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Content

How He Came to Baba

This is a particularly sweet talk, by a person who was 100% Baba's to the end.

This is Bal's coming to Baba story, in some more detail than in Glimpses I. Bal thinks that he may have been rather a "naughty animal" prior to coming to Baba. Not much interested in spirituality and masters and all that, because in era of 1940s he was thinking that the duty of every person was to free the country. In this way, Bal was trying to find his own way, his own living, his own ideals, but because of circumstances his body fell apart with TB and he became quite ill, though "best of treatment" was offered.

He was taken to a sanitorium which collapsed his lungs as part of the treatment, and he became quite weak. His ego, social work, freeing the country, education, all his aspirations were set to naught.

He knew there were some people who should be punished for their misbehavior, but why should he, Bal, experience this trauma? Father and mother loved him, he was helpless, and he began to look for something beyond this life. Got various ideas about fathomable, unfathomable, decided his present state was unfathomable. Studied lives of saints at this point, reading those books. Slowly, he began to believe that there was much truth, but also equally some other parts that confused him. Love for God is touching in those books, but even an ordinary man could have lived his life more competently than these saints. Read Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramhansa, but felt he had to find someone who was living the life. Even an artist, or an explorer or an actor has lived life, Bal felt.

Bal felt he should follow someone who obeyed the constraints: a) the person should be rational, b) maybe Hindu path is best, with yoga, interpretation of Hindu spiritual literature, and c) he should have great love for the country, because the task of getting free from the British is vital. He found Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and thought that should be the one: good linguist, radical movement person, saint of the Indian National Congress, and also knew yoga, saw Krishna while being jailed by the British. So, Bal intended to go to Ghosh.

Image of a village fair with its mazes composed of doors, and the idea that Baba opens those doors for one who is connected with Him. Bal had a dream of Ghosh, and thought he should go to Pondicherry. But casually Bal read brief news that Meher Baba had visited

some place, and would be going to another place. Baba's name, encountered at this time, brought to mind a little journey Bal had had with Baba as a child. When Bal was in school, his father worked for the railways, and Bal traveled from somewhere near Delhi to Bombay with his father. Baba (at Nasik station) got into the same compartment as the parents and Bal (some time in 1930s). Bal saw Baba's face, and felt that the respect the mandali were paying to Baba was exemplary. Some relatives told Bal the name of Baba as the parents described the person who had been in the railway coach with them.

Once more Bal thought he should go to Aurobindo to study yoga and join the movement for freeing India that came from Aurobindo's ashram. But then a thought came that he should maybe go to see Baba first. A neighbor who was serving with the railways came, and gave Baba's biography (in Marathi) to Bal. Somehow the book came to Bal, who started to read the book. Baba's words about silence and Avatar was pretty foreign to Bal, but Baba serving the poor at his birthday in 1937 in Nasik seemed admirable to Bal. So now he resolved to try for Baba's darshan before going to Aurobindo. [The book had been written by Deshmukh and financed by Jal Kerawala.]

Bal wrote to Adi, but got no reply for 4 months. Bal eventually decided that saints such as Baba didn't care for ordinary people like Bal, but after 4 months, in May 1943, a letter came from Adi, saying that Baba had been happy to read Bal's letter. The letter said that Baba sent his blessings and would be glad to answer any questions that Bal should have.

Bal now feels that he was guided by Baba from this point forward. Bal's letter said that he didn't know enough about spirituality to ask a good question, so he would like to have time at Baba's holy feet to try to learn about it.

One of Baba's replies, after a few months (the whole duration of the correspondence was 1.5 yrs) said things like "I know your heart..."

Adi eventually wrote a letter that Bal could come to a meeting but the condition was that if he was to attend he should be prepared to obey Baba implicitly. Again Bal wrote, addressing his letter as usual to Baba, that he couldn't promise implicit obedience with all honesty. After a week or so Bal happened to meet Gadekar and Gadekar told him he was a fool not to have offered his implicit obedience. Now Gadekar began to explain about obedience and spirituality, and Bal was very impressed with what Gadekar said, and now Bal sent another letter offering his obedience to Baba. The response to the first letter came that same day, saying that he shouldn't worry about obeying Baba. The second letter was never replied to. From this, Bal feels that Gadekar's influence had not been needed or desired in Baba's eyes, and it was better what he had said the first time.

Finally, after 1.5 years, there was to be a program at Nasik, 600 miles away from Kurduwadi (Bal's place). Bal managed to meet up with Baba's train at Manmad, and went on the same train to Nagpur. The train stopped in Nagpur, and Baba got out to meet other devotees, and he looked quite beautiful. There was a big crowd, maybe 700 persons there on the platform, and Bal's carriage was a long way from Baba's. Somehow, Bal had lost all

his money and all his tickets, and those of two of his friends, while being on the train from Manmad to Nagpur. Meanwhile, Bal's luggage was attached to the luggage of the mandali, so he realized he could pass off the train without interacting with the ticket collectors. So he succeeded in getting off the train without being asked for his ticket. Having passed through the gate of the train station, he thought he was safe, but he saw some ticket collector was now asking him for his ticket. The ticket collector began to smile, and Bal now realized that the person was his old friend from 6 or 7 years back, when they had been school chums. So ticket problem was solved, and Bal had a sigh of relief, and there was a transport there for Bal, and they were taken to Dr. Deshmukh's bungalow for breakfast. Bal had a full dose of Baba's divinity for four days. For those days, Bal kind of joined the mandali.

Then the program moved to Saoner. Word reached Bal that his mother had come, and he was required to go to the station where his mother was located, and bring her to Baba. At this point, Bal didn't know any of the mandali, but his luggage and his meals had been with the mandali. Bal wrote a note to Baba, and got a message from Baba that he could go get his mother. It made him very sad to leave, but just then he ran into a close relative who knew him, and that person told him that his mother was coming to the Nagpur station, and she was there, and Bal didn't have to miss Baba's program.

In the course of these five days, the programme ended, and Baba in effect paid for Bal's whole travel back to Kurduwadi. During the entire five days of the programmes, Bal hadn't garlanded Baba, or even spoken to Him. So on the last day, Bal purchased a garland, going on foot to the flower market, fruit and after that some lotuses from the lake at Nagpur. By the time Bal had reached there, all the people had gone! His madness had occupied Bal with the purchasing of these things, and now Bal was lost. So Bal walked the distance to Thakur's bungalow to see if Baba was there, and to go with Baba to the station. Bal went to upstairs to the darshan hall at that bungalow, but no persons there either. So Bal went to Baba's room, and sure enough Baba and Adi were there in the room, and Bal found he had the garlands, the fruits and lotuses. Baba motioned to Bal that Bal should garland Him, and Bal did all that. Baba gave him a big embrace, that that was his first real meeting with Baba. This was in 1943 or 1944, and Bal was about 24 years old.

Even after coming to Baba, it was not a total acceptance for Bal. Baba gave Bal free latitude think however he wanted, read whatever he wanted,