



# National Film Archive of India

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
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## Interview of renowned Cinematographer E. Mohammed taken by Bapu Watve at Miraj on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1988.

**Bapu Watve :** Mohammed, where were you born?

**Mohammed :** I was born at Kolhapur.

**Bapu Watve :** Do you remember the year in which you were born?

**Mohammed :** I do not know my exact year of birth so I tried to find it out. I tried to search at the Municipal office and even at school but couldn't get it. So, I went to Magistrate and fixed my birth year. Accordingly, I am 77 years old.

**Bapu Watve :** What was your father doing?

**Mohammed :** My father was a mason. The family financial condition was not good so I was doing mason work while schooling. Because of poor financial condition, I studied upto 6<sup>th</sup> standard.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it a Marathi medium of the school?

**Mohammed :** Yes, Marathi medium.

**Bapu Watve :** Then did you learn English?

**Mohammed :** A little bit. When I was in 6<sup>th</sup> standard, at that time I studied English upto 2<sup>nd</sup> standard. Since we were poor, I was not knowing what to do further. So,

there is one technical school at Kolhapur, I started working there. At that school, they offered me a scholarship of Rs.3/- and allowed me to learn.

**Bapu Watve :** So, you got a scholarship of Rs.3/- per month.

**Mohammed :** But I was not happy with it so, I quit from that school. My father understood that I am not much interested in learning anything so, he thought of putting me to work somewhere at tailoring shop. Thinking that I will learn something while earning. He took me to Mangalwar Peth. There was one tailoring shop of Babaram. My father knew him well. He told him to teach me some tailoring. Actually, I was not at all interested but I don't want to hurt my father so, I started working there. I used to do just help them. In this Babaram & brother 's shop, Mr. S. Fattelal used to come to meet them. He was not having any brothers so he regularly used to visit them. While just chatting, Babaram told S. Fattelal about me and said, "he is a nice boy. Please give him some work." At that same time, there was something going on at Prabhat studio. You were to produce some film.

**Bapu Watve :** But when you were working at the racecourse?

**Mohammed :** Prior to this, I was working at the racecourse.

**Bapu Watve :** That means you had worked at a racecourse for some time.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I worked there for some time.

**Bapu Watve :** What kind of work you had done there?

**Mohammed :** I used to ride horses. I used to give them training. It was sort of giving them practice and rehearsal. New horses used to come from Arab countries and they were not used to the racecourse ground. So, we used to give them practice.

**Bapu Watve :** How old you were at that time? Were you around 12 to 13 years old?

**Mohammed :** Yes, must be 14 years.

**Bapu Watve :** Because of that, you must have learned to ride the horse perfectly.

**Mohammed :** I was quite good at horse riding.

**Bapu Watve :** When S. Fattelal that means Saheb mama, took you to work at Prabhat studio, was it established?

**Mohammed :** No, at that time, the establishment of Prabhat studio was in progress. For that digging up pits, setting the curtains and another such kind of work was going on.

**Bapu Watve :** Prabhat company was established on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1929 and was setting up at Maganwar Peth at Kolhapur. I was quite young at that time. I vaguely remember these things.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I remember that how the preparation of the establishment took place. There were rehearsals going on. They had made a sitting arrangement at the rehearsal department.

**Bapu Watve :** As what they had appointed you there? Had they taken you as an actor or in the camera department?

**Mohammed :** First they took me as an actor. They had bought many mirrors. We had to just look into the mirror and make crooked faces. We were not knowing what will be required for the film so we were preparing ourselves.

**Bapu Watve :** In spite of that what other work you had to do there in the studio?

**Mohammed :** If you are asking about other work then, after finishing the shooting like the film “Gopalkrishna” गोपाळकृष्ण ...

**Bapu Watve :** That is alright but do you remember when you started working with Prabhat studio? Did you witness that the owners of the studio, themselves helping in raising the studio shed?

**Mohammed :** Not only the owner but we all used to work together in setting up the studio. Digging the pits, putting up curtains, tying the wires etc. these all types of work we used to do.

**Bapu Watve :** That means owners and you all were working equally like you are from one family.

**Mohammed :** yes, like one big family.

**Bapu Watve :** When you joined the studio, what was the strength of the staff?

**Mohammed :** Must be around thirty-five to forty.

**Bapu Watve :** That was all the staff?

**Mohammed :** When there was outdoor shooting at Bhadgaon ..

**Bapu Watve :** Vadgaon?

**Mohammed :** No, Bhadgaon. They told us that we have to go for shooting for fifteen days at Bhadgaon, be present tomorrow with your bed and baggage at the studio. So, when we received that order and also, we were eager to visit Bhadgaon, the next day we reached the spot with our bag and baggage. We all started and reached Bhadgaon where the shooting of “Gopalkrishna” गोपाळकृष्ण was going to take place. Gopalkrishna गोपाळकृष्ण was a silent picture and not a talkie movie.

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, talkie movies had not started in India.

**Mohammed :** Amongst us, there was one person named Suresh, he was to play the role of “Krishna”, Tamhankar was the father of Radha and Keshavrao ...

**Bapu Watve :** Who had played the role of “Radhe”

**Mohammed :** One person by the name of Sakharikar had done the role of Radhe. The rest of all were Rakshas. Mane had become Kauns.

**Bapu Watve :** Dnyanoba Mane from Kolhapur. He was a famous wrestler.

**Mohammed :** He was given the role of Kauns. The first scene of the shooting was there with putting on the reflector.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, previously the shooting used to take place on the reflector.

**Mohammed :** Shantarambapu told the make-up man to put the old man’s make-up on me.

**Bapu Watve :** That means your first role was of an old man.

**Mohammed :** Yes. The scene was like this. Five to six cows go to the jungle. My role was to go along with them. While they are grazing, just sit over there. After some time, some people come there. When they try to snatch the cows and I protest. So, they beat me with a whip, drops me down and takes all the cows. This way, it was my first role as an old man in the film. It was a role of an old man who gets bitten up.

**Bapu Watve :** you have acted in the first film by Prabhat film company.

**Mohammed :** Like that, I was doing small roles. With this first role, I started getting roles. It was my first film. I still remember that full first film of mine. After that, I came to Indore. At Indore, curtains were put up, everything was set. They taught us other technical things.

**Bapu Watve :** While acting in Cinema, did they make you do other work?

**Mohammed :** No, No. I don’t have to do the other things. They had appointed other people for that work. My work was on the reflector. How to adjust the reflector and

give light, may it outdoor shooting but also for indoor shooting. And even I had to act in the movie.

**Bapu Watve :** That means you were playing the roles and also taking care of lighting.

**Mohammed :** yes, I thought by this way, I can learn both things. At least I got some work to do.

**Bapu Watve :** Even at that time, it was not considered as below dignity to do any kind of work. Even, people never used to say that it is not my job or I will not do it.

**Mohammed :** Yes, everyone used to work as if it is their own company.

**Bapu Watve :** Avdhutrao once had told me that the first few picture's photography was done by Sahebmama.

**Mohammed :** Yes. Goplakrishna , Bajarbattu बजरबट्टू these films were picturized by Sahebmama.

**Bapu Watve :** Khuni Khanjir खूनी खंजिर..

**Mohammed :** Khuni Khanjir खूनी खंजिर and Chandrasena चंद्रसेना.

**Bapu Watve :** Udaykal उदयकाल.

**Mohammed :** Udaykal उदयकाल. These all were done by Sahebmama,

**Bapu Watve :** That means Sahebmama was the real cameraman.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Sahebmama was the first cameraman.

**Bapu Watve :** Then when did Keshavrao joined?

**Mohammed :** Keshavrao came afterwards. When the studio shifted from Mangalwar Peth to Shahupuri.

**Bapu Watve :** But Keshavrao was partner right from the beginning but the starting films were photographed by Sahebmama.

**Mohammed :** Yes, the first few films were completely picturized by Saheb mama.

**Bapu Watve :** Then when did they take you to the photography department?

**Mohammed :** When we went to Shahupuri, few films were picturized like Shubh Mangal,

**Bapu Watve :** Those were talkie films, but did they take for the silent movie?

**Mohammed :** No, no, they had not taken me for a silent movie. I was only handling lights.

**Bapu Watve :** In 1931 the first talkie film of Prabhat studio “Ayodhyecha Raja” अयोध्येचा राजा was released at that time, this studio came to Shahupuri from Mangalwar Peth, at Tanibai Kagalkar’s place.

**Mohammed :** At Tanibai Kagalkar’s place. There Saheb told me, “Mohammed, you start working on camera now.” From that time, he gave me the work of handling the camera. I asked him, “I am handling light plus you want me to work with the camera also.” He said, “I want you to handle the camera also.”

**Bapu Watve :** So, you were not keen on becoming an actor.

**Mohammed :** No, no. I was not interested in becoming an actor but I just wanted to work with any department.

**Bapu Watve :** Actually, You had such a good personality. You were quite suitable for the role of hero.

**Mohammed :** That is alright. But even I never felt this work is of less importance. How long I can work as an actor. Once I am aged, I will have to quit but this work will be ever, lifelong. When an actor becomes old, he loses his importance. This was my opinion so I wholeheartedly shifted my focus on this work. When I was shifted to the

camera department, I went and met Gaikwad and told him, “Keshukaka, we used to call Keshavrao-Keshukaka ..”

**Bapu Watve :** Keshavrao Gaikwad.

**Mohammed :** Saheb has sent me and has told me to work with you.” He said, “good, you have come. Let us start on work.” He asked me to call Avdoot and told him to give me the work.

**Bapu Watve :** So, Keshavrao Gaikwad was a cameraman and Avdoot and you had become his assistant.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Right. First Assistant Avdoot and second me. Like this, we were working distributing our work and working together near about 70.

**Bapu Watve :** After that, I remember in the film “Maya Machhindra” माया मच्छिंद्र, a third talkie film after “Agnikankan” अग्नी कंकण of Prabhat studio, a queen Tilottama comes on the horse and you were holding the reins of that horse. And you ....

**Mohammed :** Yes, it was a really funny story. It was like Durga Khote who had become a queen was hesitating to sit on the horse. She was feeling that he might drop her. Even that horse was a bit naughty. Shantarambapu call me and told me to dress up like a woman. I told the make-up man to dress me up like a woman as that country is ruled by a woman.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Tilottama’s country was ruled by ladies.

**Mohammed :** He dressed me like a woman and took me to the spot. Shantaram Bapu told me, “When queen sits on the horse and rides it, go along with the horse. Then she will reach the spot, get down and will go to her throne and sit on it. This is the shot. You have to just bring that horse to the spot.” I said, “ok, I will do it.” We did that shot



the same way, how he had explained. I brought the horse; the queen sits on it and she rides the horse and I ran along with it.

**Bapu Watve :** So, this way you have done a small feminine role.

**Mohammed :** Even I have done a small role in “Ayodhyecha Raja” अयोध्येचा राजा.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, you have done a small feminine role in Ayodhyecha Raja अयोध्येचा राजा.

**Mohammed :** Whenever it is the requirement of actor for a small role, I used to do. In the film, “Harishchandra Taramati”, I have done a small role at the scene of action. Even in “Maya Machhindra”, I have done all sorts of work and even help in photography. I had never said “NO” to any work.

**Bapu Watve :** Have you acted in “Agnikankan” अग्नी कंकण film?

**Mohammed :** I have not played any role but helped in other work like; lighting, photography.

**Bapu Watve :** But you had not done make-up. In the film “Sinhagad” सिंहगड?

**Mohammed :** In the film “Sinhagad” सिंहगड, the role of Tanaji was done ..

**Bapu Watve :** It was done by Shankarrao Bhosale.

**Mohammed :** The role of Shankarrao was played by Dhaiber.

**Bapu Watve :** Not Shankarrao, it is role of Shelarmama.

**Mohammed :** Yes, not Shankarrao but Shelarmama. The scene was like this that they had to cross the fort by climbing with the help of rope.

**Bapu Watve :** They had to climb the fort Kondhana with the help of rope.

**Mohammed :** So, at that time Keshavrao Dhaiber called me. As I have mentioned before I used to call him Keshukaka. He said, “Mohammed, you have to do my make-

up.” Even two-three more people asked me to do their make-up. I assured them to do the make-up. I had to climb on the edge of the hill to the make-up. Like that, I had done his make-up for the role of Tanaji and also looked after the other accessories. First, I did make-up of Tanaji, then ...

**Bapu Watve :** Then Jagatsingh.

**Mohammed :** No, then he told me to do the make-up of Shelarmama. Then, one by one I did make-up for Patil and others whoever was in a queue. Then, shooting took place. When everything was over, Keshavrao said, “good, you have done my job, otherwise I will have to do everything.” Then I went to the studio. There Rajarambapu means the father of Shantarambapu, called me. I went and met him. He said, “Mohammed, you got a price.” I asked him, “for what?” He said, “you got a price of Rs.5/- from the company. At the time of shooting the rope scene, whoever has climbed the rope, got Rs.5/- from the company as a price.” I said, “it is indeed a happy moment for me. Please give me that Rs.5/-.”

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, Rs.5/- had a great value.

