides and that whatever is bestowed on him by God must be for his good. In this particular case, the impoverished condition of the poor girl, her torn rag and the new Sari, the donor, the dance and the acceptance were all parts of the Lord and pervaded by Him. Hence, Das Ganu got a practical demonstration of the lesson of the Upanishad - the lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens, is ordained by God, and is ultimately good for us.

Unique Method of Teaching

From the above incident, the reader will see that Baba's method was unique and varied. Though Baba never left Shirdi, He sent some to Machhindragad, some to Kolhapur or Sholapur for practising sadhanas. To some He appeared in His usual form, to some He appeared in waking or dreaming state, day or night and satisfied their desires. It is impossible to describe all the methods, that Baba used in imparting instructions to His Bhaktas. In this particular case, He sent Das Ganu to Vile Parle, where he got his problem solved, through the maid-servant. To those, who say that it was not necessary to send Das Ganu outside and that Baba could have personally taught him, we say that Baba followed the right or best course, or how else could Das Ganu would have learnt a great lesson, that the poor maid-servant and her Sari were pervaded by the Lord. Now we close the Chapter with another beautiful extract about this Upanishad.

The Ethics of the Ishavasya Upanishad

"One of the main features of the Ishavasya Upanishad, is the ethical advice it offers, and it is interesting to note that the ethics of the Upanishad are definitely based upon the meta-physical position advanced in it. The very opening words of the Upanishad tell us that God pervades every thing. As a corollary from this metaphysical position, the ethical advice it offers is, that a man ought to enjoy whatever God bestows on him in the firm belief, that as He pervades everything, whatever is bestowed on him by God must be good. It follows naturally, that the Upanishad should forbid us from coveting another man's property. In fact, we are fittingly taught here a lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever happens, it is divinely ordained and it is hence good for us. Another moral advice is, that man must spend his life-time always in doing action, specially the karmas enjoined in the Shastras, in a mood of believing resignation to His will. Inactivity, according to this Upanishad, would be the canker of the soul. It is only when a man spends his life-time on doing actions in this manner, that he can hope to attain the ideal of Naishkarmya.

Finally, the text goes on to say that a man, who sees all beings in the Self and sees the Self as existing in all beings; in fact, for whom all beings and everything that exists have become the Self - how can such a man suffer infatuation? What ground would such a man have for grief? Loathfulness, infatuation and grief verily proceed from our not being able to see the Atman in all things. But a man, who realizes the oneness of all things, for whom everything has become the Self, must ipso facto, cease to be affected by the common foibles of humanity. (Page 169-170 of The Creative Period by Messrs. Belvalkar and Ranade).

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all