

Saibaba-The Invocation of the Divine

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURU MAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. For a smooth, unhindered completion of a work once begun, the wise and the learned sing, at the outset, the praises of the tutelary deities, and invoke their blessings.
2. By so praising the deities, by making an obeisance to them all, impediments are sought to be forestalled and the desired goals achieved.
3. Let us, therefore, bow, first to Ganapati, the benign figure of the elephant-god, with his twisted trunk; the Protector of the Meek, and the Lord and Master of the fourteen branches of learning.
4. Fourteen worlds are contained in your belly and hence you are called, 'Lambodara', while in your hand is the powerful, sharp-edged axe with which you strike down the obstacles in the way of your devotees.
5. O Lord of the Ganas (of Shiva), O elephant-faced God, I bow to you who assuage the pain caused by impediments. Pour your Grace into my utterances, I pray!
6. You are the succour of your devotees. Under your anklets come rolling all the obstacles. Just one glance from you is enough to drive away all want and poverty. 08/28/05
7. In the ocean of worldly life, you are the Ark; the Light of Knowledge you are, in the Darkness of Ignorance! You, O Lord, with your twin consorts, Riddhi and Siddhi (signifying Prosperity and Success), look upon me graciously, I beseech!
8. Hail to you, O Lord, who are the destroyer of the woods of impediments, and whose vehicle is the humble mouse. O son of Girija, O God of benign countenance, to you I bow!
9. Here do I follow the customary practice of making an obeisance to the tutelary deities, that I may complete my work unhindered, and be blessed with good fortune.
10. And yet, is not this Sai Himself, Gajanan, and Ganapati, who, axe in hand, will remove the obstacles to the narration of his story?
11. He is indeed Gajanan and Bhalchandra with the crescent moon on his forehead. And he boasts of a single tusk, and elephantine ears. He is the Terrible One of the broken tooth, the Annihilator of the jungle of obstacles.
12. Most Auspicious among the Auspicious, O long-bellied Lambodara, O compassionate Ganaraya! You are none other than Sai Himself! May you lead me on to the Abode of Eternal Joy and Peace.

13. I now make obeisance to goddess Saraswati, the daughter of Brahma! May she with her art and ingenuity alight upon my tongue, making it her vehicle, the swan.
14. Goddess Saraswati, draped in spotless white, with the tiny vermilion mark on her forehead, holds the Brahma-veena gracefully in her hand, as she rides her swan. O Saraswati, look upon me kindly!
15. Unless the Presiding Goddess of Speech, this Mother of the Universe is propitiated, can ever literatures or art, verse or tale, sit gracefully upon one? And, without her Grace, can I venture to write this story of Sai?
16. This Mother of the Universe, from whose wombs were born the Vedas, verily is she the river of all the glorious Learning! May she make one and all, drink at my hands, the nectar-sweet story of Sai's life. 8/29/05
17. It is, as if Sai Himself, as Bhagavati, as goddess Saraswati, holds the Omkar-veena in hand and sings His own Life-story for the deliverance of His devotees!
18. My obeisance, now, is to Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, who symbolize Creation, Preservation and Destruction, of the Universe, respectively. They are the epitomes of Sattva (Harmony), Rajas (Motion), and Tamas (Inertia).
19. O Self-illuminated Sainath, to us you are truly, Ganadheesh and Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.
20. You alone are our Sadguru, the boat to ferry us safely across the Ocean of Life. And we, your devotees, are as travellers aboard the ship and beseech you to guide us to the shore yonder.
21. But for the merit of some good deeds of our past births, how could we have been so compellingly drawn to your holy feet, which have proved to be our sole refuge?
22. I now, bow to my family deity, Narayana Adinath, who abides in the Sea of Milk, and is the Redeemer of all, from sorrow, suffering and pain.
23. When Parashuram forced back the waters of the ocean and created a new land called 'Konkan', in that land appeared Narayana.
24. Narayana dwells within and rules over the hearts of all the creatures, protecting them with loving kindness. It is from Him that I draw my inspiration.
25. My obeisance, next, is to that great sage and my original ancestor whom Bhargava (Parshuram) brought to Konkan, from Bengal, for the successful completion of the great Yajna (ritualistic sacrifice).
26. Bharadwaj, the greatest among the sages, the founder of my ancestry, who belonged to the Shakala branch of the Rig Veda, and who was also the founder of all the Adya Gaud Brahmins, - to him I bow respectfully.
27. Next, I make my obeisance to the Brahmins, who are the Brahman Incarnate, the veritable gods on the earth. And then, I proceed to pay my respects to the greatest among the yogis, - Yajnyavalkya, Bhrigu, Parashar, Narada, and others. 08/30/05

28. Ved Vyasa (son of Parashar); Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatsujat, Sanatkumar (born of the mind of Brahma); Shuka; Shaunak, the composer of Sutra; Vishwamitra and Vashistha;-
29. Valmiki; Vamdev, Jaimini; Vaishampayan and the nine munis i.e. Yogindra, etc. I prostrate in obeisance at the feet of all these sages.
30. Let me now worship all the saints, like Nivritti, Jnaneshvar, Mukat, Sopan, Eknath, Swami Janardan, Tukaram, Kanhoba, Narahari and others.
31. For a mention of all the saints by their names, this book will hardly have space. Therefore, I make obeisance to them all and pray for their blessings.
32. Then, I bow in respect to Sadashiva, my grandfather, who was a man of impressive piety, and who, finding this worldly, material life meaningless and empty, took his abode at Badrinath and Kedarnath, to the end of his days.
33. My father was a worshipper of Shiva and, having made Shiva his personal god, always wore rudraksha beads round his neck. Respectfully, I bow to him.
34. And then, how can I ever repay the debt of my mother, who spared no trouble, bringing me into this world and rearing me? Humbly, I fall at her feet in obeisance.
35. But soon she passed away, leaving me, a mere infant, behind. My paternal aunt, a pious soul, then looked after me, bringing me up most painstakingly. At her feet, I bow my head in great reverence.
36. The love and affection of my eldest brother for me, has no parallel. For me, he would have willingly given up his life. I cannot but be filled with gratitude as I bow at his feet.
37. As for you, O my listeners! I make my obeisance to you respectfully, as I pray for your undivided attention. Unless you, are attentive, how can I be happy?
38. The greater the connoisseur a listener is, waiting eagerly for more and more, the greater is the enthusiasm and verve of the speaker, as he goes on narrating. 8/31/05
39. If you yourselves are inattentive, then wherefore this narration? Hence it is, that I prostrate before you and implore you to listen to this tale with good cheer.
40. Full well you know, that I have no profound knowledge of science and literature. Nor have I perused any scholarly works, or even listened to the sacred stories of saints, being narrated.
41. I am aware of my shortcomings, too! I am conscious of my unworthiness. It is only in obedience to the guru's command that I have ventured to attempt writing his 'Life'.
42. My own heart tells me that before you, I am but a piece of straw. And yet, I beseech you to be gracious and accept me with all my faults.

43. And now, let us remember our Sadguru and worship his feet with love and devotion. With body, speech and mind, let us surrender to him, who is the mainspring of all wisdom and inspiration.
44. Sweet dish is always reserved for the end of a meal. In the same way, the sweet adoration of the Guru marks the end of this Invocation of the Divine.
45. OM Shri Sadguru! My obeisance to you, the only Refuge of this animate and inanimate Creation! You, and you alone, O Compassionate One, sustain this entire Universe, eternally.
46. Hiranyagarbha or the golden egg of the Brahman, from which comes the earth, its seven islands and nine continents, the seven heavens and the seven netherworlds, is itself, the well-known Brahmanda.
47. The Sadguru dwells far beyond the cosmic illusion, which creates this Brahmanda and which is known by the name 'maya' or the 'unmanifest'.
48. In trying to describe the greatness of the Sadguru, the Ved-shastras become silent. Know that ingenuity or tricks of logic are of no avail here.
49. O Sadguru, you defy all comparison; for, to whichever object you are likened, you already pervade it, by virtue of natural attributes. Whatever object the eye falls upon, is but a form assumed by yourself. 1/9/5
50. Such you are O Sainath, a Sea of Kindness, Samarth Sadguru, who can be comprehended only by your own self, and are beyond everything, without a beginning or an end. To you, I bow!
51. My obeisance to you, O Greatest among the Gurus, who are in perpetual Bliss, ever-content, self-effulgent, home of all auspiciousness, the Soul Beautiful!
52. In singing your praises, in trying to describe you, if even the Vedas and the Shrutis have fallen silent, how then, will my (scant) knowledge, be enough to comprehend you?
53. Hail to you, who are Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh, and Datttreya, who wanders at will on the banks of Godavari! I bow to you in obeisance!
54. That which is the very essence of Brahma comes only from the Sadguru. With his grace alone, it can be realized. At his feet should be offered the 'Panch-pran' (the five vital airs) in a spirit of absolute surrender.
55. Bow your head before him in reverence; with your hands, press his feet gently; let your eyes gaze into his face intently, and, the nose inhale the fragrance of the water that washes his feet.
56. Let the ears listen to the praises of Sai constantly, and keeping Sai's form before the mind's eye, meditate on Sai incessantly. The ties of worldly life will then fall off, automatically.
57. With devotion, offer at the Sadguru's feet your body, mind, worldly wealth – everything, and dedicate your life in the service of the guru.
58. Only after laborious efforts do rare privileges of guru-naam, guru's holy company, his grace and the sweetened milk washed off his feet, guru-mantra and the opportunity to stay in guru's abode, come your way.

59. Great is the power of all these. For they urge the devotee onwards even without his knowing it, pushing him to the very threshold of Moksha. This has been tried and tested by those of single-minded devotion. 9/2/5
60. Guru's company is the pure water of the Ganges which purifies others, washing away all their impurities. What can be more fickle than the human mind? But even this mind is fixed steadfastly, by the guru, at the feet of God.
61. The service we offer at the Sadguru's feet is our Veda-Shastra-Purana. Prostrating at his feet in obeisance is, to us, yoga, ritual sacrifices, penance and all such means of deliverance.
62. The sacred name of the Sadguru is out Veda-Shastra; 'Sai Samarth' is our 'mantra' or the sacred chant. It is also our only 'yantra' and 'tantra'.
63. Sai takes his devotees to that supreme state in which, self experience brings them the conviction that 'Brahman alone is real', and a constant awareness stays with them that 'this world is an illusion or maya.'
64. The 'highest bliss', 'the joy of Self-realization', 'the happiness of being One with the Brahman' – all this is a tangle of idle words. What we need is an abidingly blissful state of mind.
65. Once this state of mind is firmly rooted and remains constant, happiness, peace and contentment come to us. And this is the most perfect state one can attain in this life.
66. Sai is a mine of such blissful happiness. Like the ocean, he is complete and full in himself. His devotee is blessed with good fortune and will never want for this Supreme Bliss.
67. Shiva and Shakti (the Supreme Spirit and Divine Energy), Purush and Prakriti (the Supreme Soul and Nature), Pran and Gati (the vital airs and their motion), the lamp and its brilliance – all these are modifications of the Pure Brahman. They are really One, but are considered as different.
68. 'Brahman does not like to be alone', and 'desires to be many', so says the Shruti. Though the company of the other is desired and liked, yet they all again become one.
69. In the state of Pure Brahman, there is neither Purush nor Prakriti. Where the sun shines perpetually, can there be night and day?
70. Sai Baba is, essentially, beyond all attributes; he is without attributes. But, for the benefit of his devotees, Sai has assumed a form with the purest of attributes. I surrender to him whole heartedly.
71. Those who have sought refuge and protection from Sai Samarth, have escaped many a calamity. Thus, with this same selfish purpose, I bow my head at his feet.
72. Obeisance to loving Sai, who is really one, but assumes form and duality to experience the joy of his devotees' love and thus sports with them.
73. To that Compassionate One, who is the cosmic consciousness in all beings and is the seat of Supreme Knowledge; who manifests himself through all the animate and inanimate creations, I bow to him in reverence.