**Mohammed :** A read great value. So, this way I got Rs.5/-. I have done many small jobs in the company.

**Bapu Watve :** I forgot to ask you that when you joined the Prabhat film company, how much salary they were giving you?

**Mohammed :** Oh, I forgot to mention to you that when I joined Prabhat, for the first four months, I was not paid the salary. I just knew that I have to work here. I never asked them neither they gave me any salary. You know Rajarambapu ..

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, Rajarambapu, the father of Shantarambapu used to look after accounts work of Prabhat studio.

**Mohammed :** Yes, right. He called me and said, “we have sanction Rs.9/- per month as a pocket expense. Come and take it.” After four months, he starting giving me Rs.9/- as a pocket expense. For the next many days, I was just getting Rs.9/- and after that, Rs.9/- was increased to Rs.13/-.

**Bapu Watve :** Could you manage in that Rs.9/-?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I could as we had a proper house and had our own farm. I was not having any addiction but only used to eat at the hotel and spend money on parties.

**Bapu Watve :** You were not having any addiction to cigarettes?

**Mohammed :** No, Cigarette or bidi, nothing of that sort.

**Bapu Watve :** When your salary became Rs.13/-?

**Mohammed :** When I was at Prabhat, means at Kolhapur.

**Bapu Watve :** I forgot to ask you one thing. When Keshavrao was acting in Sinhgad सिंहगड who was doing photography?

**Mohammed :** At that time, Avdoot was doing photography.

**Bapu Watve :** You didn't get a chance to do the photography at that time?

**Mohammed :** I got the chance afterwards. Now I was just allotted the work of arranging sets, taking charts etc. You asked me that when Dhaiber used to do photography. When he was acting in the film at that time, he even used to do photography.

**Bapu Watve :** When his turn to act is not there at that time he used to do the photography.

**Mohammed :** And when his shot is there at that time Avdoot used to take care of shooting. He had an assistant free of cost. This way the work was going on.

**Bapu Watve :** because he even had acted in the film “Bajar Battu” बजरबट्टू. At that time, Fattelal was doing photography. This way the work was taken care of.

After the film “Sinhagad” सिंहगड, you, I mean so say Prabhat Film company, had taken bold steps to produce coloured films. Till that time, nobody in India had taken such a bold step. At that time, it was very difficult to produce the colour film in India.

**Mohammed :** Yes, it was very difficult.

**Bapu Watve :** Because at that time there was no electricity. The shooting had to take in sunlight. Still, how did you manage to take colour photography? How did you get this technology and from where?

**Mohammed :** Shantarambapu, Damlemama, Saheb mama these people, used to keep negative films one upon one on the double magazine and used to run two films in small intervals.

**Bapu Watve :** for that have you done any arrangements with the Camera?

**Mohammed :** no, we had not done any arrangement but it was done in Germany. The gate of the camera (aperture) was sent to Germany to make necessary changes. They had fixed the trigger to that gate of the camera.

**Bapu Watve :** That means at a time two negative films used to run.

**Mohammed :** Yes, at a time two negatives of the films used to run. Reels of the same film used to run at a time. To run the same, after setting the films, you have to punch. When you join both the punch together, it is called (a word not audible). This way the

shooting used to take place. You can't (word not audible) without punching and after setting you have to punch.

**Bapu Watve :** This happened in the year, 1933. Nowadays, you need to do a special kind of lighting but at that time you were not having such kind of facility. You were using reflectors for lighting. So, you were implementing the same lighting technology for colour films that you were using for black-white.

**Mohammed :** yes, we were implementing the same technology for colour film. Accordingly, Dhaiber has done the whole film.

**Bapu Watve:** film "Sairandhari" सैरांध्री.

**Mohammed :** yes, Sairandhari सैरांध्री.

**Bapu Watve :** "Sairandri" सैरांध्री was completed and released but why the print was not good?

**Mohammed :** The reason was that firstly negatives were not processed properly and secondly, the gate which we had fixed on camera was creating a difference of minute millimetre. It was creating a double image but any one single image was appearing. The image used to look out of focus.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, because of that, the complete picture was looking out of focus.

**Mohammed :** Because there was a mistake with the gate. That gate was not fixed properly. When both the films were joined then one clear image could have come out. That fault remains with that camera forever. So, it was looking out of focus.

**Bapu Watve :** You didn't notice this fault till you sent this film for processing in Germany?

**Mohammed :** No, nobody notices this. When it went to Germany, they noticed it.

**Bapu Watve :** In India ..

**Mohammed :** The development of the negative of the film was done in India. Still, nobody noticed in India. Because dubbing and processing were done together. We could not find out, how many millimetres difference was there. When it went for printing that time, we got to know how many millimetres difference is there? When it went to Germany at that time, we have realised that we have done some mistakes. But then we were helpless.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, this full picture shooting was complete so can't do anything.

**Mohammed :** The shooting was done so we released the film as it is. Because of that mistake, the film couldn't succeed. Otherwise, the picture was really good.

**Bapu Watve :** The role of Bali and others were really incomparable. The best thing was Prabhat studio had the esteem privilege of producing the first Indian coloured film.

**Mohammed :** Yes. After that, they called us and declared that the shooting is over. They are shifting their studio to Pune and we all have to shift to Pune.

**Bapu Watve :** You all must be aware that they had taken place for the studio and the construction was going on.

**Mohammed :** Yes, even they specifically told me that I should come to Pune.

**Bapu Watve :** Tell me one thing, when did Damlemama left for Pune, it was after completing the shooting of the film "Sairabdhri" सैरांध्री or before that?

**Mohammed :** No, he immediately left after completing the shooting. He went and stayed in a bungalow at Deccan Gymkhana at Pune. They told Avdoot and me to go to Pune where the studio construction was going on and take a review of it. So, Avdoot

and I went to the construction site at Pune, stayed there for four to five days, took shooting of that construction site and came back to Kolhapur.

**Bapu Watve :** So, did you take the shooting of how they have done planning, how the construction is going on?

**Mohammed :** Yes, completely.

**Bapu Watve :** Then where did you stay at that time?

**Mohammed :** Avdoot and I stayed at Damle mama's bungalow.

**Bapu Watve :** So, it was like your own house.

**Mohammed :** Yes, like our own house, we stayed there, had tea and meal two times and also slept at the bungalow.

**Bapu Watve :** You can say, at that time, owner and servant had a kind of bonding with each other.

**Mohammed :** Yes, when we reached there, he immediately told us to stay with him in his bungalow.

**Bapu Watve :** You mean to say that he never felt you are an outsider.

**Mohammed :** Not at all. He always treated us as a part of his family.

**Bapu Watve :** That is why you felt like working with him.

**Mohammed :** very true. The company treated us so well that whatever work was allotted we did it wholeheartedly. Like that, we finished our shooting of the construction site and came back to Kolhapur. We were just thinking about what to do next. We had no work at Kolhapur then what will we do here? I also thought that as these people are shifting and I don't have any work here, it is better to go to Pune and

settle there. So, I came to Pune and went to the construction site. They told us that they have made arrangements for us to stay at the construction site.

**Bapu Watve :** Were you staying at the studio?

**Mohammed :** Yes, we were staying at the studio.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it completed by that time?

**Mohammed :** Yes, it was almost completed. The dressing department, make-up department etc. were completed. So, we were staying there. We used to eat food at the hotel.

**Bapu Watve :** When you shifted to Pune, how much salary you were getting?

**Mohammed :** At Pune, we were getting Rs.13/-, same as before. It was not increased. Whenever there is a birthday, we used to get Rupees two to four as increment.

**Bapu Watve :** you mean to say, for Prabhat studio's birthday?

**Mohammed :** Yes. Like that my salary went on increasing and reached to Rs.25/-. Then I thought of bringing my wife to Pune. So, I took place on rent at Deccan near Paranjape Diary. The rent was Rs.6/- for three rooms. At that time, everything was quite cheap.

**Bapu Watve :** This is in the year, 1934 ...

**Mohammed :** From there I used to walk down to my work. The studio was not very far; it was quite close. After I got an increment, my financial condition changed. There was a gentleman by the name "Tamhankar".

**Bapu Watve :** He was an actor of Prabhat and also used to look after the administration.



**Mohammed :** Yes. He had started chit-fund. We had to contribute little money every month. I took a loan from that chit-fund and bought “Philips” cycle for Rs.35/-

**Bapu Watve :** That was the best cycle.

**Mohammed :** It was the best plus cheap also. So, after buying that cycle, it was easy for me to go to work. Then slowly I repaid that loan. From my salary, I used to buy groceries from one particular grocer. Once he told me that you just give me the list and accordingly, I will send you the grocery. So, he used to send groceries at home on a credit. This way, I had regularized my routine and leading a happy life.

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, people used to think that this person is working for Prabhat then they can definitely give you a credit. Even a person working for Prabhat used to get a place easily. This way, the company had gain popularity.

**Mohammed :** Yes. Sometimes, there is a shortage of money by Rs.10 or Rs.20/- but he used to say, “no problem. Pay me later. Whatever, you need, take it. No problem.” This way, I had settled my family life.

**Bapu Watve :** But practically, when did you handle the camera?

**Mohammed :** I started working with Prabhat as Assistant Cameraman. We completed “Amrit Manthan” अमृत मंथन movie.

**Bapu Watve :** That was the first movie at Pune.

**Mohammed :** for “Amrit Manthan” अमृत मंथन, Dhaiber had handled the camera. Avdhoot was the first assistant and I was second. I used to be for focusing. This way, we worked together. Then a film “Kunku” कुंकू was produced.

**Bapu Watve :** no, in between there was one movie produced, “Chandrasena” चंद्रसेना. After “Amrit Manthan” अमृत मंथन, “Chandrasena” चंद्रसेना was produced.

**Mohammed :** Those were photographed by Dhaiber.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, correct but you had played the role of Pujari in Chandrasena चंद्रसेना. Maruti is holding the Pujari and you were shouting 'not me', 'not me' ...

**Mohammed :** No, I don't remember.

**Bapu Watve :** But I still remember.

**Mohammed :** Yes, yes now I remember.

**Bapu Watve :** Prithvi had acted as King Cong Maruti and he is holding you in his hand and you were shouting 'not me', 'not me' ..

**Mohammed :** Yes, that was done by me. I remember.

**Bapu Watve :** After that, a film "Dharmatma" धर्मात्मा of Bal Gandharv was produced.

**Mohammed :** At that time, I became Assistant Cameraman. Before that Daiber and Avdoot were doing.

**Bapu Watve :** After that film "Rajput Ramani" राजपूत रमणी was taken for direction.

**Mohammed :** Yes, and for that Avdhoot was the cameraman and I was assistant. After that, the film was produced ...

**Bapu Watve :** It was "Amar Jyoti" अमर ज्योती.

**Mohammed :** Was it?

**Bapu Watve :** You had taken one shot in Amar Jyoti अमर ज्योती which you must be remembering that queen is getting down the steps. At that time, there was no crane so you had tied the trolley to the pulley. When the queen starts walking, you were bringing the trolley down with the help of a pulley. And as she walks further, that trolley used to pass by her. This kind of shot had created curiosity in the industry that how it has been taken?

**Mohammed :** We had done that kind of arrangement.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it Shantarambapu's idea?

**Mohammed :** Yes, it was his idea.

**Bapu Watve :** One more thing I even remember is the dance of Seloti on drum bits of film "Dharmatma" धर्मात्मा.

**Mohammed :** (songs words not audible)

**Bapu Watve :** People were really wondering how the shooting must have taken. They had just passed the lights at the backside.

**Mohammed :** yes, only lights passed at the back on the curtain.

**Bapu Watve :** When the film "Amar Jyoti" अमरज्योती was completed then Damle and Fattelal started on the film "Tukaram" तुकाराम. Did you get the chance at that time?

**Mohammed :** I never got a chance to shoot a complete picture but in between few shots A complete picture I got to shoot was "Gopal Krishna" गोपाळकृष्ण.

**Bapu Watve :** Do you remember, there was some difficult shot and Damlekaka and Saheb mama told you, "oh Mohammed ..."

**Mohammed :** Yes, I remember. There was one shot that the cameraman was not able to shoot.

**Bapu Watve :** It was off, she banging the head.

**Mohammed :** Yes, of banging the head. The cameraman was not been able to shoot after around ten retakes. Damlemama was fade up. He stopped the shooting, looked at me and asked, "Mohammed, will take the shot?" I said, "yes, I will." Then I kept assistant Naik for focusing and took the camera to take the shot. He asked me

whether I want to take the rehearsal but I denied it. I told him that I don't require rehearsal. I checked everything is alright. She bangs her head and I took the shot.

**Bapu Watve :** Gauribai had played that role.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Gauribai had played. I took the shot and said, "ok." Damlemama said, "Mohammed, in the first shot, you are saying ok. Just check, we don't want to come again for this shot." I told him that I have taken it properly. He again asked me whether I had taken it properly. This way I had taken the shot in one go.

**Bapu Watve :** So, this was your first start. Since you were working with them, one thing I want to ask you is that previously Damlemama and Saheb mama were doing photography in Maharashtra, so during the shooting at Prabhat studio, were they helpful to you for lighting and decoration. Or have learnt anything about lighting from them? Were they giving any suggestions or instructions like how to give light or how to keep the camera angle?

