

# Shirdi Sai Baba Rescues Captain Jahangir Framji Daruwalla and His Three Ships in The Russo - Japanese War (1904 - 1905)

S.D.K. SUBHASREE<sup>1</sup>, DR. A. RENUKA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of History, Govt. Arts College, Salem-7, T.N, India

<sup>2</sup>H.O.D, Associate Professor, Department of History, Govt. Arts College, T.N.

*“I may be here in my physical body, and you may be far away beyond the Seven Seas, yet, whatever you do there I know instantly. Wherever you may be, when you spread your hands before me in supplication with faith and devotion, there I stand behind you day and night steadfast as your faith and devotion”, said Baba to Cholkar in Shri Sai Saicharita, Chapter-15, Ovi 67.*

## I. BABA’S LEELA TO RESCUE A DEVOTE BEYOND THE - SEVEN SEAS

Baba’s words are true for each and every devotee even now, as they were then. This is such a Leela where Baba literally goes beyond the seven seas to rescue a devotee.

## II. RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR OF 1905

It was during the Russo-Japanese War, Captain Jahangir Framji Daruwalla, and a Parsee, found that all his steamers except three were sunk by the enemy and that the rest of the steamers would soon meet the same fate. Being a good Captain, he hoped to ferry the remaining ships to safety. He had a photograph of Baba in his pocket. He promptly took it out and earnestly prayed to Baba to come to their rescue. Just as he was praying, Baba sitting in the Dwaraka Mai shouted, “Haq, haq”. The devotees sitting with Baba were astounded to see him completely drenched from head to toe. Water flowed in torrents, and soon the Dwaraka Mai became a pool of water. For about an hour the devotees removed buckets and buckets of water. Then they gave Baba a dry Kafni to wear.

## III. TELEGRAM FROM CAPTAIN DARUWALLA

As Baba was silent about the cause of his being drenched, one of the devotees drank the water as tirth (holy water) and found it extremely salty. Simultaneously, at Sea Captain Daruwalla saw Baba in person pull and tow his ships to safety. On the third day after this incident Baba received a telegram from the Captain, thanking him for the rescue operation.

## IV. CAPTAIN’S ‘THANK YOU’ GESTURE

When he returned home after completion of his mission, he came to Shirdi and prostrated at Baba’s feet. He thanked Baba for answering his prayers to swiftly, and saving the lives of his crew and passengers. Captain Daruwalla was an ardent devotee and took a great deal of interest in Baba’s affairs. He donated Rs.2,200/- in two installments for repairing the Sabhamandap of the Dwaraka Mai. This was a small ‘Thank You’ gesture.

## V. BABA GAVE RESPECT TO OTHER RELIGIONS

Sai Baba respected other Religions and expected his followers and devotees also to do so. Once Baba came to know that Kakasaheb Dixit, one of his favourite devotees, had recently talked ill of Christ and Christianity at his lodging. So when he came and started massaging Baba’s feet, Baba shouted, “Get away! Do not massage Me!”. Dixit

understood and repented. Baba then allowed him to massage his feet as usual.

#### VI. BABA DISLIKED THE CHANGING OF RELIGION

Similarly, Baba did not like anybody changing his religion. Once Bade Baba (Fakir Baba) brought with him a recent Hindu convert to Islam (Ibrahim) to the masjid. Baba, slapping the convert on the cheek, retorted, “Ah! You have changed Your Father”. Baba always advised everyone to stick to one’s own religion, one’s own deity of worship and one’s own Guru (Preceptor). He used to say “Apna baap to apna baap” (nobody like one’s father).

#### VII. MISSION OF SAI BABA

In short, Sai Baba’s mission was to convince everybody that all religions are nothing but different paths leading to the same goal, i.e, realisation of God, and that the basic principles of all religions are the same. All beings are children of God-whether you call Him Ishwar, Allah or by any other name, and so His children should live in peace like brothers without fighting with each other on the basis of religions.

#### VIII. UNITY OF HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

During his lifetime Baba ensured this in Shirdi with his fact, yogic or divine powers and timely Upadesh (advise). The result was that whenever Baba sat in the masjid, both Hindus as well as Muslims gathered round him without any ill-feeling or caste pride; whenever Baba distributed food, both Hindus as well as Muslims partook of it without repulsion or hesitation, and whenever Baba moved out in a procession to Chavadi on alternate days, not only Hindus but Muslims also vied with each other for the honour of carrying various insignia of devotion, namely Whiskers (Chamars), Umbrella (Chhatra), etc. The main mass of devotees were Hindus and they carried on their worship of Baba at the masjid with rituals based on Pandharpur Arati. Their bhajans were full of allusions to Hindu Mythology, but the Muslims

who were present on such occasions enjoyed all this and freely partook of the offering distributed by the Hindu bhaktas. Similarly, whenever any Muslim devotees came to pay homage to Baba with Flowers, Sugar lumps, Coconut and recited ‘Fatia’ sometimes joined by Baba himself, the Hindu devotees sat quietly observing the rites in absolute silence, and respected and partook of the sugar lump as well as pieces of coconut with pleasure and joy. What a glorious harmony and brotherhood! India needs the same harmony and brotherhood today very much in order to safeguard lives and property of our, and to preserve the unity and integrity of our country.

#### IX. PRIMARY DUTY OF THE SAI DEVOTEES

Although the same Unity and integrity is still seen in Shirdi where people from all communities - Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsees, Christians gather together to offer their obeisance to Shri Sai Baba, it is required to be spread all over India. We, Sai Devotees, therefore, must make a beginning in earnest in this respect and set an example of others by Precept and Practice.

#### REFERENCES

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