74. O Gururaya! O Bliss Incarnate! You are my ultimate destination. You alone, are my repose, for only you can relieve the pain and suffering of this afflicted one.
75. Now, at the end of this paeon, and as evidence of the fact that God alone dwells in all living beings, I make obeisance to them all, imploring them to accept me graciously.
76. I bow to all living creatures. May it please that Sustainer of the Universe, who pervades it, through and through, and is completely one with it without any duality.
77. Here I end the adoration that customarily comes at the beginning and at the end of work. It is also, for this book, the Invocation of the Divine and the Holy. I shall now narrate the main purpose of this book.
78. Ever since Sai, very kindly, conferred his grace on me I have been thinking only of him day and night. That itself will destroy the fear of worldly life.
79. No more for me the chanting of other mantras, nor yet, any other penance! I see only the pure, manifest form of Shri Sai, all the time. 9/4/5
80. Gazing into Sai's face, hunger, thirst – everything is forgotten. What worldly pleasure can stand comparison to it? The trials and tribulations of worldly life are forgotten altogether.
81. Looking into Baba's eyes, one forgets one's self. And, as the love wells up from within, the mind is immersed into inexpressible joy.
82. To me service at Sai's feet is everything; -- karma and dharma, Shastras and Puranas, yoga and ritual sacrifice, and, the performance of prescribed religious ceremonies, pilgrimages, penance, -- everything.
83. A constant, scrupulous adherence to the guru's word, when firmly rooted in the mind, and backed by an unswerving faith, will bring to the mind, abiding peace.
84. Such was the state of my mind, a result, no doubt, of my past karma, which fostered in me a growing fondness and attachment to Sai's feet, and I experienced its incomprehensible power. How can I ever describe that power?
85. It is the power from which springs devotion and a loving attachment to Sai, which brings renunciation while yet in the worldly life, along with a state of incessant joy.
86. Many are the forms of devotion, described variously by different schools of thought. Briefly, and as carefully as possible, I shall now describe their characteristics.
87. Ceaseless meditation on one's real Self is the main characteristic of devotion; so say the Self-realized Acharyas, who are proficient in Veda-Shastras.
88. To express one's devotion by performing pooja, is the way prescribed by Vyasa, the son of the sage Parashar, and is another form of devotion, called 'Archan-Bhakti'.

89. Parijat, and other such fragrant flowers should be gathered from the garden, for the guru. Then the courtyard of the guru's house should be swept clean, and washed, first, by sprinkling water, followed by a cow-dung wash.
90. Thereafter, one should take a bath, followed by Sandhya or the prescribed daily prayers. A sandalwood paste should then be prepared for the gods and for the guru, which is to be applied to them when they are given the ritualistic bath. Lights and incense should then be waved before them.
91. Thereafter, the consecrated food-offering should be made and arati performed, to conclude the ritual. All this, when performed with love and devotion, is known as 'Archan'.
92. The pure awakened Supreme Spirit in the heart should be invoked in the idol, and then the pooja should be started.
93. After the ritual is over, the consciousness of the Supreme Spirit should be regained in your heart.
94. Now, understand the characteristic of another form of devotion which was advocated by Gargacharya. In this, the mind gets totally absorbed in singing the praises of God through keertan. So much so, that the mind becomes one with the joyous spirit of the Hari-kirtan.
95. To be constantly meditating on the Self, to be narrating or singing the sacred stories of the Lord, and conforming in one's conduct to the prescribed rules of the Shastras, are the characteristics of the form of devotion described by Shandilya muni.
96. Those who wish to advance, spiritually, will conduct themselves according to the rules prescribed by the Vedas, avoiding all that is either not advocated or prohibited by the Vedas and which is therefore, not in their interest.
97. When the mind becomes totally devoid of conceit, so that it is no longer the doer of action nor the enjoyer of the fruit of action, it is then that it surrenders everything to God.
98. Performing action or karma in this spirit leads effortlessly to freedom from all action. Karma can never be given up totally by anyone. But what can be given up, is the conceit of being the doer of action.
99. A thorn can be removed only by a thorn. So also can karma be ended only by karma. With the realization of the Self, karma will be overcome completely. 9/5/5.
100. Cessation of desire for the fruit of action, is the secret of the renunciation of desire for the fruit of action. Performance of the routine and specially prescribed religious rites and rituals is called the, 'law of pure conduct'.
101. To offer all karma at the feet of God; to forget, for a moment, everything, making your mind totally detached; -- these, very different characteristics, mark the devotion described by Narad muni.
102. Such are the many characteristics, one stranger than the other. But, as for ourselves, let us cross the ocean of worldly life, safely and quite untouched

by its turbulent waters, only by a constant remembrance of the story of our Guru's life.

103. I too, developed a fondness and passion for listening to the story of the Guru, and was deeply engrossed in this pursuit. So that, I thought, I should also write a book about these numerous stories of actual experience and doubtless veracity.
104. It so came to pass, that once, while in Shirdi, I had gone to the mosque for Baba's darshan, when I saw, to my utter amazement, Baba grinding wheat.
105. But let me first tell you (of your gains in listening to) this story. Listen at your ease. And then, listen to how the idea of writing Sai's 'Life' was conceived from the above incident.
106. Describing, again and again, the excellent qualities of One who is of sacred celebrity, and, discussing together, in company, his fascinating stories, purifies the mind and brings perspicuity to the intellect.
107. By singing his praises, by listening to his leelas and his stories, one can please God. Sorrows and sufferings caused to us by the threefold afflictions are also warded off.
108. Hence, those plagued by the threefold afflictions, as also, those impelled by a desire for self-upliftment, and those intent on Self-meditation, -- all such people fall at the feet of saints and are enriched by elevating personal experience.
109. And now, listen attentively to this fascinating account (of the aforementioned incident), and you will be amazed by Baba's kindness and compassion.
110. One day, in the morning, after he had finished washing his face, cleaning his teeth, etc., Baba sat down at the grinding stone, to grind.
111. Scuttle-basket in hand, he went to the bag of wheat and began taking out, by the brimfuls, measure upon measure, of wheat into the basket.
112. He spread out another empty sack on the ground, placed the quern on it and knocked its wooden peg firmly into place, to prevent its becoming loose while grinding.
113. He then rolled up his sleeves, tucked in the folds of his kafni (long robe), and he squatted near the quern, with his legs spread out.
114. 'What is this crazy idea of grinding wheat?' I just thought to myself, puzzled as I was, 'To a poor penniless one, without attachment to material possessions, why should there be anxiety about worldly things?'
115. However, with head bent down, Baba had taken a firm hold of the quern-handle and went on rotating the quern-stone, with his own hands, as if he was crushing, most certainly not wheat, but all enmity and hatred to a powder.
116. Many a saint had I met before; but here was the only one grinding at the quern. What pleasure could grinding afford him? Only he can understand his strange ways!

117. People watched him in astonishment, but no one dared to ask him what he was doing. As the news traveled through the village, men and women came running.
118. The women gasped for breath, as they ran. Four of them hastily rushed up the steps of the mosque and seizing hold of Baba's hand roughly, snatched the quern handle away from him.
119. Baba began quarrelling with them; but without heeding him they started grinding all at once. And as they did so, they sang Baba's praises and of his marvelous leelas. 9/6/5
120. Touched by their genuine affection, Baba's mock anger vanished, giving way to tenderness and love, as an indulgent, pleased smile stole over his face.
121. All the wheat was ground, measuring full eight pounds (four seers); the scuttle-basket was emptied. And then began thoughts and conjectures, racing wildly through the minds of the ladies.
122. 'Baba prepares no wheat-bread for himself; to subsist on alms is his actual practice. What then, will he do with all this flour?' So they argued in their minds.
123. 'Moreover, he has no wife, no children. Baba is all alone, without encumbrances of a home and a hearth, or of material belongings. What then, should he want all this flour for?
124. One of them said, 'Oh! Baba is compassion itself! All this sport is only for us. Just see! He will now give away all his flour to us.
125. Presently, he will make four shares in it, one for each of us!' They began building castles in the air.
126. But only Baba can understand his own ways; none other can divine his ultimate purpose. And yet their greed urged them on to loot Baba.
127. When all the wheat was over, the flour was spread out; the quern was put away to rest against the wall. The women filled the scuttle-basket with the flour, all in readiness to be taken to their respective homes.
128. All this while, not a word escaped Baba's lips. But as they proceeded to divide the flour into four equal parts, listen to what Baba said.
129. 'Are you out of your senses? Where are you taking the flour? Does it belong to your father that you are carrying it away? Go at once, at the village boundary and throw all the flour at the side of the brook there!
130. Free-booters, all! How they came running to loot me! Was it some borrowed wheat that you now stake a claim to the flour?'
131. Fretting and fuming in their hearts, and greatly ashamed of their greediness, the women, in their discomfiture began whispering amongst themselves. But, all the same, they at once set out for the village boundary, as commanded.
132. No one understood Baba's intention, at first, and the reason for his actions appeared to be beyond one's understanding. A patient waiting was ultimately rewarded by an understanding of his marvelous ways!

133. Later, I asked people why Baba did all this, and they said that in this way Baba banished the disease from the village, altogether.
134. It was not wheat, but the terrible cholera epidemic that he fed to the quern to be crushed. Afterwards, he got the coarsely ground flour to be thrown along the side of the brook at the village border.
135. When the flour was thus thrown away, the epidemic was on the wane from then onwards and the days of distress were over for the village. Such was Baba's skillful handling!
136. A cholera epidemic chanced to erupt in the village, and this was the mysterious remedy employed by Baba to counter it. The disease was eradicated and, once again, the village enjoyed peace.
137. The spectacle of Baba grinding at the quern filled me with admiration and wonder. How does one connect his action to its cause and its effect? How can a correspondence be found between all these?
138. What connection can there be between the wheat and the dreaded disease? It was far beyond one's imagination. I felt that I must write a book about this.
139. Love rose in my hear, like the surging waves on the Sea of Milk, even as I felt a strong urge to sing to my heart's content, of the charming story of Baba's life.
140. Here ends the invocation of gods and goddesses. Obeisance to the saints, and to the relatives, and, the ceaseless adoration of the Sadguru has come to a close, too! Hemad seeks refuge at the feet of Sainath.
141. In the next chapter, I shall explain, to the best of my ability, the purpose of this work, persons for whom it is meant, and its relation to the main subject. Listen to it, O Listeners, at ease.
142. It will also be explained, later, who this Hemadpant is, who has composed this 'Sai Satcharit', so very beneficial, both, to the listeners and to the speaker himself. 9/7/5

Weal to be all! Here ends
'The Invocation of the Divine',
the first chapter of
'Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous
and composed by his devotee Hemadpant.