**Mohammed :** no, no. He never told me anything of that sort or had not given any such kind of suggestions. They only were focusing on directions.

**Bapu Watve :** Did they ever gave suggestions on composition?

**Mohammed :** Yes, sometimes they used to give suggestions.

**Bapu Watve :** Since both of them were artists. Is it true that both of them had done directions?

**Mohammed :** Shantarambapu used to be there but Damlemama and Saheb mama both had given direction.

**Bapu Watve :** And Rajan Nene was assistant at that time.

**Mohammed :** Three of them had directed the film and I used to be their helper.

**Bapu Watve :** Did Shantarambapu ever came for the shooting of “Tukaram” तुकाराम?

**Mohammed :** Shantarambapu never came for the shooting. Sometimes, if there is any need to take the shot then he himself used to come. He had done this with many fi For example, at the time of the shooting of “Dnyaneshwar” ...

**Bapu Watve :** No, here I am referring to the film “Tukaram” तुकाराम. She comes there with a Bhakri (Roti) in her hand for Tukaram. I still remember that shot was taken by Shantarambapu. In his biography, he (Shantarambapu) has mentioned that I have done this entire “Tukaram” film. You were a cameraman so you must be knowing the truth.

**Mohammed :** No, no. Damle and Fattelal had done this film.

**Bapu Watve :** Avdhoot also said that they were helping each other. But it is not right to say that Damle and Fattelal have not done this film.

**Mohammed :** Yes, it is not right to say that they have not done. He (Shantarambapu) had given some suggestions.

**Bapu Watve :** Because at that time, everyone was supportive of each other.

**Mohammed :** “Tukaram” तुकाराम film was entirely done by Damle and Fattelal. Not only this, even other films like Dnyaneshwar and other successful films ..

**Bapu Watve :** Gopalkrishna

**Mohammed :** Gopalkrishna गोपाळकृष्ण. These all films both of them used to do. After that, even Sant Sakhu संत सखू they had done. If ever Shantarambapu feels like to do then only he used to come otherwise he doesn't.

**Bapu Watve :** Film “Tukaram” तुकाराम was super hit at that time.

**Mohammed :** Yes, very successful.

**Bapu Watve :** After this film, the film “Vanha” वहां which you had just earlier, was done by K.Narayan Kale. But it was not much successful but the sets of the films were very good. This film was about Arya and Aryans.

**Mohammed :** It was not much successful. After that, he had produced “Maza Mulga” माझा मुलगा. Even this was also not successful.

**Bapu Watve :** After this film “Vanha” वहां, “Kunku” कुंकू of Shantarambapu was released. I think, there was no chance for your photography at the time of “Kunku” कुंकू.

**Mohammed :** At the time of the film “Kunku” कुंकू, Avdhoot fell ill. So, I informed at the studio that Avdhoot will not be coming as he is not well. Then, Shantarambapu came and call me, “Mohammed, come here and take out that camera.” Since Bapu had ordered me, I quietly took out the camera, cleaned it and kept it ready. He just simply told me to do many things but never told me clearly to handle the camera. I had decided to do as per his instructions. He asked me to switch on the lights. I did that. In the end, he told me to handle the camera and take the shot. He explained to me that from which angle to move the camera and take a shot of both of them, of offering a cigarette.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh, That scene? He comes and offers a cigarette to his father.

**Mohammed :** Yes, that scene. Two retakes were done and on the third retake, the shot was taken. After that, we wind up everything and he called me upstairs. He told me to develop the real that day itself. After developing and sorting out the film, he wanted to see the printed film tomorrow at 9 am. I said, “alright.”

**Bapu Watve :** Prabhat had all the required technology.

**Mohammed :** So, accordingly we gave them an order to develop, print the film and asked them to keep it ready for the next day morning at around 9 am. I told him that I don't know how you do but I want to by the next day morning. Further told me that doesn't matter if you have to do it overnight. But they had kept everything ready. Then, we asked Konkane ..

**Bapu Watve :** Means operator Prabha Konkane,

**Mohammed :** Yes, I asked him whether the print is showing. He said, “yes, the print is ready and fix it on the real. You can inform Shantarambapu accordingly.” I went upstairs and told Bapu, “Anna, the print is ready.” He went down, checked the print and came back. Ordered everyone to get ready with make-up and all.

**Bapu Watve :** He didn't tell you after seeing the print whether it is done correctly or not?

**Mohammed :** He didn't say anything. I was tensed and was thinking that I have done something wrong. Because he had asked to do the same make-up, same setting and everything same like yesterday. Then he himself sat on the make-up man's chair and asked Mr. Date to sit in front of him. He was adjusting his moustaches. While checking yesterday's printing he realised that moustaches were completely white which he didn't want. He wanted the moustaches should be black with few white strings. So, he himself did that make-up again and took the shooting again.

**Bapu Watve :** So, the shooting you had done the previous day, he had done it again. You were under the impression that you have shoot wrongly.

## Part II

**Bapu Watve :** That means, at the time of the shooting of the film “Kunku” कुंकू, there was no mistake at your end. It was a make-up man’s mistake.

**Mohammed :** Yes, It was the make-up man’s mistake not mine. What he wanted is one or two white strings in black moustaches. Then he corrected his mistake and the shooting was done again. (One sentence is not audible)

**Bapu Watve :** After that, the next movie was “Gopalkrishna” गोपाळकृष्ण of Damle-Fattelal. Did you get an opportunity in that film?

**Mohammed :** Damle sir called me and told me, “Mohammed, you will have to take care of Gopalkrishna.” I said, “Ok, I will do.” Further, he told me that we will have to go to Delhi and also to Gograswadi, Mathura for shooting so take the camera and necessary things. Then I asked Damlemama, “do you want me as assistant for cameraman?” He said, “no, no, not as an assistant. I am an assistant. I will do everything. You just pack up.”

**Bapu Watve :** Who said this?

**Mohammed :** Damlemama said this. I did not know that Damlemama is going to click the photos. Then we all started. We visited Gograswadi, Mathura, Agra, and Delhi. We were moving around. Sahebmama was also with Damlemama. We came down to Mathura. He arranged the set in the hotel room. The hotel room was not having beds but ‘Charpoy’. That Charpoy is done by woven natural fibre ropes.

**Bapu Watve :** We call it ‘Bajli’.

**Mohammed :** Yes, it is Bajli and on that, you just have to spread the mattress and sleep on it. You will not get a bed of any sort.



**Bapu Watve :** This means it wasn't a luxurious bed.

**Mohammed :** No, you just can't relax and enjoy. We stayed there for a day and then Saheb mama said, "let us go to Fatehpur Sikri." He called a car. Then we went to see Fatehpur Sikri. I also wanted to see and even I was with them as a photographer. One thing I have noticed about Damlemama. He always used to buy fruits like a banana; oranges etc. from the market and keep that basket full of fruits in the car. And wherever we used to go by car, he used to eat on the way.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh, this is only his luxury.

**Mohammed :** Yes, what else do simple people expect?

**Bapu Watve :** That means they were really sober and simple people.

**Mohammed :** So this way, we saw Fatehpur Sikri. We stayed there for one day and after that, we started for Gograswadi.

**Bapu Watve :** Gograswadi of that area. Of Uttar Pradesh.

**Mohammed :** Yes, the one at Mathura. While going to Gograswadi, there is a river. Some cows were crossing the river. They were going straight.

**Bapu Watve :** Were the cows walking along the river?

**Mohammed :** Yes. They had got into the river and crossing it. But Damlemama said, "we need cows, who are coming down and not going across. Then we got down there, booked the boat and waited there for cows to return after grazing. We set up our camera. There were plenty of fruits to eat in the car.

**Bapu Watve :** That was all your meal?

**Mohammed :** Yes. We were all set with our camera and were waiting nearly for an hour or two till the cows return.

**Bapu Watve :** You were just sitting there for two to three hours till the cows return?

**Mohammed :** Yes, we were just sitting there. After some time, those cows started coming back. They got down in the river to return and we geared up for shooting. At that time, there were no batteries. You have to do it manually.

**Bapu Watve :** Was the camera IMO?

**Mohammed :** No. It was a Bulanov camera. Then Damlemama started panning (not sure of this word). I was doing tanning. The boat was going through the water. We reached across the river. Damlemama finally announced that we have done with the shooting.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, this shooting is shown in 'Gopalkrishna' film. It is really beautiful picturized. People were wondering how the shooting is taken and where it is taken. Good thing is that you still remember it.

**Mohammed :** After finishing that shooting, Damlemama said, "now we don't have to do anything. This is sufficient. Then we return to the lodge. The next day morning, we went to Delhi. There we visited Qutub Minor and other places. After that, he said we will have to go to Agra. So, we booked the car and went to Agra. There we saw the Taj Mahal. We were not having any important work. Only we had done shooting of cows. Sadanand Varerkar and Damlemama wanted to see the Taj Mahal and along with them, I got a chance to see the Taj Mahal. We sat there for some time. We stayed there for a day. The next day he told me, "We are heading towards Kashmir. You have finished your shooting. Take your camera and other belongings and go to Pune. We will organize everything for you. There was Dalsukh Pansare. He had a big office there. His elder brother was there. Damlemama told him to arrange for my return to

Pune. Then he organized my return trip to Pune. This way I return to Pune via Mumbai and Damlemama and others went to Kashmir.

**Bapu Watve :** One more sensitive shot you have taken like cows are walking down-home and the sun is setting.

**Mohammed :** That was taken at the same place.

**Bapu Watve :** Where, at Mathura? At the same place where the cows walking along the river.

**Mohammed :** Yes at Mathura.

**Bapu Watve :** That was a wonderful shot. The big herd of cows is walking down. Did you get this shot at the same place?

**Mohammed :** We captured it at the same place. After that, they sent me back to Pune. After coming back to Pune, I did a complete shooting of the film Gopalkrishna.

**Bapu Watve :** That means, shooting of the film Gopalkrishna गोपाळकृष्ण was almost done by you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I did. In that film, Ram Marathe was Krishna and Shanta Apte was Radha. The role of Rakshas was done by Ulhas.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, K.C. Ulhas He acted in the Hindi version and in Marathi Haribhau Lonari had acted. I have taken his interview when I had gone to Nashik. Ganpatrao was Kans and Hindi S. Prahlad was Kans.

**Mohammed :** That film was quite successful.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, You had taken good shots in that film. The cows scatter and attack Rakshas.

**Mohammed :** We had done this shooting at Gograswadi, an upper side of Kalyan.

**Bapu Watve :** It is the same Gograswadi of Dombivali.

**Mohammed :** We had done shooting there. There we find proper atmosphere for shooting

**Bapu Watve :** I was there amongst those Gopal.

**Mohammed :** Yes, you were there. He had some cows which he had tied them and he had ordered some more for shooting.

**Bapu Watve :** They had bought twenty-five cows more from Gograswadi. They had bought it prior to shooting.

**Mohammed :** They had taken shots of those cows and inserted them in the film. They had got the artificial heads of Kishi and also of his sisters done by Carpenter.

**Bapu Watve :** The scene was like this that they make attempt on Kishi.

**Mohammed :** Then they destroy the hut of a blacksmith. This all I had done it completely.

**Bapu Watve :** The shot of blowing the huts was taken very well.

**Mohammed :** When they make attempt on Kishi and his sister their heads blow up. Actually, we had made it artificially but, in that shoot, it is looking like a real one.

**Bapu Watve :** Was this Damlemama's mechanism?

**Mohammed :** We had a carpenter named Bawaji Mistry.

**Bapu Watve :** Babji Mistry.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Babji Mistry. He had done excellent carpentry.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it Damlemama's idea?

**Mohammed :** Damlemama and Sahebmama. Babji Mistry had made bulls and cows so well that they were looking real. They were so huge and looking real that we also used to feel scared of them.

**Bapu Watve :** The effect was really great.

**Mohammed :** These all shots were taken by me. The photos of that shots were displayed everywhere. That was my first film of whose photography was done by me.

**Bapu Watve :** But your name is not there. It is showing as an assistant.

**Mohammed :** Yes, my name is there as an assistant.

**Bapu Watve :** After that came, “Maza Mulga” माझा मुलगा of K. Narayan Kale.

**Mohammed :** It was quite a complicated film. Shantarambapu was spot boy. He asked me, “this film needs completion. Will you come to complete it?” I assured him that I will. He told me that there is a song which will finish the film.

**Bapu Watve :** One shot, one song.

**Mohammed :** He said that you have to do composition. It is a song by this lady, Shanta Hublikar, she is leaving. .... I set my camera on the trolley.

**Bapu Watve :** Do you remember the song?

**Mohammed :** No, I don't remember. I had done this shooting but I don't remember the song.

**Bapu Watve :** Majmaj, firuni chhalashi ka - मज मज फिरुनी छळशी का ?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I remembered now.

**Bapu Watve :** You know, Dilip Kumar still remembers this song. He had told me and even he sang this song. Why I remember it is because he sang it in Marathi.

**Mohammed :** You can't compare me with him. Whereas the songs are a concern, I am bad at it. We have done shooting of many films so I remember it for the time being and then we forget it. It is not possible to remember each and every song. At the time of rehearsal, whenever he used to say start, I started the camera. I used to keep my camera moving. He used to come and check but never said a single word. Whenever a shot used to start then he used to stop it. Whatever shots I have taken, it was taken in combination. He just watched me and never reacted. If I start the shooting at any time, he will ask to stop the shooting. He wouldn't say a single word but stop the shooting and asked to do it again. Then I concluded that Shantarambapu never says appreciative words for good deeds. He never praised anyone.

**Bapu Watve :** It was his nature.

**Mohammed :** Or maybe; he must be feeling if I appreciate then ....

**Bapu Watve :** It will be like giving unnecessary importance.

**Mohammed :** He must be thinking that if I praise someone then they might sit on my head. Whatever it may be, you can't conclude on it.

**Bapu Watve :** As far as he is not criticizing then everything is alright.

**Mohammed :** It was all on him. If he likes something then he wouldn't say anything. And if I have done something wrong then immediately, he will say, "what have you done?" This is what I had realised. But I kept quiet. I completed that song. It went to a laboratory for development. Then he saw it in the studio but didn't say anything to me. Afterwards, I went separately to the theatre to see and I found the composition was done properly. I thought since he has not said anything that means it is my acknowledgement receipt. When Avdhoot used to do the composition and so do I.

But when Avdhoot used to do the shooting and I am on focus, at that time Shantarambapu suddenly used to get up and starts instructing him. He used to say, “Loosen the keys.” Avdhoot used to do that. Even at the time of composition, he used to say, “do like this.” He used to instruct like this. That time I had realised that Anna has good knowledge of composition and also, he has knowledge of everything. He was a great man.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, He was a great man.

**Mohammed :** I salute him. In this film industry, he knew everything, from the camera, lighting to acting. For everything, he will give proper suggestions and guidance. He has studied everything in depth.

**Bapu Watve :** In this contest, he is simply great. In fact, the director of the film “Maza Mulga” माझा मुलगा was K. Narayan Kale but the song was taken by Shantarambapu. The idea behind this was that the film of Prabhat studio should go well. It was the love for Prabhat studio.

**Mohammed :** Even I also realised that since he is not saying anything that means whatever I am doing is correct. Doesn't matter if he has not appreciated it.

**Bapu Watve :** Since he has not criticized me or been angry with me that means everything is alright. After that “Manoos” film was done. The photography of film “Manoos” माणूस was done by Avdhoot. Did you get a chance to do anything for “Manoos” माणूस film? Have you done photography of “Manoos माणूस?”.

**Mohammed :** No, I couldn't get chance to do photography of film “Manoos” माणूस but I had arranged set-up, focus, lighting or other things. If the lighting man is absent then Avdhoot used to send someone to call me. I used to tell the person whom he had sent

that I am on leave. But he used to insist that you are being called urgently. I used to understand that they are not able to manage the work. So, I immediately used to resume the work. If you see, I could never get leaves.

**Bapu Watve :** Because they had realised your importance.

**Mohammed :** When I was doing lighting work, Keshavrao Gaikwad used to call me. I always called Keshavrao Gaikwad “Keshukaka”. He used to ask me whether I have finished lighting work then come here. I used to say that only a little bit is left. Then he used to give me instructions on lighting. As soon as he sees me checking the lights Keshukaka used to call me. Then whoever used to be there; maybe it is Damlemama, Saheb mama or Shantarambapu, I just used to complete my job of taking the shot.

**Bapu Watve :** It seems, in your lighting work, Keshavrao Gaikwad had guided you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, he was a great help to me.

**Bapu Watve :** But after “Rajput Ramani” राजपूत रमणी film, Keshavrao left Prabhat Film Company. I think that is the biggest mistake he had done in his life.

**Mohammed :** His film “Rajput Ramani” राजपूत रमणी was not done well at the box office.

**Bapu Watve :** After completing the film “Manoos” माणूस then Damle and Fattel did film “Sant Dnyaneshwar” संत ज्ञानेश्वर.

**Mohammed :** I have done photography of this “Sant Dnyaneshwar” संत ज्ञानेश्वर film.

**Bapu Watve :** Did they call and tell you to do this film?

**Mohammed :** Yes.

**Bapu Watve :** I think; especially, Damlemama and Saheb mama, always wanted you. They had great faith in you.



**Mohammed :** That is true that Damlemama had faith in me and he specially called me and told me to do it. Even he had given me “Gopalkrishna” गोपाळकृष्ण.

**Bapu Watve :** That means, he loved you like his own son.

**Mohammed :** He loved me more than his own son. He had trust in me and my work so every time he used to insist me to do the photography.

**Bapu Watve :** He was knowing what kind of work you do so he always appreciated your work. So, you have done the entire film “Dnyaneshwar”?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I have done complete shooting of “Dnyaneshwar” संत ज्ञानेश्वर. Not a single person, not even Avdhoot had helped me in this. Whatever the shots are in that film like ‘people are going in the galaxy was all done by me.

**Bapu Watve :** Have you taken all the trick scenes?

**Mohammed :** In that film, there are shots of ‘wall flying’, for that Prahlad had used some chemical.

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, Harbans Singh was there.

**Mohammed :** To do these trick scene, they had used some chemical. I had asked him many times how they are doing that solution in laboratory. But till date, they didn’t tell me that secret. If they would have taught me that secret then I would have been master of all. I did all other things except that. We used to do shooting on green lights. Then they were bleaching that film and using that double film they were creating the image. In that, they were very expert. I accept it. The lion comes, children are hiding.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, children are on the way to Phaltan.

**Mohammed :** On top, the train is passing. Children are going by road. These all-main tricky shots are taken by them. I appreciate it. Other shots are mine.

**Bapu Watve :** Namdeo had started and trees are moving aside to give him the way to go ahead. Were those shots taken by you?

**Mohammed :** That was done by me but it is of not much importance. Wall flying scene was very important.

**Bapu Watve :** They have taken this shot from a top angle. Wall is flying in the air and exactly below that community, people are standing on the road.

Mohammed Saheb, I remember one more thing. When Dnyaneshwar Maharaj arrives at Alandi. Hari ala re, Hari ala re हरी आला रे हरी आला रे this song was taken. This shooting was done only in the morning because you could get lighting at only one side.

**Mohammed :** Yes, you are right.

**Bapu Watve :** It was only possible for a company like Prabhat at that time.

**Mohammed :** If you are at one spot for shooting and if the sky is not clear. Then you don't get sufficient light. Damlemama, Sahebmama and Shantaramabu, any of them, would wait till the rays come to the spot. They used to wait till they don't get a beautiful scene on the camera and also used to make artists and others wait. I am surprised to note and would like to share that if our Shantaramabu didn't like something, he will take as many retakes as possible. I have done charts of negatives of his films; it was not less than two lakhs per movie. He was using so many cartons. But maybe he is spoiling many negatives but out of that, he used to make a beautiful film.

**Bapu Watve :** Comparing to him, Damlemama was misusing fewer negatives.

**Mohammed :** Yes (laughing). Damlemama, Saheb mama and Shantarambapu these people were really great. They had studied everything in depth. They were not bothered about negatives getting waste but were concerned about making a good film. I have gained that knowledge by working with them. That is the reason, I could take a scene in the films like Maya Machchindra माया मछिंद्र, (film name not audible). Working under their guidance and by observing them, I could take the shots as they could. So much of the knowledge they have given me.

**Bapu Watve :** You were lucky to have such kind of Guru (teacher) in your life and even it was your luck that you got such a good organisation to work with.

**Mohammed :** Because of this organisation, I could succeed in life. An ordinary person like me has learnt which one is ordinary photography and which one is trick photography. No other cameraman must have learnt this; even there is no one in the Marathi film industry. I was the only one who has achieved this. Sulochanabai had mentioned it to many people and told them that to learn from me. She further instructed them that till the time I am with them; they should learn it from me.

**Bapu Watve :** You mean that she wanted them to learn how to do trick photography from you?

**Mohammed :** Yes, Sulochanabai had told this to many people, many times. Whenever a topic used to come out, she used to mention this to spot boys or other people.

**Bapu Watve :** Raja Nene was also quite a useful person to Damlemama and Fatteh Lal.

**Mohammed :** He always worked with them, no doubt.

**Bapu Watve :** He was quiet intelligent. Even he had worked with Shantarambapu.

**Mohammed** : Raja Nene had done 10 O'clock (film Das Baje दस बजे) with Shantarambapu.

**Bapu Watve** : You had mentioned that one incident at the time of Dnyaneshwar. Shantarambapu was watching Dnyaneshwar with ..

**Mohammed** : That I will tell you later but one day an unimaginable thing had happened. Sahebmama was busy with Dnyaneshwar. At that time while editing, Shantarambapu had come out with an idea. He adds this scene in that, "A lady who was a devotee of Dnyaneshwar, used to treat him as a God. "

**Bapu Watve** : For this kind of love we call it Platonic love.

**Mohammed** : Yes. When he had gone to take a bath, at that time, she comes to meet him or you can say, to see him (to take darshan). When he takes bath and comes out to change the clothes. Here Shantarambapu had added very sensible shots. He has shown that when Dnyaneshwar comes out and starts changing his Dhoti (clothes), she hides behind the tree and closes her eyes. After finishing changing the clothes, he goes away from the place leaving his footprints on the steps. Then that lady comes out from the hiding place and does pooja by offering flowers on those footprints. This shooting was done by Damlemama but Shantarambapu had instructed him to take this scene. The picture was really good.

**Bapu Watve** : No, not this. You had told me that Shantarambapu had told Avdhoot ....

**Mohammed** : Once Shantarambapu was doing editing work on my photography. My photography is always good so there was never any problem with my editing. There was no mistake in my photography. Avdhoot went there. As soon as Shantarambapu

sees Avdhoot, he called him, “Avdhoot, please come here. See, what that child has done.”

**Bapu Watve :** He was mentioning you as “Child.”

**Mohammed :** Shantarambapu always appreciated my work.

**Bapu Watve :** He mentioned it to Avdhoot, that was a certificate of appreciation for you.

**Mohammed :** Avdhoot came and told me that Bapu was praising your photography and criticising mine. I console him by saying to ignore it. He started telling me, “Whatever photography you are doing he never criticises but he always criticises mine.” I console him and told him that to follow his instructions. He must be feeling bad as I was junior to him. I had started working under him and my work is getting appreciated.

**Bapu Watve :** Let me remind you of an occasion, see if you remember. The film “Dnyaneshwar” was the first Indian movie which was shown in America. The very famous director of that time Frank Capra has written an article on the cinematography of the film “Dnyaneshwar”. In that, he had mentioned that “a big applaud to Prabhat” for making such a technically sound movie at the remote place of Pune. Further, he had mentioned there that the music, photography, technique, take-in and also all other things are incomparable. At that time, Keshavrao Bhole had called and informed you that, “Mohammed, Frank Capra has also praised your photography and this is the proof of it.” Do you remember this?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I do remember.

**Bapu Watve :** Keshavrao Bhole was the subscriber of it and he used to buy that cinematography magazine.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Keshavrao had told me this. I told him that he has appreciated our photography and written in that magazine, what more we want? He always used to appreciate my work.

**Bapu Watve :** But your name was not there for the film “Sant Dnyaneshwar” संत ज्ञानेश्वर as a cameraman.

**Mohammed :** Yes. After doing such hard, they had not mentioned my name. Not only Dnyaneshwar but many other films ...

**Bapu Watve :** For Dnyaneshwar, your name was mentioned as an assistant cameraman. Did you meet Damlemama at that time?

**Mohammed :** No, I didn't meet him. After Dnyaneshwar, one more movie was released.

**Bapu Watve :** No. At the time of Dnyaneshwar, you had asked them that they could have given your name.

**Mohammed :** Not at that time. I asked them at the time of the film “Sant Sakhu” संत सखू. Because I felt that there is no sense in asking now.

**Bapu Watve :** Keshavrao Bhole was knowing that you have done photography so he showed you that magazine. After film “Dnyaneshwar”, film “शेजारी” of Shantarambapu was released.

**Mohammed :** About film “Shejari शेजारी”, I remember, Shantarambapu was directing and I was the assistant. (Sentence is not audible)

**Bapu Watve :** Balkrishna was there. Manohar Kulkarni was also there.

**Mohammed :** Bhagvat was also in that team.

**Bapu Watve :** Ganpat Kale was there.

**Mohammed :** Yes. Gokul was there and many more. Even Mukul was also there. I had many assistants. At the time of the shooting of this film “शेजारी”, Avdhoot again felt sick. We had to do the complete scene of a dam and the lady’s song.

**Bapu Watve :** Radhika Chakrabhole

**Mohammed :** He told me, “you have to take it”. I said, “alright”. When everyone arrived, he told me to do the lighting. Then we took one ladder, and on top of that ladder, we had kept another upside-down ladder. On that, we had kept the camera. Below that, the trolley was moving and on top, we had to take shots. Date and Gajanan....

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Jahagirdar as Mirza.

**Mohammed :** This shooting was going on at night. Shantarambapu and I, along with one assistant, were taking shots at the top. We completed taking those shots as Chandrakant dies, (inaudible) Whatever the shots pertaining to the dam, Shantarambapu had put it on me to complete. You must be knowing, there was someone by the name of Singh.