The Purpose of the Book –Naming of the Author

MY OBEISANCE OT SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATIM AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Invocation of the Divine has ended in the preceding chapter; the family gods and the Sadguru have been propitiated. The seed has been sown of Sai's Life-story. Let us now deal with the purpose of writing this book.
2. Who needs most to read this work and the connection of the work to the subject of the book will now be stated briefly, which will also introduce the listeners without effort, to the book itself.
3. In the first chapter, we saw how Baba, to the great surprise of the villagers, used the device of grinding wheat, to destroy the epidemic of cholera.
4. As I heard of these marvelous leelas of Sai, my heart was flooded with joy and love, which has burst forth in the form of this poetic composition.
5. So I thought I should describe, to the best of my ability, the blessed deeds of Sai, which will be instructive to the devotees and will expiate their sins.
6. And therefore, I have undertaken to write this very sacred 'Life' of Sai by commencing the writing of these stories, which make for happiness in this life and in the life hereafter.
7. Life of a saint is a guide to the path of righteousness; it is neither Nyaya (epistemology), nor Tarkashastra (logic). Hence, to one worthy of a saint's grace, nothing would be strange or surprising.
8. And so, my prayer to my listeners is, 'Come, and share in this joy. For great is the good fortune of him who is always engaged in listening to these sacred stories in the company of the virtuous.
9. 'If I am not able to sketch the picture of a most intimate friend, a long-standing companion, whose company I have enjoyed, day and night, how then can I write the 'Life' of a saint?
10. 'I who know not fully, even my own true heart or mind, how can I faultlessly describe the thoughts in a saint's mind?
11. 'In trying to determine the true nature of the Self, all the four Vedas fell silent. How will I know, for certain, your true nature, O Sai?
12. First, one must become a saint oneself. Only then can the saints be understood fully. How then, can I describe the saints? And this, my own unworthiness, I already know full well.
13. One may measure the volume of water of the seven great seas; the wide expanse of the sky may even be covered; but never can the saints be comprehended by the human mind.
14. In my heart I know, that I am but an abject human being. But Baba's boundless power and glory creates in me an irrepressible desire to sing, which is uncontrollable.

15. Glory to you, O Sai, who are the repose of the poor and the meet!
Unfathomable is your Love, which simply cannot be described. Be gracious to me, your humble servant.
16. I sincerely wish to write this account of your life. But I am afraid that I will be biting off more than I can chew. Save me from the world's ridicule, I pray.
17. And yet, why should I have any fears? For Jnaneshvar Maharaj himself, said that those who write the lives of saints, endear themselves to God.
18. And, it is that same God, who has kindled the inspiration in my heart to write. Hence, dull-witted though I am, he knows best how to have his own work accomplished. 9/8/5
19. In whatever manner their devotees resolve to serve them, it is really the saints themselves who get the service done through the devotees. The inspiration flows from the saints; devotees are but the instrument.
20. In short, it is Sai, who is getting his own 'Life' narrated through an ignorant fool like me. This is the glory of this story, which commands our respect.
21. Sages and saints, or even God Himself, narrates His own story, by placing his hand of benediction on the head of him whom he chooses (as an instrument).
22. As for instance, in the Shake year seventeen hundred, Mahipati was similarly inspired, so that sadhus and saints, had their lives written by him, and his services accepted.
23. Service was similarly accepted by them at the hands of Das Ganu in the Shake year eighteen hundred, by making him write the lives of later saints, which were purifying and ennobling for all.
24. Just as Bhatkavijay and Sant Vijay, Bhakta-leelamrut and Sant-leelamrut are the four compositions of Mahipati, Das Ganu has also written two others.
25. Of these latter, one is called Bhakta-leelamrut, and the other Sant-kathamrut, both of which deal with saints and devotees who have come to be known recently.
26. Bhakta-leelamrut contains the fascinating life of Shri Sai, described in three chapters, which listeners can read for themselves.
27. Similarly, chapter fifty-seven of Sant-kathamrut relates a highly instructive, interesting tale narrated by Sai to a devotee.
28. Moreover, 'Raghunath-Savitri Bhajanmala' (authored by Ragunath and Savitri Tendulkar), written from the authors' personal experience in the form of 'padas' and 'abhangas', about the marvelous leelas of Sai, is a source of great peace and happiness to people.
29. Out of an overwhelming love for Baba, a child of his (i.e. Hari Sitaram Dikshit) has written a Preface to this same 'Bhajanmala' which is a shower of nectar to the ever-thirsty Chakora (his devotees) and of which the reader should partake respectfully.
30. Das Ganu's miscellaneous poems are also full of deep feeling and will gladden the hearts of readers as they read of Baba's leelas in them.
31. Amidas Bhavanidas Mehta, too, has narrated with great love and devotion, some miraculous tales of Baba, in Gujarati, specially for the Gujarati readers.

32. Besides all these, some eminent Sai devotees have published from Pune, a collection of Baba's stories, under the name 'Sai Prabha'.
33. So that, when numerous such works are available, where is the need for this book? So the listeners may well question. Listen, now to my reply.
34. Sai's 'Life' is a great ocean – boundless, infinite, a mine of precious gems; which I, a tiny Titwi (Lapwing) bird is endeavouring to empty. How can this ever come about?
35. Sai's life is thus unfathomable, which it is just impossible to recount fully and satisfactorily. One should therefore, be content to narrate as much of it as one can, and to the best of one's ability.
36. Innumerable are the extraordinary stories of Baba, which assuage the worldly sufferings of the afflicted, enthuse the listeners for more and more and steady the minds of his devotees.
37. The stories of Baba narrated were varied – some, of worldly wisdom, some of the common experience and those that explained his mysterious deeds.
38. As the innumerable Vedic tales of divine origin are well-known, so also were the numerous stories, captivating and pregnant with meaning, that Baba used to tell.
39. And, when listened to with undivided attention, hunger-thirst was forgotten; an inner contentment reigned supreme. So that, all other pleasures appeared as straw.
40. Some may strive to be one with the Brahman, some may work for proficiency in the eightfold path of Yoga; yet others may seek the fullness of the bliss of Samadhi. Listening to these stories they will all get what they seek. 9/9/5
41. These tales liberate the listeners from the bondage to their karma, bringing enlightenment to their minds and bringing happiness to all, without making any distinction.
42. Hence a wish arose in my mind to weave together a garland of these variegated tales, so worthy of a collection, so as to make an offering to Baba. This, I felt was the best form of worship.
43. Even a few words of these stories, falling on the ear casually, are enough to make the misfortunes of a creature, recede, at once. If then, the entire story is heard, with reverence and faith, a simple, trusting devotee will surely and easily cross the ocean of worldly life.
44. Making me his instrument of writing, Baba will hold my hand to fashion the letters. I am but the instrument moving mechanically, as Baba guides.
45. Watching Baba's leelas for years together, my mind kept toying with the ideal fondly, that Baba's tales may be collected together for the benefit of the simple and loving devotees.
46. Those, who have not had the actual darshan of Baba, to pacify their eyes, may at least gain some merit by listening to the stories of his greatness.
47. And should a truly fortunate one feel the urge to read these stories, he will at least have the experience of joy and inner satisfaction, on doing so.

48. Such was the thought that came to my mind, which I conveyed to Madhavrao (Deshpande). But I still had my doubts whether I would be able to write a book.
49. For, I had already crossed the sixty-year mark, and, at sixty, the wicked mind is more prone to create problems and obstacles. Moreover, feebleness of body might prevent a full-blooded effort. And all that would then remain would be empty babble of words.
50. And yet, rather than waste the effort on something meaningless and empty, it would far better be employed in Sai's service. It would at least make for some spiritual advancement. Hence this Yajna (effort).
51. The thought came to my mind, that I should write down an account of what I experienced, by day and by night, a constant contemplation on which will bring peace and repose to my mind.
52. I wished to present to the listeners those utterances of Baba, which came repeatedly, and with a natural ease, were so firmly rooted in self-experience and brought satiety to the Self.
53. Many were the tales of wisdom that Baba narrated; many devotees be guided to the path of bhajans. If I were to make a complete collection of these, it would become Sai Baba's 'Gatha' (sacred poetic composition).
54. Whoever narrates these stories, and whosoever listens to them respectfully, will both enjoy a rare peace of mind and repose.
55. Listening to these tales, which came straight from Baba's mouth, the devotees will become oblivious of their physical sufferings and as they meditate upon them constantly, they will be liberated automatically from the ties of the worldly life.
56. The words that came out of Sai's mouth are as sweet as nectar. How can I describe their beauty and charm? Listening to them, the heart will be filled with supreme bliss.
57. And, when I find someone narrating these stories, without any pretensions to learning or virtue, I feel that even if I rolled in the dust at his feet, deliverance for me will be near at hand.
58. The most remarkable style of presentation of these stories, as also the ingenious use of every word and phrase, holds the audience enthralled, bringing joy to one and all.
59. As the ears thirst for the stories, and the eyes long for his darshan, so will the mind transcend consciousness, being absorbed in divine concentration.
60. My loving Guru is my mother. As his stories travel from person to person, by the word of mouth, let us treasure them up in our ears, with reverence.
61. Let us bring the self-same stories to the mind, again and again, and store up many as we can, binding them together in the ties of love. The treasure can then be shared with each other, in profusion. 9/10/5
62. In all this nothing is mine. The impulse is wholly from Sainath himself. Whatever he prompts me to say, I say, you see!