**Bapu Watve :** Veer Singh.

**Mohammed :** yes, Veer Singh. He used to come and tell us, “Babuji, everything is ready. You can cut it whenever you want to, we have kept it ready.” Then I used to tell him that we will be taking it tomorrow. He used to say that everything is ready, whenever you want to do the wiring. Even I used to do that wiring. Then we used to keep the gun powder in between stones to blast. Then I used to keep the camera at

high speed. Like that we had done blast two to three times. When the first time we did the blast, it got over within one and half minutes to two minutes. We were wasting a role of nearly ten feet. We were taking in such high speed. It used to be four-time higher speed. Then we were developing and printing it and then we were showing it. Then Saheb mama and Damlemama used to check it and bring out the mistakes. They used to say, "Mohammed, you have taken a good shot but water has not splashed very high. Even those dolls how they have fallen from the steps or has happened something else and where they have gone is not seen. It has to be shown clearly. I think we have to take it again." Then I had to organise everything again. I had to again arrange stones, bricks. Again, Singh had to do his arrangement.

**Bapu Watve :** I think Dalvi was there to help you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Dalvi was there to help me even two more assistants were there. We had made a big roof with big wooden planks. On that, we had made a hole and fixed the camera. I was standing at one side. From keeping time to taking the shot was my responsibility. Sometimes, it used to months to complete the scene. When the koyba used to break, that time they used to blow the horn for three to four minutes. It was a warning for dam bursting and everyone should be alert. Stone might come down. At that time, people knew that Mohammed is going to take the shooting.

**Bapu Watve :** Did you actually blast?

**Mohammed :** Yes. We used to bring three big stones from the backside hill and we used to make holes in that and fix the pipes. It was all fixed with cement. This all we used to burst. This all we had shown the second time and they had come out with



some mistake. We were left with no choice but to do it the third time. Then the third time, we created the same scene with keeping those dolls and blasted. It was done very well. Even the water splashed high, dolls were fallen properly. After seeing this both, Damlemama and Saheb mama, were very happy and said, “Mohammed, this is what we wanted. Everything is perfect.”

**Bapu Watve :** That means, shooting of bursting of the dam was done by you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, that shooting was with me. This kind of job was always given to me. Whatever the difficult jobs were always given to me. If there is any problem arises then they used to call me. (laughs) Then I used to come with my bags and baggage. This way I have done in the film “शेजारी”. Then I told you that song “लख लख चंदेरी तेजाची सारी दुनिया. That song was changed afterwards and matched in the film.

**Bapu Watve :** That is why, Shantarambapu quit Prabhat.

**Mohammed :** Yes, he quit and along with Avdoot and many other. After two to three days Damlemama called me.

### Part 3

**Bapu Watve :** Damlemama called on 3<sup>rd</sup> day and what did he tell you?

**Mohammed :** He told me, “Mohammed since these people have left us, I am giving you all the responsibility of camera. So, he appointed me as a department head and he handed over all the keys to me. I was denied but he said, “I won’t be able to give you anything and you will have to take off everything now.” This way he trusted all the responsibilities on me and I became head of the department. Now, all work pertaining to the shooting came to me.

**Bapu Watve :** No but you have forgotten to brief on the movie “Sant Sakhu संत सखू”.

After completing the film “Shejari शेजारी”, “Sant Sakhu संत सखू” was produced.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Right, “Sant Sakhu संत सखू” was produced.

**Bapu Watve :** After that Shantarambapu left Prabhat company.

**Mohammed :** I had done complete shooting of “Sant Sakhu संत सखू” but they had not mentioned it anywhere. Then I had an argument with Avdoot on this topic.

**Bapu Watve :** With whom, Avdoot?

**Mohammed :** Yes. You can say, we nearly fought. We were fighting on the ground floor and so Shantarambapu asked as to who is fighting. A person standing there told Shantarambapu that Mohammedsaheb and Avdhootsaheb are fighting. He guessed that this fighting must be because of the cameraman’s name and so, he walked out of the office. After that, I just felt that I must inform this Damlemama. When I went to meet Damlemama, Sahebmama was also sitting there. I told Damlemama about our quarrel and told him that whatever movie’s shooting I have done alone; it has nothing to do with Avdhoot. So, there should be my name. Even, for “Sant Sakhu संत सखू” my name is not mentioned. Damlemama quietly told me, “Mohammed, what you are saying is correct. Your name should be there. But remember one thing, if I asked them to mention your name then we owners will fight amongst each other. That is the reason, I have not spoken till date. I am very much aware of your skillset. Your name should have come. Actually, we should have given your name but we can’t do it as Avdhoot will inform this to the owner, who is his brother. Then we will have quarrels. Now you don’t think about this. Let them give him credit by putting his name. But henceforth, I will give credit to both of you by mentioning both the names

as Cameraman. Then Damlemama solved this problem by mentioning our combined names.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it like Cinemaphotographer E. Mohammed and Cinemaphotographer - Avdhoot?

**Mohammed :** Yes, both the names appeared separately. After that, I didn't talk to him much. When both the names appeared then why should I fight. After few days, I had given one month leave application to Damlemama. He asked me, "why do you want leaves for one month?" I told him that there was not much work so I want to go to my native place. I have not gone for a long period. So, I came to Miraj. I had decided to rest for a month. Three days must have passed and on the fourth day, I received a letter from Damlemama. He had stated, "Mohammed, though I have sanctioned leave of one month but I don't think you need to stay there for long. The things will happen as per your wish so come down immediately. I will explain everything once you are here." After reading that letter, I started feeling, since Damlemama has said that means I must go back. When I reached there, I realised that some heated argument had taken place between Damlemama, Saheb mama and Shantarambapu.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, yes. A heated argument had taken place.

**Mohammed :** After that, they all had left.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, I remember that date on which Shantarambapu had left. It was 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1942.

**Mohammed :** Ok. Ok. I don't remember.

**Bapu Watve :** I remember it very well.

**Mohammed :** When I went there, Damlemama welcomed me by saying, “Mohammed, good you have come. Now everything will happen as per your wish. You wanted your name mentioned independently, now it will be done. Now we are starting the shooting of a new film. You will be handling everything independently. Raja Nene will be directing it. The name of the film is “Daha Wajta दहा वाजता ”. I knew it is in my hand now, since Shantarambapu and others had left the company. Then the photography of the film “Daha Wajta दहा वाजता ”, was handled by me independently without any assistance.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, I have seen it.

**Mohammed :** After completing this film, I had checked the sorting and (inaudible) of this film personally at Prabhat Talkies.

**Bapu Watve :** Prabhat talkies at Pune?

**Mohammed :** I used to watch two to three reels and check if everything is alright. One day, Damlemama and Saheb mama called me and said, “Mohammed, we want to see what (inaudible) you have done. Take us to the Prabhat and show us”. I said, “alright.” Then I called at Prabhat talkies and told Mr. Kulkarni, the manager of the studio that tomorrow I am coming along with Damlemama to watch (inaudible), inform the operator accordingly to keep it ready.” He said, “Don’t worry. I will keep it ready.” The next day, Damlemama, Saheb mama and me, together went there. Nobody else was there. We all watching the film. In that film, I had taken shots of one song outdoor and also the same song indoor. For indoor shooting, we had given lights and for outdoor, we had taken in sunlight. And both the shots had combined.

**Bapu Watve :** You had matched outdoor and indoor shots.

**Mohammed :** When Damlemama saw that he patted on my back and said, “what you have done, we can’t make it out that you have combined the indoor and outdoor shots. You can’t make out which one is taken inside and which one is taken outside. It is taken so well. You have done an excellent job. He praised me. After listening to this, I was really relieved. Then they take dates to release it in Bombay. Damlemama asked me to give reels for Mumbai. He said some name of the theatre.

**Bapu Watve :** Central Cinema.

**Mohammed :** Yes. It is Central Cinema. He asked me to give him a Marathi copy and Hindi copy as well.

**Bapu Watve :** In Hindi, it was “Das Baje.”

**Mohammed :** Yes, and in Marathi “Daha Wajta दहा वाजता”. I said okay and further told him that let me handle everything. I asked him to call Mr. Karkhanis, Mr. Kulkarni who handles Hindi and Mr. Kulkarni from the printing department and inform them that they have to follow me.

**Bapu Watve :** To co-operate with you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, to co-operate with me. Damlemama was very sure about me. He said, “no problem” and he telephoned three of them and called them in the studio. In front of me, he gave them instructions to co-operate with me and told them that let Mohammed take out the prints for Bombay. Mr. Kharkhanis agreed to give me prints. Even Mr. Kulkarni took out two prints as per my instructions. I took those prints and checked them at Prabhat theatre. Then I used to call Mr. Kulkarni and instruct accordingly. Amongst all those reels, I just took out two fresh prints, one in Marathi and one in Hindi. I managed to fill only two to three containers but when other

people used to take out the prints, they used to fill containers in line. Damlemama asked me, “how many containers you have filled.” I told him that only three containers. He was really surprised. He said, “no problem. Whatever prints you have taken, I want to see them.” I told (name not audible) to show the prints to Damlemama. As usual, he was ready. I didn’t stay there as I was really bored watching the same film again and again.

**Bapu Watve :** Rather you were fade up.

**Mohammed :** I was just passing the time in the office and I received a call from the theatre saying Damlemama has called. Immediately I went there, knocked on the door and walked in. As I entered the theatre, Damlemama rang the bell to stop the film. As the bell rang, the projector stopped and the lights switched on. Damlemama said, “What have done Mohammed. The whole picture looks black. What time of print you have taken?” I said, “Damlemama, what you are saying is right. But don’t go on that. These prints are not for Pune theatre. It is for Bombay theatre. These films will look black in Pune theatre. You must see it at Bombay theatre. Baburao Pai was sitting there. Long back, someone had a complaint at the time of film “Sant Sakhu”, the prints were looking like cotton. At that time, even I had told him to ask for a new print. That time, Baburao also told me that it is not possible. I had told myself that, the faces of the actors look like, cotton balls stick to their faces. Baburao was sitting there and listening to the conversation. He said, “yes, what Mohammed is saying is right. I remember, he had complained to me at the time of Sant Sakhu.”

**Bapu Watve :** Baburao also had experienced this.

**Mohammed** : He said that at that time, he had complained. So, I am very much sure, that whatever he has taken out of print, must be correct. Since he is assuring, tomorrow I will check personally it at Central Cinema at Mumbai and I will confirm it telephonically.” Baburao left for Bombay. Damleamama and I remain in Pune. The next day, after the first show, Baburao called and told Damlemama to congratulate me. Whatever prints he has taken out are showing good results all over Bombay. He has taken out such good prints that no one can imagine. I have seen the first print then definitely the second one must be the same. Tell Mohammed that it is really good, there is no need to make changes. Immediately, Damlemama told me whatever Baburao had said. I said, “I had told that those prints are not suitable for Pune.” Damlemama and Saheb mama both were very happy.” The funny thing is that, in Bombay, at that time, whoever the technicians and cameramen, rushed to see this film. The name of the film was spread so rapidly and everyone was wondering that there is such a good photographer in India. Someone can do much better photography than in foreign countries. Even it was mentioned in the newspapers that the photography is beautiful as we see in crystal. My photography was appreciated by everyone. Suddenly I became very famous for the film “Daha Vajta दहा वाजता”. I was suddenly gone on top. Everyone started saying, “Mohammed accha photography karta hai”. Damlemama told me to go to Bombay. After reaching Bombay, all cameramen started asking me, “how you have done, just tell us. What have put in that? To do such qualitative photography what have you done?” After doing photography of “Daha Vajta दहा वाजता”, I reached on the top of the photographers' list. At the time, there were famous photographers named, Divecha ...

**Bapu Watve :** Dwarka Divecha ..

**Mohammed :** Yes. He used to call me “Guru”. Dwarka Divecha said, “Babuji, I don’t have that skill of planning, lighting or the grade which you have. I can’t do that.” I said, “What are you talking Divecha?” He said, “Everyone in Bombay, praises my photography but you are much above me. Even in a foreign country, they will not spare you.”

**Bapu Watve :** He liked your photography.

**Mohammed :** Yes, he liked it very much. Everyone had liked it. Even it had come in newspaper also. No newspaper had written bad about me. Damlemama was very happy. He told me to go to Mumbai. So, I went to Mumbai for eight days.

**Bapu Watve :** Did he asked you to go to Mumbai along with your family?

**Mohammed :** No, not along with the family. My wife wanted to come with me and to stay there for a month. I told her that it is not possible but you all can go to Mumbai. I have a shooting of the film “Ram Shastri रामशास्त्री .” (a line is not audible) He (Nene) had appointed a separate cameraman not me. I got a big picture named “Ram Shastri रामशास्त्री”.

**Bapu Watve :** It was a very big film.

**Mohammed :** I started working on it. The starting of the film was with me.

**Bapu Watve :** That means the beginning of the movie, the first half was with you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, starting the movie. While shooting this film ...