63. But then, to say that 'I speak' is again my ego. It is Sai who really holds the strings. And it is he who moves my tongue to speak. Who am I to say 'I speak'?
64. Once the ego is surrendered at Baba's feet, boundless joy will ensue. As the ego is overcome, the whole life will be filled with happiness.
65. When this idea occurred to me, I did have the opportunity, but not the courage, to put it to Baba. Suddenly, I saw Madhavrao and I at once conveyed my thoughts to him.
66. No one else was around, at the time, and Madhavrao seized the opportunity and asked Baba-
67. 'Baba, this Annasaheb (Dhabolkar) here, says that he want to write your life-story, to the very best of his ability, if you will but permit it.
68. 'Do not say, I am but a beggar, begging alms from door to door, subsisting somehow on bread, with or without greens!'
69. 'Of such a one as me, why do you want to write a life-story? It will only excite a ridicule!' For, you are a diamond which must be set in a socket.'
70. If only you will give permission and extend your help, the book will write itself, or rather, you will get it written by me, by removing all the obstacles in the way.
71. Blessings of saints, are in themselves, the auspicious beginning of a book, while without your grace no writing can progress smoothly.
72. Reading my thoughts, Sai Samarth was moved by compassion and said, "Your wish will be fulfilled". I, at once, place my head at his feet.
73. Placing his hand of benediction on my head, he gave me udi as prasad. Such is this Sai, well-versed in all the systems of divine faith and the liberation of his devotees from all the worldly ties.
74. On hearing Madhavrao's prayer, Sai took pity on me and began instilling courage to calm my agitated, impatient mind.
75. Knowing the sincerity of my purpose, words indicative of his consent came from his mouth. "Make a collection of all the authentic stories, experiences, conversations and talks, etc.
76. "It is better to keep a record. He has my full support. He is but the instrument; I myself will write my own story.
77. "My own tale I shall narrate myself and thus I shall fulfill the wishes of my devotee (to write my life-story). He should subdue his ego and offer it at my feet.
78. "He who conducts himself in this manner, in life, will not only get from me full assistance in the writing of the book, but I shall toil from him in every way.
79. "When ego and conceit are totally resolved, leaving not even a trace behind, it is then that I will dwell in him, writing the book with my own hand.
80. "While listening, reflection or writing is begun with this thought firmly governing it, then that work will be accomplished by myself, while he (Dhabolkar) will only be made my instrument.
81. "A record must, be of course, be kept. Inside the house or outside or wherever else you may be, think of me, again and again, and you will enjoy peace.

82. "Listening to my stories, narrating them to others in a kirtan, contemplating on them will propagate love and devotion for me, which will destroy ignorance, instantly.
83. "Wherever there is faith and devotion together, I remain enslaved forever. Have no doubt about this. But otherwise, I always remain unattainable.
84. "When heard with virtuousness and a good feeling, these stories will generate devotion in the listener's minds; self-experience and bliss will then follow most naturally and a state of perpetual joy will thus be attained.
85. "The devotee will have self-realization, which will bring in tune, both, his Jeeva (Atman) and Shiva (Brahman); he will comprehend the Incomprehensible, which is without attributes, and the Supreme Spirit shall reveal itself. 9/11/5
86. "Such is the reward, the fruit of my stories. What else would one want? This is also the ultimate objective of the Shrutis (Vedas) and so, by attaining this the devotee will be enriched.
87. "Where contentiousness prevails, ignorance and Maya abound. There is no thought for Deliverance and the mind is continually engaged in malicious, misconceived speculation.
88. "Such a one is not worthy of Self-knowledge. He is engulfed by ignorance alone. He can enjoy happiness neither on earth nor in heaven. Everywhere, and at all times, he is unhappy.
89. "Not for us, an obstinate maintenance of our point of view, not the refutation of another's point of view. Nor yet, the exposition of the two contrary viewpoints. Why all this futile, unnecessary effort?"
90. 'Exposition of the two contrary viewpoints' was a phrase that reminded me of the promise I had given to my listeners, earlier.
91. At the time when the first chapter came to a close, I had promised the listeners that I will first tell them all, the story of how the name 'Hemad' was given to me.
92. When this tale-within-a-tale is heard, its appropriateness or otherwise, can be determined and your curiosity will be satisfied. In fact, this is also prompted by Sai.
93. Thereafter, the main story of Sai's life will be pursued from the point, where it was left off. Hence the listeners should listen to this story attentively.
94. At the end of every chapter we hear of its being 'composed by devotee Hemadpant'. But who is this 'Pant?'
95. This question will naturally arise in the minds of the listeners. And, to satisfy this curiosity they should listen attentively as to how the name came to be given (to the author).
96. From birth to death, sixteen purificatory rites of the human body have been prescribed in the Shastras, among which, the naming ceremony is one that is well-known to all.
97. Listen carefully, O listeners, to a short tale about this, which will explain the naming (of the author) as 'Hemadpant', in its proper course.

98. Mischievous as the present writer was, by nature, he was loquacious, too, and reviling and ridiculing – quite untouched by any knowledge or wisdom.
99. He knew not the importance and greatness of a Sadguru; but was the very image of evil-mindedness, priding himself on his own wisdom, and eager for argumentation.
100. And yet, so powerful was his line of destiny, that by sheer good fortune, (and despite his resistance), he had the darshan of Sai's lotus feet.
101. Had it not been for his indebtedness from the preceding births, to the great devotees Kakasaheb Dixit and Nanasaheb Chandorkar, could he ever have gone to Shirdi?
102. Kakasaheb kept on pressing me, and the visit to Shirdi was fixed. But on the very day of departure, the decision was suddenly reversed.
103. This writer had a very close friend, who, initiated by his guru, was a devoted 'guru-putra'. While at Lonavala, with his family, he was caught up in a very strange situation.
104. At that place of such salubrious climate, his only son, who was strong, healthy and virtuous, caught high fever and fell ill seriously.
105. All human remedies were tried. Charms and chants and religious rites were tried, too. Even the guru was called and made to sit at his bedside. But in the end, he gave a slip to everyone.
106. At the critical juncture, the guru was made to sit near him to avert the calamity. But everything was in vain.
107. Strange indeed, is human life! Whose is the son? Whose, the wife? So many things happen just because of the karma. Destiny, the result of our past karma, is inevitable.
108. When I heard these sad tidings, my mind became dejected and agitated. Is this all the utility that a guru has, that he could not even save an only son?
109. Such overwhelming power of destiny and karma weakened my resolve for Sai's darshan and became an impediment to my visit to Shirdi.
110. Why go to Shirdi at all? Just see the condition of my friend! Is this all the profit of a guru's company? What can a guru do before destiny?
111. If what is destined is bound to happen, then where is the need for a guru? Thus the visit to Shirdi was put off.
112. Why leave your own place? Why run after a guru? Why this love of inviting trouble in an otherwise happy existence?
113. Let us endure whatever is pre-ordained – be it pleasurable or distressing. What is the use of going to a guru, if the pre-destined cannot be averted?
114. And, much as one may wish to the contrary, things, events will come about according to the merit or otherwise, that one has earned. Nothing can prevent the working of Destiny. And, it was this, that ultimately dragged me to Shirdi.
115. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was the sub—divisional officer, set out from Thane, on a tour of Bassein and was waiting for his train at the Dadar railway station.

116. There was an hour in between, for the Bassein train to arrive and he thought he should utilize this time for some useful purpose.
117. Even as he got this impulse, a train going only up to Bandra, came to the station, which he then boarded.
118. On his reaching Bandra, I received a message from him and went to see him accordingly. He, at once, opened the topic about Shirdi.
119. 'So, when do you propose to leave for Sai darshan? And, why all this slackness about visiting Shirdi? Why such delay in departure? How is it that there is no firmness of resolve in the mind?'
120. Nana's eagerness made me feel quite ashamed of myself. Very frankly, I told him about the wavering in my mind.
121. Upon this, Nana gave me, very earnestly and lovingly, a piece of sound advice. On hearing it, happily, my desire to visit Shirdi was revived, once again.
122. Only after extracting from me a promise that I would start immediately, did Nana go. I too, then resolved to leave at once and went home. 9/11/5
123. I then, finished my packing, made all the necessary arrangements and set out, on the same evening, to go to Shirdi.
124. Thinking that the evening Mail will halt at Dadar, I paid the fare up to Dadar and brought a ticket.
125. As I boarded the train, which was still at Bandra, a Muslim swiftly entered my compartment, even as the train was slowly moving out of the station.
126. Like a fly in a very first mouthful, my buying a ticket up to Dadar seemed to augur ill for my journey, right at the start.
127. Seeing all my luggage, 'Whereto this journey?' he asked me. So I said, 'I will go to Dadar and catch a train to Manmad'.
128. He, at once, alerted me, 'Do not get off at Dadar. The Mail will not halt there. Go straight to Victoria Terminus.'
129. Had this warning not come in good time. I would not have been able to catch the train at Dadar. And then, I know not what absurd ideas would have assailed the already wavering mind.
130. But, on that day, I was to seize that lucky chance and go to Shirdi. Hence all these intervening incidents took a turn favorable to me, quite unexpectedly.
131. Next day, I arrived in Shirdi at nine or ten o' clock, in the morning Bhausahab Dixit had already been waiting for me, there.
132. It was in the year 1910, that this incident took place. Sathe wada was then the only place for the visitors to stay.
133. As I alighted from the tonga, my heart was so full of eagerness for Baba's darshan, that I could hardly wait to fall at his feet! Waves of joy surged up in my heart!
134. At that moment, Tatyasaheb Nulkar, one of Sai's great and well known devotees, had just returned from the mosque and said to me 'Make haste and take darshan quickly!
135. 'Baba, with his devotees, has already come to the corner of the wada. Come as you are, for a 'dhool-bhet, first! For, he will then set out for the Lendi.

136. 'Have a bath, afterwards, and when Baba returns, then go to the mosque and have darshan comfortably, once again.
137. On hearing this, I rushed to the place where Baba was as I prostrated in the dust at his feet, I could hardly contain my joy.
138. Nanasaheb had already told me about Baba. But personally, I saw so much more than that. With his darshan, I considered myself blessed; and the eyes had fulfilled their purpose.
139. Never before had I heard of or seen Baba's comely figure. Seeing, it now, my eyes were calmed; hunger, thirst, everything was forgotten; all senses stood still.
140. The touch I experienced, of Sai's feet, the kind enquiries that he made after me, were moments of highest plenitude in my life.
141. My indebtedness will always and inviolably be to those to whom I owe this saintly association, which has gladdened each and every part of my body.
142. Only those who help spiritual progress are the true kith and kin. No other relatives can be like them. This is what I believe in my heart.
143. So great is their obligation that I know not how I can repay them. So I only lower my head on their feet with reverence and with folded hands.
144. I was blessed with Sai's darshan. All my doubts were resolved. To add to it, I had Sai's sacred company. And I experienced the highest joy.
145. Such is the marvel of Sai-darshan! His mere darshan is enough to bring about a total change in one's manner and conduct. Whatever of the past karmas has remained, will be wiped out and a loathing for sensual pleasures will gradually grow upon you.
146. Sai's kindly glance destroyed the sins accumulated over the past births and gave rise to the hope that his holy feet will bring me eternal joy.
147. By great good fortune have I found Sai's feet, which are as the great Manas lake, which will transform me, a crow into a swan. Sai is an acharya (a spiritual head), a great yogi, a Paramahansa, the most excellent among the saints.
148. Annihilator of all sins, sufferings and adversity that he is, Sai's darshan and his sacred company has purified me greatly. 9/12/5
149. This meeting with Sai Maharaj was the fruit of my accumulated merit over several past births. Once this Sai pervades your vision, the whole creation appears to you as filled with Sai.
150. On the very day that I arrived in Shirdi, an argument arose between me and Balasaheb Bhate as to why one needs a guru at all.
151. Why give up one's independence and voluntarily embrace subjugation to another? Where there is competence in the performance of one's duty, what is the necessity of a guru?
152. Each one must ultimately strive for himself. And if he doesn't what can the guru do? He, who only stretches his limbs indolently, without so much as lifting a finger, what can anybody give to such a one?

153. This was the simple point of view I put forward. My opponents held a point of view exactly opposed to mine. Obstinate adherence to their own point of view, on either side, balanced equally. And so the controversy raged.
154. The opposite side firmly held that, however proficient in Vedas a learned pandit may be, without the guru's grace his deliverance would be confined only to the books.
155. A fierce argument, as to what is greater – Destiny or Free Will, raged. When you lean so heavily on destiny, what can happen? Said I.
156. My opponents argued that whatever is to befall cannot be resisted. What is destined, is just enviable. The most conceited among the egoists have wearied.
157. Who can work against Fate? You do one thing; the result is something else! Leave all your cleverness aside! But my ego would not accept defeat readily.
158. I said, 'But how can you say all this? Human endeavour is Power. What help can Fate give to one who sits back lazily?
159. 'Only by one's own efforts can one uplift oneself, the Smritis have proclaimed. And it is impossible that by ignoring this one should cross the ocean of this life safely.
160. 'Here one has to work for one's own Salvation. Why, then run after a guru? How will it suffice to have a guru, unless one is watchful of one's own interests?
161. 'What Siddhi, what success can a guru give to the fool who has thrown away his discriminating (between right and wrong) intellect, the means for achieving his end and his won self purification?
162. This debate remained inconclusive; nothing fruitful resulted from it. If anything, I lost my peace of mind, in the bargain. That is all I gained!
163. Arguing in this manner, where neither side showed the least sign of exhaustion, three-quarters of an hour passed by. So that, at last an end was put to it.
164. Later on, when we, along with others, went to the mosque, just listen to what Baba asked Kakasaheb!
165. "What was going on in the wada?" he said, "What was all that dispute about? And, what was this 'Hemadpant' saying?" He looked pointedly at me, as he said this, last.
166. Now, between the wada and the mosque, there is considerable distance. How then, did Baba know about this incident? I was quite astonished in my mind!
167. All the same I was struck dumb by these piercing words and hung my head in shame, that I should have behaved with such impropriety in the very first meeting!
168. This name, 'Hemadpant', which Baba gave me was, I felt the direct result of the morning's heated disputation and I made a mental note that it must have been that incident which reminded Baba of 'Hemadpant'.
169. The great Yadav kings of Devgiri were the same as the Jadhavs of Daultabad, and the prosperity of their kingdom in the thirteenth century had much enhanced the glory of Maharashtra.

170. One of their kings, Mahadev by name, was a valorous and mighty sovereign. Equally famous was his nephew for his valour and virtuous deeds.
171. This latter, 'Ramaraja' by name, was a crest-jewel in the crown of the Yadav dynasty. And Hemadri, a man of many parts and exemplary qualities, was a minister to them both.
172. Author of a treatise on 'Dharmashastra', a most munificent benefactor of the Brahmins, Hemadri was the earliest composer to arrange systematically, a code of conduct, which was consistent with Shrutis and Smritis.
173. Hemadri also wrote a book called 'Chaturvarga-Chintamani', which discusses in detail, in the four chapters on religious vows and observances, charity, pilgrimages and Moksha or Salvation. Such was his famous composition.
174. 'Hemadripant' of the Sanskrit language becomes 'Hemadpant' in the Prakrit (Marathi) language. He became well-known in those days as a great statesman, proficient in state-craft.
175. But his life of descent (gotra) was from 'Vatsa'; mine from 'Bharadwaj'. His lineage (pravara) had five exalted persons; mine had three. He was Yajurvedi and I was Rigvedi. He was well-versed whereas I was an ignoramus.
176. He belonged to the 'madhyandin' branch of Yajurveda; I, to the 'Shakala' branch of Rigveda. He was learned in Dharmashastra; but I was wild, incongruous. He had learning and wisdom while I was an inept fool. Why then this undeserved title to me?
177. He was a seasoned politician, a shrewd statesman; I was dull-witted and of little understanding. He was from 'Rajya-Prashsti', his poetic composition in Sanskrit, whereas I was incapable of even a simple verse.
178. And adept that he was in the art of writing, I was an ignorant fool. He was learned, being proficient in Dharmashastra. But my understanding was very limited.
179. 'Lekhankalpataru' is his collection of many and variegated poems. And I, Baba's ignorant child, cannot even compose a simple verse!
180. This was the period when Gora Kumbhar, Chokha Mahar, Swata Mali, Nivrittinath, Jnaneshvar, Namdev and other promoters of Bhagvat dharma had come up to the horizon. 9/12/5
181. In the same royal court which was adorned by learned gems like Pandit Bopadev, Hemadpant took his seat and earned fame among the learned and the talented.
182. Thereafter, Muslim armies invaded the Deccan from the north, spreading themselves out everywhere. And that was the end of the rule of the Deccan rulers.
183. But this title, no doubt, a tribute to my cleverness, was not conferred to me without a purpose. These incisive words were aimed at my contentious nature, and to shatter my egotism.
184. Strutting around with my meager knowledge, mine was but an empty babble. But Baba opened my eyes to my inadequacy of knowledge, by the timely collyrium of admonition.

185. However, as stated earlier, the name – so significant and so well-timed – which came from Sai’s mouth, I accepted as an ornament.
186. All the same, I felt I should learn my lesson and not allow contentiousness, a most evil quality, ever to touch me, even for a moment, for it brings on untold harm.
187. This name must have been given to me, so that I may shed my conceit about my argumentative power and that I may remember, to my dying day, to be always humble.
188. Even Shri Ram, the son of King Dashrath, who was in incarnation of God, of Knowledge itself, and a saviour of the Universe on whom the sages meditate all the time, even he used to catch the feet guru Vashishta.
189. Shri Krishna was the comely form of the Brahman Itself; but even he had to take a guru and brave great hardships, carrying logs of wood in the house of his guru Sandipani.
190. Compared to them, who am I? Why then, argue and debate at all? There is no Knowledge without the guru, nor Deliverance. The enunciation of the Shastras was thus firmly fixed in my mind.
191. Contentiousness is not good; nor so is the desire to view with others. If there is no implicit faith, and courage and patience, spiritual progress cannot be made in the least.
192. In the days that followed, I myself experienced this. In this way, with love, with a good feeling and a pure heart I humbly accepted the name, as an honour.
193. But now, let this story, which refutes the idea of ‘my party and the other party’, which ends all argument and counter-argument, and is equally instructive for all, be set aside.
194. And so, I have now narrated the purpose of the book, for whom it is meant, its connection with the subject, and also, the naming of the author as ‘Hemad’.
195. But now, enough of lengthening of this Chapter! Later on, Hemad will offer humbly at Sai’s feet, other detailed stories in their proper order. Listen attentively, O Listeners!
196. Sai alone is our prosperity; Sai is our total consciousness of Bliss. He alone is our lasting detachment from worldly afflictions. And even our ultimate Refuge is not but Shri Sai!
197. Be all ears to Sai’s story! By his grace alone can the fear of worldly life be overcome and the wicked sinful desires of this kaliyuga can be totally destroyed.

Weal to be all! Here ends the second chapter of
“Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit”, called
‘The Purpose of the Book – Naming of the Author’,
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

The purpose of the Book –Baba’s Approbation of his Gatha

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA. MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Now, to resume the connection with the foregoing story, Sai gave his full assurance to me, saying, “You have my full consent to write my ‘Life’”.
2. “You do your own part well; have not the least hesitation in your mind. Trust my words fully and make a firm resolve in the mind.
3. “If my ‘leelas’ are recorded, then any sins committed through ignorance will be dissipated. And when these are listened to, with faith and devotion, the cares and troubles of worldly life will be forgotten.
4. “Waves of love and devotion will surge on the ocean of listening, diving again and again, into which, will bring gems of wisdom into your hands.”
5. On hearing this, my mind was cleared of all doubts. I bowed at Sai’s feet and began writing his ‘Life’, as I could recollect it.
6. As these words came from Baba’s lips, I committed the fact firmly to my mind, that this writing of Baba’s life was definitely going to take place. And, I will only be a labourer pressed into service.
7. See how incomprehensible is Hari’s leela! None, but He can understand it! Shruti, Dharmashastras, Vedas – all fell silent. No one could fathom it!
8. Do not be taken in by those proficient in scriptures, or those engrossed in the letter (and not the Spirit) of the Vedas; the highly intelligent Pandits or those engaged in unprofitable wrangling, to prove a point with examples, as ghat (the earthen vessel), pata (cloth), etc.
9. Shri Hari (God) is the sport of his own devotees (i.e. he dances to their tune), hungering for the simple and the guileless (devotees), and enslaved, altogether, by love. But to the hypocrites, He remains unattainable, always.
10. “Only in this lies your welfare. For me too, it means fulfillment of my descent upon this earth. And you see, this is what I always repeat frequently and this has been my constant concern.
11. “Moreover, one thing I tell you, Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande), I grant all the wishes of him who chants my name with love and faith, which, in turn, enhances his devotion to me.
12. “So that, he who fondly sings my praises or narrates the story of my life will always see me standing in front of him and behind, and everywhere around him.

13. "All the devotees who are attached to me, heart and soul, will naturally be delighted, listening to these stories.
14. "Whoever sings my praises in a kirtan, to him I shall give total, perfect happiness, peace and contentment, always. This is my promise.
15. "He who gives himself up to me with single-minded devotion, and sings my praises with full faith, remembers me and contemplates on me, the deliverance of him is my promise.
16. "Wherever my name, devotion, a record of my leelas, my pothi and my contemplation is constantly present in the heart, how can sensual desires ever arise there?
17. "Even if my stories are merely listened to, all the diseases will be cured. And I shall pull out my devotee from the jaws of death.
18. "Listen to the stories with reverence; reflect upon them deeply. After reflection, contemplate on them. This will bring great satisfaction.
19. "The mind will transcend the consciousness of self and the differentiated consciousness will dissolve. And by a single-minded absolute faith the heart (chitta) will become a mass of diving energy.
20. "Repetition of the name "Sai Sai" will burn down sins, resulting from the evil desires of Kaliyuga. A mere prostration before me is enough to destroy the past sins of speech and hearing."
21. Although the work (of writing Sai's 'Life') was no mean task, with profound reverence I obeyed his command, with so generous a giver as Baba, why should I accept a lowly position?
22. He got some (devotees) to build temples; some others, he got deeply interested in doing kirtans. Some he sent of pilgrimages; but as for me, he bade me write.
23. Of them all, I am the lowliest. By virtue of which quality I me, this Sai, this Ocean of Kindness and Mercy, was so pleased with me, I fail to understand.
24. But this is the marvel of guru's grace! So that, where there is not a drop of water, even on such a dry stiff tree, flowers bloom and fruit grows abundantly, without any effort.
25. In the days to come, some will build ashrams; some, temples; others will construct a ghat on the river-bank, too! But let us follow the beaten track and read Sai' life-story.
26. Some offer pooja with great reverence some others gently press his feet. But my heart was eager to sing Baba's praises.
27. What could be attained by meditation in the Krita or Satyayuga, by performing sacrifices in the Tretayuga, by ritualistic pooja in the Dwarparyuga, can all be attained in this Kaliyuga by praising the name of God and by worshipping the guru.
28. My unworthiness (for this work) is blatant, as I am 'Jack of all trades, master of none'! Why then should I have taken upon myself, such a massive and difficult task? 9/13/5