**Bapu Watve :** Raja Nene, Keshavrao Bhole, Shankarrao Damble

**Mohammed :** Balasaheb Phatak.



**Bapu Watve :** Anant Mane, Dharmadhikari, Shantaram Athavale, all these people left.

**Mohammed :** I was left alone. Everyone got notice but I didn't.

**Bapu Watve :** On top of it, Damlemama was very sick at that time. That is why, everything went wrong. You didn't receive the notice?

**Mohammed :** No, I was the only one who didn't receive the notice but everybody else.

**Bapu Watve :** Even the technicians.

**Mohammed :** As everybody left and so ..... I couldn't stay back. There was no fun left to work.

**Bapu Watve :** Your colleagues left and Damlemama was bedridden. Then you must not be feeling to stay back with Prabhat.

**Mohammed :** Then I decided to resign. I told Nemade that to inform them of my resigning and ask them to relieve me.

**Bapu Watve :** You must have felt very bad leaving Prabhat.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I felt very bad. They hold a meeting and ask Vasu, not Vasu, somebody else..

**Bapu Watve :** That was Nemade. Nemade was working as an accountant.

**Mohammed :** He told the cashier to settle my account.

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, Nageshrao Joshi was there.

**Mohammed :** I took my salary and came here. Here, two - three days passed and one gentleman had come to meet me from Pune. He told me that the person who makes films, Nana, has called you. So, I went back. There Rajendra told me that we need to go to Mumbai. They are producing film "Taramati तारामती".

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Ramniklal Mohanlal.

**Mohammed :** Rajendra told me that the photography of this film will be done by you and me. I had to work somewhere, so I join them. I was getting the same salary. I accepted whatever it was and worked with them for eleven months. There I met Shobhana Samarth, Thengadi, (name not audible). Palli was Vishwamitra.

**Bapu Watve :** You had done “Bachchon ka Khel”?

**Mohammed :** I have not done. That was done by Bhagwat. Before the film “Bhachchon Ka Khel” was produced, I had already left.

**Bapu Watve :** where?

**Mohammed :** At Lahore. When the last set of film Taramati तारामती was left. The last set was of Darbar of Indra Dev. I was to end the movie with this last set and another film was going to start.

**Bapu Watve :** The same “Bachhon ka ..

**Mohammed :** I had a friend named “Mhatre” from Bombay. He was to do film with some “Kishori”....

**Bapu Watve :** Roop Kishori.

**Mohammed :** They were in need of a cameraman. Mhatre was the assistant director of that film and he was my friend. They had told Mhatre that we require a good cameraman. So, he was searching accordingly. Many People told him that E. Mohammed’s shooting’s last scene is going on and he is getting free. He will be available for you. Mhatre telephoned in the office and talked to Bhausahab. Bhausahab told me that they need a cameraman and they have offered you that position. He asked me whether I would like to accept the offer. I told him that I

accept the offer but on one condition. I will not go to meet him unless he agrees to my condition. If he agrees to it then I will go and meet him. He asked me, “what are my conditions?” I told him that I want a total salary of Rs.1500/-. I will not pay income tax. To and fro expenses will be borne by him. Wherever it may be. It may be in London. Lodging and Boarding expenses will be paid by him. If he agrees to it then I will join. You inform him of all my terms and conditions, if he agrees to it then I will come for the discussion. Mhatre told me that he will talk to him and will inform me tomorrow accordingly on the telephone. I told him that if I won't receive the call then I will understand that he doesn't agree to my terms. The next day, Mhatre called and told me that he wants to meet you. I told him that he has to agree with my terms then only I am ready to meet him. I asked him whether there was any discussion on my terms? Then I told him to accompany me to meet him as I won't be able to find out his room at Taj. Then he came to pick me up and took me to meet him. We went to Taj, climbed the steps. Mhatre knocked on the door and opened it. There, Roop Kishori and one Marwadi person was sitting. As we entered the room, Mhatre told Roop Kishorilal, “I was telling you about E. Mohammed, he is the same person.” He looked at me from top to bottom and welcomed me. With great affection, he offered me to sit and further said, “give me some time. I will just finish this and join you.” Further, he instructed Mhatre to arrange for tea and biscuits. Mhatre left the room to arrange for tea and snacks. Roop Kishori finished his discussion within fifteen minutes. He settled his payment as the other person had done one set at Bombay. After finishing tea and snacks, we got up and started walking towards the Gate way of India.

## Part 4

**Bapu Watve :** Mohammed Saheb, what did you discuss when the producer from Lahore, Roop K. Shorey and you reached to Gate way of India.

**Mohammed :** He asked me that how can you work it out? I have not paid such a high salary to anyone. Why are you demanding so much? I told him that it is his wish to give or not but I am demanding because not that I am E. Mohammed but I know what I am worth of? You must have seen my work. If you have seen my work then you will definitely know what I am worth for? Have you seen my movies? He told me that he has seen many movies done by me. Whatever movies you have done, I have seen all of them. I don't have any complaints about your work but I am concerned about the salary. I told him that he doesn't have to worry about anything. If you are ready with my terms then I will make a contract right now. I am ready to come with you anywhere for shooting, it may be out of India. Then He said, "Do one thing. Come in the morning at nine o'clock and sign the contract." I was very happy. I greeted him and walked out. From there I went to Andheri. We all were staying at Andheri. There my friend named, Balsaheb Phatak was staying there.

**Bapu Watve :** Manager of Prabhat.

**Mohammed :** I told him everything that he has called me to sign the contract. I further told him that he will be paying Rs. 1,500/- salary and I will not be paying any tax on it. Even the rest of the things will be taken care of by Roop K Shorey. Bal told me that when you are going to get so much salary why don't you join.

**Bapu Watve :** How much salary you were getting in Ramniklal & Mohanlal?

**Mohammed :** I was getting Rs.600/- there.

**Bapu Watve :** Now it has become two and a half percent more.

**Mohammed :** Next day morning, I got up and went to Hotel Taj and met him. He welcomed me. He called his accountant and asked him to prepare the contract. In that contract, he had mentioned income tax and all the conditions. It was for one year contract. He first signed the contract and asked me to sign it. I also signed the contract. He took out the cheque book and gave me the bearer cheque of Rs.1500/- as an advance. On top of it, he gave me Rs.200/- and told me to come on 2<sup>nd</sup>. I assured him that I will be there on 2<sup>nd</sup>. I started from that place. When I came out, I checked the cheque. It was of Punjab National Bank. I went to Punjab National Bank and submitted the cheque at the counter. They gave me the token. I took the token and sat there. After two-three, they called me. I got up and went to the counter. They asked me the denomination of the cash, whether I want it of Rs.100/-. I said, “will do.” The cashier gave me fifteen notes of Rs.100/-. In my entire life, first time I had seen a note of Rs.100/-. I was very happy. I put those notes in my pocket and straight came down to Andheri, packed my luggage. The next day, at Andheri, I greeted the local person and checked-in in the ordinary hotel. After that, I went to Lahore for the shooting. While going to Lahore, I had not taken permission from anyone and had taken (name not audible) as my assistant.

**Bapu Watve :** (name not audible) the one who was the manager in Prabhat and later become a cameraman?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I took him along with me as my assistant. We took our tickets and started from V.T. We directly took tickets to Lahore, which is also of first class.

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, Hindustan and Pakistan had not separated. That is why no obstacles.

**Mohammed :** Yes, they were not separated. We reached there in the morning. The person had come to receive us. He showed us the hotel. The studio was not that far from the hotel. We could easily walk down. There was not need of a car. This way we were staying there. There was no work as such. Fifteen days just passed in arranging the set. We were not bothered. We were having meals at two time and used to roam around the city. First time, we were seeing Lahore. This way, we spend our time. After some days, shooting started.

**Bapu Watve :** What was the name of the picture?

**Mohammed :** “Shalimar शालीमार”.

**Bapu Watve :** Do you remember the casts of that picture?

**Mohammed :** Chandramohan was there. Al Nasir was the main hero.

**Bapu Watve :** The one who was with Veena.

**Mohammed :** Then there was Pramela.

**Bapu Watve :** The one who had acted in old “Mother India”.

**Mohammed :** Manorama was also in that.

**Bapu Watve :** Meera was also in that?

**Mohammed :** No, she wasn't. Even Hari Shivdasani was in that.

**Bapu Watve :** He was one of the famous character actor.

**Mohammed :** In that Chandra Mohan was there who was playing role of Jahangir.

They raised first set and ...

**Bapu Watve :** Chandra Mohan must be happy to see you.

**Mohammed :** No, he had not arrived at that time. He came later.

**Bapu Watve :** The reason is that it was a peak time of Prabhat actors.

**Mohammed :** When we met at that time, he was very happy and said, “tum bhi aa gaye?” The first set was raised and people had gathered to see the lighting.

**Bapu Watve :** A word must have spread that you have come to Lahore. It must be the news in the paper.

**Mohammed :** It was a news in the paper and also gossip that a top cameraman has come. People had seen my pictures. Many people had come to see the lighting of the shooting. After that, once everything is done, they told me that lighting and everything is ready. I also came to know Roop K Shorey is not only producer but he was also a cameraman.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh.

**Mohammed :** He had not done that lighting. He had seen that in the end. The light was not sufficient for that set so, it is going to create problem. He asked me that he feels there is no enough light. I told him that whatever you are saying is right but that will be seen later. If require we will add. He said that those lights are now over. We don't have those lights left now; we will have to buy. If require (word not audible) light can of useful. Now since you have put planks there, it has covered the gap. When he saw what I did, he was very happy. He was speechless. Then we completed the shooting.

**Bapu Watve :** In Prabhat you never faced the light problem.

**Mohammed :** After that summer started. It used to be so hot that I started getting prickly heat on my body. And those red small boils started giving me trouble. It was not tolerable.

**Bapu Watve :** I think you were fade-up of that.

**Mohammed :** It was so hot that even we used feel that we are wearing hot iron clothes. I got scared but somehow manage. I had a prickly heat all over my body. And even my contract was getting over. So, we received a call from Dastursaheb. So, we went to meet him. He said, “Mohammed, your contract is getting over. Now, you make contract with us.” I told him, “Dastursaheb, the climate of this place doesn’t suit me. I can’t stay here.” He said, “please tell me how can help you? What you want?” I told him, “I like winter of this place but I can’t bear summer.” He was insisting me to think on his proposal. So, as soon as my contract got over, I left Lahore and came back. Then I stayed at Mumbai for some days. It was little difficult to get photography job. I couldn’t get it immediately. But after some days, I started getting it. Many film producers approached me and were insisting me to start with them.

**Bapu Watve :** Did you receive any Hindi film when you came back?

**Mohammed :** Yes, Hindi film producer, who is that sh ....

**Bapu Watve :** Shree Rajan.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Shree Rajan. He approached me. He has a studio at ...

**Bapu Watve :** At Tardeo.

**Mohammed :** Yes, at Tardeo, he had built. We met, discussed and we fixed the terms. But after some days, that went into liquidation. In between one Kashmiri director had approached but as I had promised him, I didn’t accept his proposal. So, I lost both the chances. After that, Dharmadhikari called me.

**Bapu Watve :** Datta Dharmadhikari ...



**Mohammed :** He asked me whether I would like to work for him. First, I got his film “Suhagan सुहागन” then “Kalakar कलाकार” and all other movies I got.

**Bapu Watve :** Those are Hindi movies. But have you done any before that or Bal Bapat had done? I mean film “Bala Jo Jo Re बाळा जो जो रे” ..

**Mohammed :** Yes, I had done “Bala Jo Jo Re बाळा जो जो रे” ..

**Bapu Watve :** Nanhne Munne नन्हें-मुत्रें, Chimni Pakhare चिमणी पाखरे ..

**Mohammed :** These are done by Bal Bapat

**Bapu Watve :** But you had done film “Aasmaan आसमान” for Pancholi.

**Mohammed :** That I did when I came back. When I came to Mumbai. At Pune, you must be knowing Govardhanbhai Patel.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Dayabhai ....

**Mohammed :** Pancholi contacted him and asked where I am. Govardhanbhai was knowing where I am. Pancholi told him to contact me and also told him that he wants to meet me. Then he sent me a telegram, asking me to meet him. I went to meet him. Govardhanbhai told me that Pancholi wants to meet you. Then we went to meet him. There is place near race course, what is the name ...

**Bapu Watve :** Mahalaxmi.

**Mohammed :** yes, Mahalaxmi.

**Bapu Watve :** It was a Famous Studio

**Mohammed :** Yes, Famous Studio. We went there. No, not there. The office wasn't at that place. Sorry, I am wrong. There was a person named Lakhani. They had office little bit ahead of Worli. They took me there. The name of the owner of that office was Lakhani. Pancholi and I were knowing each other. So, when I went there, he

welcomed me by saying, “welcome, welcome. Now, we will work together for the film Aasman आसमान .” We discussed in length and he offered me Rs.1,000/- as a salary. I agreed to it as no one will pay me more than this?