29. To sit back, without making an effort will make me guilty to the sin of disobedience. And if I were to obey his command, how can I prove myself equal to the task?
30. After all, who can describe accurately and adequately, the inward state of Samarth Sai? Only when he himself bestows grace, for the sake of his own devotees, and himself makes his devotee describe it, is this possible.
31. But I have left no room for anyone to say as to why am I aspiring to do that which is beyond the reach of words.
32. For, the moment I took pen in hand, Baba subdued my ego, the 'I' in me, and took upon himself the writing of his own life-story. Thus all the credit for writing it, is entirely his.
33. This is, after all, the writing of a Saint's life. Who else, but a saint himself, can do it? To try and comprehend the incomprehensible qualities of Baba is like attempting to embrace the boundless sky above.
34. Profound and unfathomable is his greatness, while, to describe it, I have not the intellectual capacity. It is better that he should take his work in his own hands and redeem his promise.
35. Baba. Though I am a Brahmin by birth, yet I am without the two eyes of the Vedas and Puranas. And even though this is a blemish on my high birth (as a Brahmin), you have brought glory to it.
36. Shrutu and Smriti are the two eyes of a Brahmin. When one of these is absent, he is blind in one eye, and when both are absent, he is totally blind. I am as deficient, as lowly as the latter.
37. But when you are my 'blind man's staff', why should I be distressed? Leaning on it, I will walk behind you, on the beaten track.
38. Now, how to proceed further, I, a lowly creature know not. You yourself must guide my mind to get your own purpose accomplished.
39. He alone understands his own artful ways, whose inconceivable, mysterious power moves the dumb to speak as Brihaspati, and the lame to cross the great Meru mountain.
40. I am but a slave at your feet. Do not disappoint me. So long as there is breath in this body, do get your own purpose accomplished.
41. And now, O my listeners! You have understood the purpose of writing this book. It is Sai himself, who will get it written. Nay he will himself write it for the benefit of his devotees.
42. What music it produces, is not concern of the flute or the harmonium. The effort comes entirely from the performer. Why then, should I become miserable?
43. Is the nectar that the Chandrakant (or the moon-gem) exudes, a creation of its own? No, indeed! It is the marvel of the moon, her creation, as she rises on the horizon.
44. Again, when there is a high tide at sea, are the surging waves a handiwork of the sea? It cannot produce them on its own, but has once again, to depend upon the moon-rise.

45. Just as a buoy, with a red light, is anchored in the sea, to steer the ships clear of rocks and whirlpools, thereby speeding up their onward movements.
46. So these stories of Sainath, the sweetness of which puts even the nectar in the shade, will make easy and safe, the crossing of the otherwise impassable ocean of worldly life.
47. Blessed are these stories of the saints, which, as they enter the heart through the ear, clear it of the bodily conceit, so that the question of the pairs of opposites does not remain, at all.
48. And as these stories are being stored in the heart, so are all the doubts and questions in the mind, gradually resolved, pure Knowledge gets stored abundantly and the false puffed up pride in the body, climbs down.
49. Narration of Baba's pure, divine qualities, listening to it lovingly, will destroy the sins of his devotees. It is the most easy way for spiritual progress.
50. What is pure Brahman, beyond Maya? By what means can this Maya be overcome? And how does one endear oneself to God, by keeping his behavior in conformity with Karma dharma?
51. What is the ultimate, the highest well-being of a man? What is the devotion, deliverance and total detachment? What is Varnashrama dharma and Advait or non-duality? These and other such subjects are very abstruse.
52. Those who are interested in them should indulge their great desire for proficiency by reading various books written by Jnaneshvar, Eknath and others.
53. Restraint and control over the mind and the senses in Kritayuga, ritual sacrifices in Tretayuga, ritualistic worship and pooja in the Dwarpariyuga and chanting the 'naam', narrating the stories and singing the praises of God in Kaliyuga, these are the easy ways for attaining Salvation.
54. To all the four Varnas, i.e. Brahmins, etc., there is only one means for Salvation and that is, listening to the stories of the guru. Be it a woman, or a Shudra, or even a caste-less one, this is but one means for them all.
55. Only he, with a store of accumulated merit, will listen to these tales. Some may even be overcome by sleep. Them too, Shri Hari will wake up!
56. Pining for unceasing sensual pleasures, and becoming abject when these cannot be had – even to such, the elixir of saints' 'Lives' will bring total freedom from sensual pleasures.
57. Yoga, Yajna (sacrifices), dhyan and dharana entail arduous efforts. No effort is needed to listen to these tales, except your attention.
58. Such is this Sai's story, pure and sacred! May the loving, noble listeners listen to it. And even their five great sins will be burned down and destroyed.
59. By the bondage of this worldly life are we relentlessly bound, and in the folds of this bondage is our true Self enveloped. Listening to the tale will loosen up these circling folds and the original, real Self will be revealed.
60. And so, may these stories be remembered till we die. May their study be always carried on; so that they bring peace and contentment to the beings burnt in the conflagration of worldly life and its sorrows.

61. Reading the stories, listening to them with faith and devotion, contemplation will come to itself, readily, of Sai, whose form will then appear before the eyes and will be fixed in the heart.
62. May the worship of Sadguru be accomplished in this way, and a detachment from the worldly life come about. May a fondness grow within, for the remembrance of the guru and the mind be purified.
63. With this same thought in mind Sainath must have blessed me. Putting me forward as a pretext, he has himself accomplished his purpose.
64. Udders are painfully distended to overflowing with milk, but the cow will not let the milk flow without her calf. This is her natural instinct. Such is also Sai's liking.
65. As I, a Chatak bird, wished for this, my Mother rained on me a Cloud of happiness to quench, not only my mild thirst (small wish), but also that of the other devotees, abundantly.
66. Oh! for the marvel of (a mother's) devotion and love! Only a mother can instinctively feel her child's pangs of hunger and thrust the nipple of her breast into his mouth, without his even opening it.
67. But who will understand her strain, her weariness? The child is not even aware of it. But for the mother, who will offer the breast to the child, unasked?
68. When a child is adorned with little trinkets, he has neither any pleasure nor interest in it. Only the mother knows that joy and admiration it excites. Such are also the doings of the Sadguru.
69. And who but a mother will yearn with tenderness and concern as to who will satisfy her infant's childish pleasures? Rare is such tender, heart-felt affection!
70. To be born to a good righteous mother is indeed, the gift of God, enjoyed only by the most fortunate. The child knows not the birth pangs she suffers to bring you in this world.
71. Let me now narrate to you another of Baba's sayings which the same significance. O you virtuous listeners, give your respectful attention to it!
72. My government service was completed in the year 1916 and a suitable pension was fixed for me. It was also time to go to Shirdi.
73. It was the Gurupoornima day; devotees had gathered for the guru's pooja. Suddenly, on his won inspiration, Anna Chinchankar made a request to Baba, strongly recommending my case.
74. In his genuine concern for me, Anna beseeched Baba thus, 'Have compassion on him (i.e. me) Baba, for the sake of his growing family.
75. 'Do give him another job. Is this pension going to suffice? Please do something whereby his worry is warded off.'
76. Baba then said in reply, "O, some service he will get; but he should now engage in my service and he will get happiness in his life.
77. "His plates will always be full. Never will they be empty so long as he lives@ if he always seeks my protection with full faith in me, his troubles will end.

78. "People who say, 'What does it matter if we do as we like', known that they have strayed away from the path. And all those who have abandoned virtuous demeanour, we must, first and foremost, avoid.
79. "Take the other direction, when they come from the front. Consider them to be frightful; do not let even their shadow touch you, even if it means bearing some pain.
80. "How can he, who is devoid of a code of conduct, without character, thoughtless, neglectful of prescribed observances and ordinances, and indiscriminating between right and wrong, how can such a one achieve his real welfare?
81. "Moreover, do not repulse or reject anyone contemptuously – be it then, a dog, a pig, or a common fly. For, without some special bond from the previous birth, no one comes to us.
82. "Henceforward he (i.e. Hemadpant) should serve me with devotion and the Almighty take pity on him. He will attain the inexhaustible treasure laid up in Heaven.
83. "How, then, should this pooja be performed? How to know for certain, who I am? For, my (Sai's) physical body is mortal, while only Brahman, which is immortal, is worthy of being worshipped. 9/14/5
84. "(So, listen!) I pervade the Universe on all the four side, in the form of the eightfold (Ashtadha) Prakriti. Bhagvan Shrikrishna has also said the same to Arjuna in the Gita.
85. "Whatever exists in this, sentient and insentient Universe as a name, a form or a shape is only myself bedecked as the eightfold Prakriti. It is also a marvel of my own creation!
86. "The mystical symbol 'OM' is expressive of me, and I alone, am the subject of that expression! Many are the things in this manifested Universe. But even these are all filled with me.
87. "Thus, where there is nothing different from the Self, what can one desire? I alone, pervade all the places in all the ten quarters of the Universe.
88. "With this awareness of my all-pervasiveness, where the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' has dissolved, what (objects) can be desirable? For all is filled with the Whole.
89. "Desires arise I the intellect and have no connection with the Atman or self. Since I (Sai Maharaj) am the embodiment of the Atman, how can there be any stirrings of desires
90. "Worldly desires are of various types. But once the significance of 'who I am' is understood, they melt away as the hailstones by the heat of the sun's rays.
91. "I am not the gross form with the mind, intellect and other sense organs, nor the gigantic universe. Nor am I the unmanifest Brahmanda. I am the Seer, ancient and without beginning.
92. "In this way I, who transcend the gunas and the senses, am not attracted to the sensual pleasures. There is not a place without me. I am neither the doer nor the one who causes it to be done.

93. "Only where there is a realization that the intellect, mind and other sense organs are but gross instruments of the physical body, true detachment will appear, unveiling real knowledge.
94. "Oblivion of the Self is itself the appearance of Maya (or illusion that the world is real). Realization of the Pure Bliss within is to know me, the Essence of all being.
95. "To such a one then, as me, when all the workings of the mind, all affections are turned, that is the true service and true worship to me. To experience the bliss of consciousness (i.e. Me), is to be in that pure state which is knowledge.
96. "This Atman is Brahman; pure consciousness and bliss are Brahman. But this universe is not real and hence creates illusions about itself. In truth, the Brahman is me.
97. "I am Vasudev; I am 'OM' I am eternal, pure enlightened and emancipated. Worshipping Me with faith and devotion will only lead to self-uptment.
98. "Thus, knowing who I am, I should truly be worshipped. Moreover, surrender to me whole-heartedly and become one with me."
99. When the river gives herself up to the ocean, can she ever come back again (as river)? Can she retain her separate identity as a river, once she has embraced the vast ocean?
100. An oil-soaked cotton-wick, as she meets the flame from the lamp, herself acquires greater brilliance and burns brighter. Such is also our progression at the feet of the saints.
101. He, whose mind reflects upon nothing except on Allah Malik, the Fountain of Life; who is unruffled and calm; has no desires or expectations and looks upon all equally, how can he have an identity separate from the Supreme Being?
102. Where the four divine qualities of detachment and desirelessness, freedom from conceit, from the pairs of opposites and non-possession, reside, how can consciousness of Self (as separate from Brahman), prevail there?
103. In short, when all these eight divine qualities dwell in Shirdi Sai, where is the room from the ego? How can I have an existence or individual identity apart from him?
104. For, my individual consciousness is but a tiny particle of his consciousness, which fills the Universe. So that to surrender my ego at Sai's feet is my most complete service to him.
105. In Shrimad Bhagvat, Bhagvan Shri Krishna has affirmed that 'he who serves me, sings my praises and surrenders to me whole-heartedly becomes one with me'.
106. Even a worm that contemplates intently on the large black bee, is, by virtue of it, transformed into one. And so also the disciple, who worships his own guru, with the same intensity, becomes like his guru.
107. And yet, the degree of separateness implied by the word 'like' is something a guru cannot bear, even for a moment. For, there is no guru without the disciple and the disciple is inseparable from the guru.

108. And so, I have defined him, whom I have been commanded to worship. And here, I just remember a story, which because of its appropriateness in this context, I shall now narrate.
109. A Rohila (Pathan), who was greatly attracted by Baba's divine qualities, once came to Shirdi. For many days he stayed in Shirdi, during which time there grew in his heart, great love and devotion for Baba.
110. Like a fleshy, full-fed he-buffalo in his physique, and in behaviour, quite unrestrained and self-willed, he would heed no one. With only a kafni, reaching down to his feet, to cover him, he came and stayed at the mosque.
111. By day and by night, in the mosque or in the Chavadi (village hall), very fervently he would recite at the top of his voice, the Kalmas (verses) from the Koran, whenever it pleased him to so.
112. Sai Maharaj himself was Peace Incarnate; but the villagers were growing very weary. Even at midnight his clamour continued disturbing everybody's sleep.
113. By day they toiled in the fields or in the woods under the scorching heat of the sun. But even at night there was no peaceful slumber. It vexed the people in the extreme.
114. Maybe, Baba was not troubled; but as for the people, it was a great ordeal. For at night, too, they could not sleep in peace and comfort. They were enraged with the Rohila.
115. Caught between the devil and the deep sea, how long could they suffer patiently? Day and night, the irritating, disquieting noise continued. It became a source of great worry for them.
116. Hot-tempered as the Rohila already was, to add to it, he was receiving great encouragement from Baba. He then became even more uncontrollable than before.
117. Swollen with pride, he became arrogant and began abusing people, using foul language to people. He turned upon them, reckless and unrestrained. And then the village too, turned against him.
118. Sai, the most compassionate Mother, protector of all who surrendered to him, all the people in the village now turned to him, supplicating in piteous tones.
119. But Baba took no notice. On the contrary, it was the villagers whom he upbraided, saying, "Do not harass the Rohila; he is very dear to me.
120. "It is the wife of the Rohila, who is dissolute, and cannot stay with him. Hence this termagant, this shrew, is eager to give him a slip, and come to me.
121. "The wretched woman has no modesty and is without shame. even if she is driven out, she forcer her way into the house.
122. "The moment he stops his shouting is the opportunity for this shrew to enter. But as he resumes his clamorous recitations, she flees, leaving him pure of body, speech and mind, which is greatly conducive to the peace and happiness.
123. "Do not cross his path; let him shout fill-throatedly. Without him I cannot pass the night in peace. He brings me great pleasure.
124. "His shouting in this manner is greatly beneficial to me. Thus this Rohila is my benefactor and a source of great comfort to me.

125. "Let him cry out his heart's content, for there lies my good. Or else, that wicked Rohili will cause me great pain.
126. "Himself when he gets tired, he will, on his won, keep quiet. So will your purpose be achieved and that shrew will not wrestle with me, either."
127. When Maharaj himself said this, there was no other alternative. Moreover, if Baba's mind was not in the least perturbed, what business was it of ours, to complain?
128. As it is, the Rohila had boundless enthusiasm. And now to add to it, this encouragement from Baba! No wonder he ventured, unrestrained, on his loud recitation till his throat was parched.
129. The people were all simply amazed! How forgiving was Baba! What would have normally brought on a splitting headache, engrossed him so deeply!
130. Oh, how horrifying was that shouting! It was a wonder his throat did not run dry! As for Baba, his insistence was only this, "Do not intimidate the Rohilla!"
131. To look at, the Rohilla was as a madcap, but what veneration he had for Baba@ and how happily he recited the Kalmas, in strict conformity with his religion!
132. Who is bothered whether the voice be melodious or harsh? Each time the inspiration seized him he would break out into a chant of Allah.
133. With the natural gift of a rattling voice, the Rohilla regularly and unceasingly, kept on proclaiming loudly, 'Allah-ho-Akbar', and the Kalmas, with great pleasure.
134. Baba shrank from being defiled by those who had a loathing for God's name and hence he said, why drive away a needlessly, this Rohila who is so fond of singing God's praises?
135. "Where my devotees are singing my praises, I am present there, wide awake all the time." Such is the utterance of God, to prove the truth of which, Baba gave this experience.
136. One who subsisted on alms – dry food with or without gravy, and sometimes went without food altogether, to such a Rohila, whence a wife? And therefore, how will she go to Baba?
137. Pauper that the Rohila was, even a paisa was precious to him. What then, of his marriage? And, of his wife? Moreover, Baba was a celibate since childhood! Obviously, the whole story was fictitious!
138. Let him (Rohila) then cry himself hoarse! Baba was so very happy with the Kalmas that, day and night, he listened to them, sleep being poison compared to them. 9/15/5
139. Where the superior wisdom of the Kalmas, and where the hollow complains, petty grievances of the villagers! It was really to bring the villagers to their senses that Baba made all this pretence!
140. Such indeed, was his import. In this way, Baba clearly brought it to the perception of all that 'I like the company of the Rohila because he loves God's name.'

141. To one, who sees only the Divine Spirit in the perceiver, the objects of perception and the act of perceiving, all are equal – a Brahmin or a Pathan, or anyone else.
142. And now, listen to the sweet words that came out of Baba's mouth, on an occasion when the midday arati was just over and people were about to go to their respective houses.
143. "Wherever you are, whatever you do, always remember this one thing well, that I come to know, all the time, and in detail, what you are doing.
144. "And I, about whom you have such an experience, am nearest to all, and dwell in everybody's heart. I travel everywhere and am the Lord and Master of all.
145. "I fill this entire creation of beings, both animate and inanimate, and yet remain. All this is the Divine Scheme, in which I am the principal manager of the strings.
146. "I am the Mother of this Universe and all the beings therein; I am also the point of equilibrium of the Trigunas – I alone provoke all the senses and, the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of this Universe am I, too!
147. "He who turns his attention to me can have no difficulties, whatsoever. But he who forgets me will be ruthlessly whipped by Maya.
148. "The visible world is my own manifestation, be it a worm or an ant, a pauper or a king. This immeasurable creation of the movable and the immovable, is really Baba's very self."
149. How interesting, how significant is this hint! Between God and the saints, there is no separateness, as their incarnation this earth is purely for the uplift of both the animate and inanimate creations, equally.
150. And should one want to be absorbed totally, at the guru's feet, he should go on singing the praises of the guru, or perform a kirtan of the guru's story, or at least, listen to such a story, with a devout mind.
151. A seeker should so listen to it that the distinction between the listeners and what he is listening to, will dissolve and as he passes into a state of Unmana, he will experience the presence of God Almighty!
152. While fully engrossed in the day-to-day, worldly life, if perchance a saint's story comes to the ear, it, by its very nature, benefits the listener, without an effort on his part.
153. If then, it be heard with a devout heart, how great a merit will come to hand! Let the listeners think of this in their minds, for their own benefit.
154. By that means, a fondness and love for the guru's feet will be cultivated and gradually, a state of highest well-being will set in. No other discipline or religious observances will be necessary. The highest good of human life will thus be obtained.
155. When the mind is thus disciplined, the longing for listening to the tales will grow and the bondage of the sensual pleasures will break away, of its own. A state of Supreme Joy will then be experienced.
156. Hearing Baba's sweet words, I resolved in my mind that from then onwards I would give up serving men and devote myself only to the service of the guru.

157. And yet, in my heart there was a restlessness, a longing. "Some job he will get", was what Baba had said in reply. Will I get a proof of it?
158. That Baba's word will be in vain, was something that usually did not happen. And so, maybe, I will once again be connected with serving men; but it will never bring me any real benefit.
159. Self-prompted as Anna's question was, yet it is not as though I did not desire it. And this desire of mine was not 'Prarabdha'.
160. Inwardly, I too, felt that I should get a job, as a means of supporting my family. And Sai tempted me, all the while, pointing his finger at the piece of jaggery as he administered a potion to me.
161. I drank the potion in the hope of the jaggery, and, by my good fortune, I was satisfied. Quite unexpectedly, I got a job, and in my greedy desire for money, I accepted it.
162. But how much can one eat even of a sweet? A point must come when the jaggery also repels. And then it was, that the nectar of Baba's teaching tasted so truly excellent!
163. The employment was not of long duration, and went away the way it came. And Baba put me back in my place, much to my enjoyment of my true and lasting happiness.
164. This entire creation of animate and inanimate things is truly, a manifestation of God. But the Almighty is beyond this Universe, the highest, Supreme Being.
165. God is not separate from the world, but this Universe is distinct from God. From the time of its creation, the Universe is distinct with animate and inanimate things, whose main base is God.
166. Know that there are eight places of God's worship, such as, the idol, the sacrificial altar and others. But, of them all, guru is the greatest.
167. Himself the Supreme Brahman, even Shri Krishna caught the feet of guru Sandipani and has said, 'When the Sadguru is remembered, I (i.e. Narayan) am pleased.
168. 'A thousand times would I like that the Sadguru's praises be sung rather than mine.' Such is the excellence and profound significance of a Sadguru.
169. He who turns his back to guru-worship is truly a wretched sinner, who has to suffer the torture of journeys between births and deaths. He ruins every prospect of self-uptliftment.
170. Again a birth, again death! Wandering between the two has been our lot. Therefore, let us listen to the guru's story and attain self-deliverance.
171. Stories which casually come from the saints' lips can open up the knots of ignorance and become our preservers in the greatest of calamities. Hence let us store them up in our hearts.
172. What trying times are ahead, we know not, nor what forces will be at work. For all this is Allahmiya's sport! And his loving devotees are but spectators in it.
173. Without possessing the power of wisdom, I still got an all-powerful guru like Sai Samarth. Should this be considered as due to my powerful destiny? No, indeed! This too, is a sport of his!