**Bapu Watve :** Who will give such a high in Marathi Film Industry?

**Mohammed :** Yes. Then I started my shooting in that studio at Bombay.

**Bapu Watve :** Then for Aasman आसमान shooting, you came to Prabhat studio?

**Mohammed :** Pancholi had decided that we will shoot at Prabhat studio.

**Bapu Watve :** That was first movie of O.P. Nayyar as music director.

**Mohammed :** yes. It was his first movie. He told O.P. Nayyar that I am his friend. In that film some Nasir Khan ...

**Bapu Watve :** Dilip Kumar’s brother.

**Mohammed :** and also Shama was in that. Lalita Pawar was as a step mother. And Anwar as brother who died.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes. Anwar was Nargis’s brother. Anwar Hussein.

**Mohammed :** He was in that film as a step brother. Badri Prasad had acted as a step-father.

**Bapu Watve :** He was good character actor.

**Mohammed :** This way the film started and so was my shooting.

**Bapu Watve :** Could you get along with Hindi artists?

**Mohammed :** Very well. It was indeed very well. Funny thing is that, Pancholi saw e smoking Capstan cigarette. He asked me, “Mohammed, which cigarette do you smoke?” I told him that I smoke Capstan cigarette. He told me that no to smoke from tomorrow onwards. The thing was they had carton of 555 cigarette which was kept

on the table. He told me, “Don’t bring your cigarette from tomorrow onwards, take it from this carton.” I said alright and started taking cigarette from his carton. They used to go to the hotel twice to eat. One day he told me to accompany him to the hotel. Pancholi was very happy with me. Sometimes, he used to give me food from his tiffin. He was very happy with my work too. Like this, I had great days working with him. It was not only with him but with all directors. No one unhappy with me nor with my work. Everyone had appreciated my work.

**Bapu Watve :** Did you receive any more offers from Hindi films?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I did received. I received a lot.

**Bapu Watve :** But you do not wanted to work in Mumbai.

**Mohammed :** It was like Bapu, ....

**Bapu Watve :** You used to suffer from constipation.

**Mohammed :** It used pain in my chest. Sometimes, I used to get that pain at night...

**Bapu Watve :** It was a gastric attack.

**Mohammed :** I used to become restless. Whenever I am back in Pune, I am a normal person. No gases, no pain. I am absolutely alright. Again, if I go to Mumbai, first three four days had no problem. After fifth or sixth day, it used to start paining. So, I came to the conclusion that Mumbai doesn’t suit me. I gave up on Mumbai. Why should I take trouble unnecessary?

**Bapu Watve :** We have to take care of the health first.

**Mohammed :** Then I started taking work at Pune, Kolhapur ... not Bombay.

**Bapu Watve :** You took hold of Kolhapur.. Otherwise, you would have earned a name in Hindi film industry.

**Mohammed :** Many people were after me. Even K. Asif was after me to join.

**Bapu Watve :** For Mughal-E-Azam.

**Mohammed :** Not for Mughal-E-Azam but for his next film “Phool फूल”. But I told him that it is not possible. At that time, Jahagirdar was on top in the industry. He was also after me. There was one named Bhatt of Prakash Pictures.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Vijay Bhatt

**Mohammed :** He too had given me offer. But it was not possible for me. My health was not supporting me.

**Bapu Watve :** If your health would have supported you then you would reached on top.

**Mohammed :** I would have lived in Mumbai. It is difficult to find such photographer in Mumbai. While doing Taramati, director Mohan ..

**Bapu Watve :** Mohan Ramniklal

**Mohammed :** He was also very happy with me. Once I asked his Diwanji to give me Rs.200/-. Diwanji went and asked him. Ramniklal immediately told him, “Whatever money Mohammed will ask, give him. Don’t ask me.” He came out and told me that whatever money you want, you can take it.

**Bapu Watve :** Even Shankarrao Damle was also in your favour. If you would have gone with him at Lahore, it would have been fun. He was also expert in his job.

**Mohammed :** He was very expert in his job. His film “Roopshaili रूपशैली” was great job. My overall nature and my work pattern, may it be, punctuality, regarding camera, lighting people had appreciated.

*End of Part 4th*

## Part 5

**Bapu Watve :** Mohammed sahib, as you had realized that the Mumbai weather doesn't suit you, you started taking films at Pune, Kolhapur and mostly Marathi films. Sometimes, if you got any Hindi film, you did it. Were you getting films in continuation?

**Mohammed :** I was getting continuously.

**Bapu Watve :** You never had a lack of work.

**Mohammed :** No, never. If I finish one film, another four to five are always waiting for me.

**Bapu Watve :** Roughly around, how many Marathi films you had photographed? Was it eighty to ninety?

**Mohammed :** I must have done total eighty to ninety including Hindi and Marathi.

**Bapu Watve :** So, it must be difficult to remember the names of the films.

**Mohammed :** yes and again it will take lots of time. I can tell you the names of some of those famous films. I will not mention films like "Alhad आल्हाद" as it had not become famous.

**Bapu Watve :** It had not become a successful film.

**Mohammed :** When I joined Mane studio, I got film “Mothi Manase मोठी माणसे of Vamanrao Kulkarni.

**Bapu Watve :** Film “Mothi Manase मोठी माणसे” was of Mangal Pictures.

**Mohammed :** Was it of Mangal Pictures?

**Bapu Watve :** The shooting was done at Prabhat, wasn't it?

**Mohammed :** No, it was done at Navyug studio. After that, Balasaheb Pathak told me that after finishing “Pudhache Paul v”, you have to do my “Maya Bazar माया बाजार”.

**Bapu Watve :** He had started with “Maya Bazar”. The film “Pudhache Paul पुढचे पाउल” was done after that. “Maya Bazar” was done first and did its' silver jubilee.

**Mohammed :** I took complete responsibility of “Maya Bazar”, like processing and also trick scenes. I had not taken any external help to do its shooting. What I did for this film, first I completed the shooting. Some shots I had taken directly on the spot. For some supreme shots, I had taken scripts from Dharmadhikari who was the director of the film. I told him that I will combers the shots and give you accordingly. Next what I did, next seven days I did shoot at night. I used to start at around 7 in the evening and shooting used to prolong at three or four in the morning. This way I took shooting of that film.

**Bapu Watve :** You had not got any outsider for trick scene.

**Mohammed :** I had not taken help of any single outsider.

**Bapu Watve :** Not even of Dayabhai.

**Mohammed :** No, not at all.

**Bapu Watve :** Because there are many trick scenes in the end of that film.

**Mohammed :** Those all scene I have done. Dharmadhikari also couldn't imagine that it was done so well. Trick scenes direction was also done by me. Those tricks were almost of 1000 feet. For this, laboratory in-charge Shitole and Vasant Giri was working under me. I got all work done by them under my guidance. I knew all other technics of photography but one important thing I learnt that how to take single blocks and bring it normal block and combine it to one single shot.

**Bapu Watve :** That means one turn one block.

**Mohammed :** yes, while doing this, I had to check whether it matches. If the difference occurs then it will not work. These blocks I got it done. The joint of the block has to match each other. I gave that work to (name not audible). With lots of difficulties he completed it. It was done very well. After that, I worked on it and made thousand feet reel. I took out the print. This film was released and was successful. I went and saw it. I was sitting with Giri. Balasaheb Chavan was operating. I was checking whether anything is wrong with the film. Since I had taken all the scenes properly then the film has to be perfect. Afterwards, when everyone saw the film, they had praised it a lot.

**Bapu Watve :** At that time, people had praised the photography so much. Now that film has completed forty years. The technology was not developed but still at that time, you had done trick photography.

**Mohammed :** This film "Maya Bazar" had become so popular that everywhere it was released like, Digvijay theatre of Pandharpur, Vijay theatre of Pune. Everywhere it was released. Funny thing is that, Homi Seth of Basant Theatre had produced one film similar to Maya Bazar. It was in Hindi.

**Bapu Watve :** Homi Wadia?

**Mohammed :** yes. Our film and his film were shown on alternate theatres. Everyone used to like our film more than his film. Because of that, his film couldn't succeed. Once we happened to meet in Mumbai. There is one gentleman by the name Dayabhai. He and Babubhai Mistry, both of them had praised me for my trick photography. Babubhai Mistry said, "You have done far better than me."

**Bapu Watve :** Babubhai Mistry was expert person in trick scene photography.

**Mohammed :** He praised me a lot. He is the person who introduced to me to Homi Seth. He praised me by saying that your trick scenes are so good that you have stolen our audience. This way, everyone had praised me for my trick scenes of Maya Bazar.

**Bapu Watve :** I remember one shot of that film. Just check whether you too remember. I remember everything as I also belong to film industry. "She throws the plate (thali) and you had tanned the camera with the speed of the thali. You had not missed the center. Many times, camera had to struggle lot to capture the camera.

**Mohammed :** I would like to tell you Bapu, at that time, in this regard, I was the most important person in the industry. Many people used to approach me for this work. I had given so many shots like throwing thali. It will not go hay-via.

**Bapu Watve :** of the tanning?

**Mohammed :** My work was so good that once I have done tanning it will not go to somewhere else for correction. Once the block is completed then people used to wonder how it has done.

**Bapu Watve :** That means tanning was your specialty. You were expert in handling the Camera. There was no retake when you used to take shots.



**Mohammed :** No, never. Every artist used to feel scared and used to say, “Mohammed is behind camera. We can’t give retake. Better rehearsal now.” Everyone knew when Mohammed is going to shoot then it is final shot, no retake. They knew that Mohammed will never go wrong. It was Mohammed’s nature that once the shot is over then he will throw the focus off his head and keep the camera at the side that means everything is ok. This was artists and other people opinion about me.

**Bapu Watve :** After that, you did shooting of “Poodhche Paul पुढचे पाउल”.

**Mohammed :** Yes. It was directed by Paranjape.

**Bapu Watve :** It was directed by Rajabhau. I have done films with Raja Paranjape. This film was quite successful.

**Mohammed :** And director of film “Maya Bazar माया बाजार” was Dharmadhikari.

**Bapu Watve :** Even film “Poodhche Paul पुढचे पाउल” had also become very famous. Even there were quiet famous artists in that film.

**Mohammed :** P.L. Deshpande, Madgulkar ..

**Bapu Watve :** Hansa Wadkar, Vivek. Also, Rajabhau himself had acted in that film. Datta Ambapkar was also in that.

**Mohammed :** He was (word not audible) of gully. (Small Street)

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Vavrya Nana. That was also a good movie. Film “Parijatak पारिजातक” was also done by you.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I did that film.

**Bapu Watve :** It was of Raja Paranjape.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I did it. It was a mythological film. This movie had also done good but not so great.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes but previous two had done very well. After that, which important movie you had done?

**Mohammed :** After that, I was not getting much of the films. The last one I did was “Shivray”.

**Bapu Watve :** You had done that?

**Mohammed :** No, That was done by Bal Bapat but trick scenes were with me.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh, God.

**Mohammed :** The scene was “when he puts his hands, he turns out to be Bhasmasur”. I did that film and started from that place. I left that studio.

**Bapu Watve :** Manik studio.

**Mohammed :** I thought of staying at Mumbai for some days. But at the same time, Nemade telephoned me. He told me to come to studio; I want to talk to you. So, I went to Prabhat studio. The manager was unknown.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, in liquidation, Kelkar had purchased this Prabhat studio. S.H. Kelkar.

**Mohammed :** I went inside and met Raman. He said, “Mohammed, you will not enjoy here as you will have to do job of any person. Instead of working here, you stay in Bombay, you will get many pictures. He said that G.L.Madgulkar is producing the film under the banner of Prabhat studio. We had great sympathy for Prabhat.

**Bapu Watve :** You had love for Prabhat and also attraction.

**Mohammed :** Even salary was going to increase so I was happy. So, I agreed to do it. Even I told them that I don't want salary, I will do it free.

**Bapu Watve :** Did you tell them like that?

**Mohammed :** He said, "Don't talk about money. You don't worry about it."

**Bapu Watve :** That means people had faith in Prabhat studio.

**Mohammed :** I told him that I really don't want any money for it.

**Bapu Watve :** I once again wants to hear the bugle.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I wanted to hear the bugle. I accepted that film and completed it on my own without any help even trick scenes. There is a trick scene in that film. Bhim shoots arrow... No, no. Arjun shoots arrow and creates the shield for Bhim. Now how to create the shield? On this everyone was discussing. Madgulkar has written in the script so, how to do it? I had taken the responsibility. For that I had appointed ten to twelve persons. Every day I was giving them rehearsal for entire month for when and how to bring arrows. Then I bought a glass measuring 10' x 12'. Below that we had kept miniature of (word not audible). On that they have to keep two legs. It took eight days for the preparation of this trick scene. We made miniature of bows also. One arrow goes like this, another like this. One is facing this side and another is shooting down. So, this way we had taken shooting of this trick scene. People were shocked to see this trick scene. They were wandering how this shield of arrows must have created. Sad thing is that, he sold that movie to Satyanarayan for bear minimum cost, indirectly. He took out the print of that film and dubbed it in Telugu. He released that movie in their theatre. On that he earned four to five lacs.

**Bapu Watve :** Oh God!

**Mohammed :** Then he came down to Pune. He told Nemade that he wants to meet cameraman, Mohammed. Nemade said, “He is around somewhere. He will be here in a couple of minutes.” Nemade sent someone to call me at the spot where shooting was going on. So, I went there. As soon as he saw me, he embraced me and started saying that you have done amazing film. You are simply great. This movie is based on Hindu mythology. You have made such a great film that I have earned nearly five lacs.

**Bapu Watve :** He had dubbed it in their language.

**Mohammed :** yes, he had dubbed it and had sent us a print of it for us. When we saw that film, we were confused that is it the same movie? It was so similar that even the songs, dialogues, stunts, everything was same. We were really confused whether it is the original film. The dubbing was so perfect.

**Bapu Watve :** The dubbing was really good.

**Mohammed :** I had first time seen such a perfect dubbing. And he praised me so much. He said that you are the great cameraman.

**Bapu Watve :** Comparing to that, Hindi version was not that successful.

**Mohammed :** No, no, it was quiet successful. As soon as it is released on theatres in the morning, immediately it was showing in paper “sold out”. It had come in the English newspaper “see Gaajgouri गजगौरी for cinema photography by E.Mohammed”.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it an article in the newspaper?

**Mohammed :** I don't know but it was heading.

**Bapu Watve :** Then it must be the heading of article on the film.

**Mohammed :** Madgulkar had said, “Where is my name. Your name has come in the newspaper. I have written the story but my name is not there and how come your

name is in the newspaper. What is the use of me writing the story?" I didn't say anything. Just listen to him and kept quiet. This way, I completed the film. After that, I did few amongst that were film "Dhakti Jau धाकटी जाऊ".

**Bapu Watve:** It was of Anant Mane. You had done that.

**Mohammed:** Yes, I did that film. After that, I did film "Sangte Aaika सांगते ऐका."

**Bapu Watve:** It was a record breaking film in Marathi.

**Mohammed:** At that time, I had three four film in a hand at a time. One was Sangte Aaika सांगते ऐका, second was Rajmanya Rajshri राजमान्य राजर्षी, Third was Kichak Vadh किचक वध ..

**Bapu Watve:** I think Raja Thakur was the director of Rajmanya Rajshri राजमान्य राजर्षी

**Mohammed:** Yes, Raja Thakur.

**Bapu Watve:** that means, you had done two pictures with Raja Thakur.

**Mohammed:** One was this, Rajmanya Rajshri राजमान्य राजर्षी and Gaajgouri गजगौरी.

After that, I completed film of Balasaheb Pathak which was pending. Then Anant Mane was after me to do the film "Sangte Aaika सांगते ऐका". What happened, at that time, Hansa Wadkar had come there. They had done agreement with her. He asked for date. So, according to that date I went there. He introduced me to Hansa Wadkar and told me the dates which he had given to her. But I told him that those dates don't suit my schedule so it wouldn't be possible for me to take this assignment. Actually, I had so many pictures in my hand which was not possible for me adjust. Then

Nemade told her that the dates which we have given you it doesn't suit the cameraman. He has refused to accept it. Hansa Wadkar asked him, "Who is the photographer." He told her that E. Mohammed is the photographer. She told him, "Give me the dates which will be suitable for him."

**Bapu Watve:** Surprising. No artists adjust the dates for cameraman.

**Mohammed:** Yes, they don't adjust but she said that she will. But he knew what kind of cameraman I am.

**Bapu Watve:** You had his film "Sant Sakhu संत सखू".

**Mohammed:** yes, I had done. Then Nemade called me and told me that she is ready to adjust her dates according to my availability. I also accepted his film. That film was a great success.

**Bapu Watve:** It run for one hundred and thirty three weeks breaking all the records of film at Pune.

**Mohammed:** The photography of this film was done according to the occasion. That photography will understand by the person who knows it well. Mandre was very happy with that.

**Bapu Watve:** Chandrakant Mandre was a great artists.

**Mohammed:** Yes, he has played role in that film.

**Bapu Watve:** Chandrakant and Suryakant, both of them were great artists so they can understand that art well.

**Mohammed:** When Chandrakant saw the first scene of dawn wherein I had shown foggy surround, setting the cattle for grazing. He was aghast. He embraced me. These

are the things I had done which will remain forever. I used to present actor such a way that no one will believe he is the same person.

**Bapu Watve :** Which are the big movie you had done?

**Mohammed :** film “Sawal Maza Aaika सवाल माझा ऐका ”.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, yes.

**Mohammed :** It had done silver jubilee.

**Bapu Watve :** Not only silver jubilee, more than that, sixty to seventy weeks. Have you done film “Kela Eeshara केला इशारा”?

**Mohammed :** No, I had not done.

**Bapu Watve :** “Sawal Maza सवाल माझा” was quiet successful. It had crossed golden jubilee.

**Mohammed :** After “Sawal Maza सवाल माझा” ....

**Bapu Watve :** Film “Mukkam Post Dhebewadi मुक्काम पोस्ट देबेवाडी ?”

**Mohammed :** Yes, that was done by me. It was one of the top films where photography is concern. On that photography, Chandrakant Mandre was very happy. He always used to ask me where I have done portrait photography.

**Bapu Watve :** Which other directors did you work with?

**Momammed :** I had worked with Mayalu ..

**Bapu Watve :** Rajdutt Mayalu? Which film you had done with him?

**Mohammed :** I have done many films with him. I mean, two/three films. One film was “Vharadi Vajantri व्हराडी वाजंत्री ”.

**Bapu Watve :** You were new in that field at that time.

**Mohammed :** Sorry, I did only one film with him, not two.

**Bapu Watve :** Then you had done film of Ram Gabale.

**Mohammed :** Yes, Ram Gabale's film "Mothi Manase मोठी माणसे". After that, I worked with Patil and did his film "Malhari Martand". I had done his film "Panchrati पंचरात्री."

After that, I think I told you Raja ....

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, you told me of Raja Paranjape, Raja Thakur. Mohammed sahib, at the initial period means at your peak time, if Maharashtra Government would have kept some awards, you would have received many.

**Mohammed :** Yes, you are right. I received some awards. I received for film "Surung", then "Sugandhi Katta" and also for my last picture which was done before my illness "Choricha Mamla चोरीचा मामला".

**Bapu Watve :** It was of Babasaheb Fattelal.

**Mohammed :** Most important thing I want to tell you about my own direction..

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, I was about to ask you that of which two films you were producer?

**Mohammed :** One of them was film "Manini". It was very good and incomparable. I had chosen the best story for the film.

**Bapu Watve :** You had done the selection of the story?

**Mohammed :** It was just neglected story. Everyone had refused to take it for film. Even Dharmadhikari had also refused this story.

**Bapu Watve :** This story was written by Pandit Mahadevshastri Joshi.



**Mohammed :** Yes, it was. For this I had taken D.J. Nayak, financier as my partner. We both had modified the story for film and selected Anant Mane as a director. He had done very good direction. Even that lady had given good support by her acting to the film. She had acted so good that while watching film “Manini”, any person, maybe he is heartless, will definitely melt. When I used to go to the theatre to see this film, and the scene appears on the screen wherein her brother comes home and insults her husband and she starts crying, remembering her mother who had expired, that point I used to come out. I couldn't bear that scene. I will tell you Bapu, when this shooting of “Manini” was going on and she was doing acting of crying and was telling her brother, in front of my camera. I couldn't see it. Tears used to start flowing from my eyes. It was not sobbing but the tears used flow down my cheeks. It was such a beautiful movie that people still praise it. For that film Central Government honored us by giving award of Best Pradeshik Film.

**Bapu Watve :** That means Best Regional Film award.

**Mohammed :** At that time, it was given in the year, 1961 by the hands of Dr. Radhakrishnan. I had gone to receive this award.

**Bapu Watve :** One more film you had produced...

**Mohammed :** It was “Tu Sukhi Raha तू सुखी रहा ”

**Bapu Watve :** Was it successful?

**Mohammed :** No, not much.

**Bapu Watve :** After that, you did not produced any film.

**Mohammed :** No, I did not produced any film.

**Bapu Watve :** When your health started giving you trouble?

**Mohammed :** I completed the film “Chorich Mamla चोरीचा मामला” and came back.

**Bapu Watve :** In which year was it?

**Mohammed :** It is almost 9<sup>th</sup> year ago.

**Bapu Watve :** This film was produced in the year, 1976 that means it has completed twelve years.

**Mohammed :** You mean film “Choricha Mamla चोरीचा मामला”?

**Bapu Watve :** I think, after that you had stop making the films.

**Mohammed :** But other people were not ready to leave me. They used to say that we will take you anywhere. Some of the directors used to say that you just come and sit at the picture set to give guidance. Actually, my health was not supporting me and I am not of that kind of person who can work in such health problems. So, I refused their offers. Once a gentleman named Deo ...

**Bapu Watve :** Deulgaokar

**Mohammed :** Yes, Deulgaokar. He came to meet me.

**Bapu Watve :** Was it Vinaykrao or Annasaheb?

**Mohammed :** Annasaheb. He met me. He had brought his cameraman Lawande with him.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, Suryakant Lawande.

**Mohammed :** He was with him. Even his editor and one more producer was with him.

That time he offered me to produce the film “Maha Mayabharat महा मायाभारत”.

**Bapu Watve :** This has happened very recently.

**Mohammed :** I told him that I have no issue in producing the film but whatever I had before, I doubt if I can do the same thing again. I might promise you to do but it might not be worth. It will be ditch for you and also will be expensive. I know how I have done trick scenes but it wouldn't be possible to give the same outcome.

**Bapu Watve :** I think, there is no such cameraman in Marathi film industry to do those kind of trick scenes.

**Mohammed :** Yes and if I instruct someone to do it, he wouldn't be able to. These things the cameraman has to do it himself. Many things are involved in shooting trick scenes. So, think about it.

**Bapu Watve :** There is no sense if you can't shoot the trick scenes. That is why he must have drop the idea of producing this film.

**Mohammed :** I told him that if any cameraman may get ready to take the trick scene, I am sure he won't be able to give the same results which I could. I have studied the camera thoroughly. Even Suryakant Lawande also won't be able to do it.

**Bapu Watve :** Now, I will ask you the last question. You have been working since the time of Prabhat studio till recent days. What difference have you noticed? You did work with Prabhat studio during their prime time. There you had complete freedom at work; there were great personalities to encourage you and even had their guidance, you had all kinds of amenities and comfort. But the situation changed after that and the condition of Marathi film institute was deteriorating. They wanted everything quickly. But the condition did not change from bad condition to soothing condition. Was it difficult for you to work with such kind of change?

**Mohammed :** No, I didn't find it difficult as I never thought from that angle. I never thought of diverting director or producer.

**Bapu Watve :** No, I am not talking about diverting director or producer, I am asking that whether you had difficulties in coping with new changes like everything they want quickly. Or you must have faced questions like, why there are no old lights?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I had faced this kinds of difficulties many times.

**Bapu Watve :** I am asking you the same question.

**Mohammed :** But I have come out of it. I have done my job in that situation also.

**Bapu Watve :** Means when there is a situation like poor light, shortage of time or sometimes relieve the artist early.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I have gone through all those problems. Most notable thing is that the artist, who had worked with me, was always happy with me. They used to say that there is no problem when Mohammed sab is there as cameraman. This was their belief on me. I had taken their care in worst situation.

**Bapu Watve :** You had taken care of artists and also of directors. Some of the new directors also worked with you and you had given them proper guidance. I know that you had guided them time to time to take the shots. In short, you had always tried to take best shots in adverse condition. Am I right?

**Mohammed :** Yes, I had taken all the efforts to give my best. The example of it is that my last movie "Choricha Mamlā चोरीचा मामला" also had given me the price. In very difficult situation, I had done the shooting of this film.

**Bapu Watve :** it was Babasaheb's first movie.

**Mohammed :** Yes, it was his first movie.

**Bapu Watve :** First you worked with father and later, with son.

**Mohammed :** I had told Balasaheb that he can ask me if he has any problems. I will give my opinion. You can implement it if you like it. It is very important to have a good communication between both. So, he also had implemented my suggestions wherever I had given. He too agrees with it.

**Bapu Watve :** Yes, he too admit of taking your help. Now, you have come up in life through hard work from very ordinary condition, are you satisfied with life?

**Mohammed :** It is like ...

**Bapu Watve :** Leave aside your health condition but do you think you did a lot in your honor?

**Mohammed :** I have done lot in my life and I have no expectations left. People come to me with great expectation ...

**Bapu Watve :** In this film industry, you have made relations with many people and this is your greatest achievement. It is unspoken rule that whoever goes Miraj, will definitely visit Mohammed sahib. They don't think that he is not sick person to visit, why should we visit him? People still come to meet you whole heartedly and that is your biggest achievement. You have made your own house. Your children are doing well. This is also kind of your life achievement. I think you are completely satisfied in life.

**Mohammed :** Yes, I am completely satisfied. God has given me a lot. I have no worries left. I got the returns of my hard work. I don't have any expectations from life. Now, I am leading a good life, just eat two times, and take proper rest. Now I don't want anything from anyone.

**Bapu Watve:** For last twelve years, E. Mohammed is bed ridden because of paralysis. Due to health, he had to give up his work. He still remembers the time he had spent. In spite of his age, he still has good memories and even he speaks almost clearly. From the bottom of the heart, he has narrated his memories which will be helpful to us in future.