174. And now, I have stated the purpose of this book; I have also narrated the assurance I have received from him, in which context, Baba guided us about his true nature and how he should be worshipped.
175. In the next chapter, O listeners! you will hear as to how Shri Sai Samarth first appeared in Shirdi.
176. And, all of you, young and old, keep aside for a moment your worldly cares and listen, you artless, trusting ones, to this extraordinary story of Sai.
177. Although he was quite unruffled and unaffected, as an incarnation of God, this Sai enacted different roles, engaging himself in the worldly life as an ordinary man, subject to the influence of Maya.
178. He, whose holy feet can be meditated upon by the short mantra ‘Samarth Sai’, and who moves the strings for the deliverance of his devotees from the worldly life, his stories are the most purifying and sacred.
179. To sum up, most holy in this Life of Sai. He who reads it and he who listens to it, are both blessed, for their hearts will be purified.
180. When the stories are lovingly listened to, the worldly sorrows will be dispelled; Sai the Compassionate One, will be propitiated and Pure, Absolute knowledge will appear.
181. Sloth; an inattentive, wandering mind; attachment to sense objects and indulgence of the senses – these are impediments to attentive listening. Push these obstacles away and the listening will give you pleasure.
182. We need no religious vows or their ritualistic conclusions. Nor are the fasts or mortification of flesh necessary. Even pilgrimages and journeys undertaken on their account are not required. Listen to this life-story and that is enough!
183. But our love should be steadfast and genuine; we should have grasped the very essence of true devotion. Only then can we attain the highest goal of human existence i.e. Moksha or salvation. Then the obstacle, posed by ignorance, will be destroyed.
184. We need not exert after other means; we shall listen to Sai’s life-story, so that all karma, past and present, is exhausted without leaving a trace behind.
185. A miser, wherever he may happen to be, has before his mind’s eye, day and night, his buried treasure. In the same way may Sai be present in our hearts.
- 9/16/5

Weal to be all! Here ends the third chapter of
“Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit”, called
‘The Purpose of the Book – Baba’s Approbation’,
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

Descent of Sai Samarth in Shirdi

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARAWASTI, ANS SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DIETY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. In the two chapters following the “Invocation of the Divine”, the object of this book has been stated and for whom it is meant, and its relationship with the subject of the book has also been sufficiently explained.
2. Now, listen to the reason, why these saints have to descend on this earth; or in other words, what is this difficult task that necessitates their incarnation in human form, on this earth?
3. O my revered listeners! I am but a speck of dust from your feet, and am not ashamed of entreating you for the favour of your attention.
4. Delightful indeed, is the life-story of a saint. And, in that, this is the nectar-sweet story of Sai’s life! May his faithful devotees drink of it deeply and be filled with joy.
5. When the Brahmins disregard the rules of conduct laid down by the Varnsashram, and the Shudras aspire to become the Brahmins; when the Acharyas (the religious heads) are shown disrespect, to the extent of trying to castigate them;
6. When no one follows the religious precepts, everyone regarding himself as learned and wise and each one trying to score over the other, but no one prepared to listen to anyone;
7. When there is a total disregard to what is proper or improper for use, in general, or as food, and also, a disregard to the code of conduct (prescribed by religion); so that the Brahmins themselves consume meat and spirituous liquors openly, in front in everyone;
8. And, under the cover of ‘dharma’, secretly perpetuate oppression and tyranny, stoking the embers of hatred between religious sects; all of which exasperates the common folk;
9. When the Brahmins shirk the daily rituals of ‘Sandhya-snana’ the orthodox tire of performing ceremonies and rituals for the propitiation of gods, and the yogis neglect yogic practices of chanting the name, meditation and penance – then the time is ripe for the appearance of saints on earth.
10. When men look upon wealth, honor, wife and children as the only source of happiness and turn away from the spiritual path, then it is that the saints appear on this earth.
11. When people fail to attain the highest goal of human life due to laxity of observing dharma, then for the revival of dharma the saints incarnate in human form.

12. When people dissipate their energies in physical pleasures of the palate and sex, to the detriment of health, longevity and prosperity, and miss the chance of self-upliftment altogether, and the saints appear on the earth.
13. For preservation of varnashramdharma, and eradication of unrighteousness; for the protection of the poor, the meek and the suffering, is the incarnation of saints on earth.
14. Essentially, the saints themselves are emancipated souls, engaged in the uplift of the meek and the lowly, all the time. Their 'avatar' (incarnation) is only for the benefit for others, for they have no selfish interests.
15. They lay down a firm foundation of renunciation around the shaky structure of worldly life of erect the temple of spirituality, thus redeeming the devotees effortlessly.
16. They accomplish their religious mission of the revival of dharma, thereby fulfilling their purpose, after which they give up their mortal coil.
17. 'Jeevatma (individual soul) is the Supreme Spirit or God Himself, who brings joy to the whole world. And God is the Guru himself, who confers happiness and weal.
18. He is also the abode of Transcendent Love; He is the constant, eternal and the undifferentiated Whole; He is beyond space, time and causality and is indivisible.
19. Speech in all its four stages, viz. Para, Pashyanti, Madhyama and Vaikharr, has failed to describe Him. Nor have the Vedas, with, all their wisdom, been able to do so and have accepted defeat under the cover of 'Neti, neti' (Not this, not this).
20. The Shat-Darshanas and the Shar-Shastras are shamed into silence; the Puranas and the Kirtans too, are exhausted in their attempts at description. Ultimately, the only means that is left is to make obeisance, surrendering to Him with all your actions, speech and thought.
21. Listening to the Story of such a saint as Sai, which is filled with his marvelous leelas and sacred tales, may our ears be purified.
22. He is the moving impulse of all the sense organs, and has given me the inspiration to write this book. It is he on whose prompting this 'Life-story' has come so effortlessly, in an orderly manner.
23. He dwells in the heart of all and moves at will in this Universe, within and without. Why then, should I worry, needlessly?
24. As one recollects his many excellent qualities one after the other, the mind stands still. How then, can words ever describe him? Absolute silence is the only way to describe.
25. The nose smells the fragrance of a flower; the skin experiences the hot and cold touch; the eyes feast on beauty; each brings pleasure to itself.
26. The tongue, no doubt, experiences the sweetness of sugar, but cannot convey the experience of others. In the same way, I know not how to describe the virtues of Sai.

27. Only when the Sadguru himself so wishes he will inspire his own chosen ones to describe most aptly, and in great detail, that which is otherwise beyond description.
28. These words are not superficial, a mere formality; but spring from the feelings from the heart, hence I crave your respectful attention.
29. As Gangapur and Narsimhawadi, as Adudmbar and Bhillawadi so is Shirdi a famous place of pilgrimage on the banks of the holly river Godavari.
30. Oh, for the sacred banks of the Godavari and her holy waters! Oh for the cool breezes that play on her surface! These dispel the darkness of ignorance from the worldly life indeed!
31. The greatness of the Godavari which is so well-known in the whole world is most impressive. Great saints, one more eminent than the other, came from there.
32. Many are the places of pilgrimage on the banks of this Gomati, which are described in the Puranas, the water from which not only washes away the sins but also liberates from the sorrows of this life, when the other, came from there.
33. The self-same Godavari, as she winds her way by Kopergaon, in the Kopergaon taluka (subdivision), in the Ahmednagar district, guides the pilgrim to Shirdi.
34. Crossing over to the opposite bank of Godavari, as the tonga enters Nimgaon, which is about six miles away from the river bank, Shirdi comes within sight, right in front.
35. Nivriddhi, Jnanadev, Muktabai, Namdev, Janabai, Gora, Gonai, Tukaram, Narhari, Narsibhai, Sajan – kasai (butcher), Sawata – mail (gardner).
36. These have been saints of yore; and saints there have been even in the recent past. These virtuous saints have regarded the world as one family and have been the refuge of the afflicted and the suffering.
37. The great saint Ramdas left the banks of the Godavari to appear on the banks of the river Krishna, for the salvation of the world.
38. In the same way, Shri Sai, this greatest among yogis, appeared near Godavari, by the great good fortune of Shirdi, and for the deliverance of the world.
39. 'Parees' (or the Philosopher's stone,) turns a piece of iron into gold by its touch and the analogy of the Parees is used to describe the saints. But so remarkable are the ways of the saints that they transform their devotees completely, raising them to their own exalted state.
40. Transcending all distinctions, to see the Brahman reflected in the entire Universe, animate and inanimate, to regard the glory of this creation as the undivided glory of Brahman;
41. And in this way, when the true knowledge, the realization that the whole Universe is nothing but, 'I am that I am', comes, who can then describe the glorious feeling of joy that it will bring? He (the seeker) will attain to a high state of purity and goodness.

42. When such oneness (of the Self with the Universe) is experienced so that nothing is known which is other than the Self, then to who can one be hostile? And of whom, afraid?
43. As Damaji at Mangalvedha, Samarth Ramdas at Sajjangad, Narsimhasaraswati at Wadi, so was Sainath the saint of Shirdi.
44. Extremely difficult to accomplish, to cross over, as this worldly life is, he who has conquered it, is adorned by Peace, who is the Treasure of Knowledge personified;
45. A retreat for the Vaishnavites, the most benevolent among the benevolent, Karna incarnate in bestowing spiritual wisdom, such is this Sai, the quintessence of Truth.
46. Without attachment to the transient, absorbed totally in the Self, and intent on attaining the highest goal of human life – how can this state of his being be described?
47. The worldly state holds for Him no prosperity or poverty; nor does He rejoice or grieve for the pleasures of the other world. His inner being is crystal clear as a mirror; the speech, always a shower of nectar.
48. He, in whose eyes a king and pauper, the poor and the meek are all equal; who know not respect or disrespect towards his own self, he is himself the all-pervading God.
49. He moved and conversed with the common flocks and watched with them the dancing and gesticulating of the Muralis; he nodded appreciatively as he listened to the songs and ghazals. And yet this Samadhi was unperturbed. 9/18/5
50. Allah's name constantly on his lips, is the sign to recognize him; in the dark night of all beings he awoke to the Light and what was day to other beings was night for him. Inwardly, he was as tranquil as the sea.
51. To which ashram (stage of life) he belonged was something beyond human speculation; for he followed no code of conduct laid down for the specific ashrams. Usually he does not leave his place and yet he knows everything that is happening anywhere.
52. Though outwardly he held a splendid durbar (royal court) regularly and related a thousand and one stories, yet inwardly he was committed to silence.
53. Leaning against the wall he would stand and would go on his rounds, morning and afternoon, to the Lendi or Chavadi, yet his state of Self-absorption was constant.
54. I know not in which birth, on what occasion, at what time and in which manner, I must have undertaken penance that Sai should have taken me under his wing thus.
55. Wicked from birth that I am, how can I ever claim this to be the fruit of my penance? Nay, it is Sai himself who loves the meek and the lowly and surely this is nothing but his grace.

56. Though born a siddha, his behaviour was that of a sadhaka or seeker. By nature unconceited and very humble, he strove to please all.
57. As Eknath to Paithan, Jnaneshvar to Alandi, so did Shirdi Sai bring glory to the soil of Shirdi.
58. Blessed are the stones and the blades of grass, in Shirdi which, without effort, kissed Baba's feet every day, and held the sacred dust from his feet on their head.
59. Shirdi itself is our Pandharpur; Shirdi, our Jagannathpuri, our Dwarka, Shirdi alone is our Gaya, Kashi – Vishweshwar; and even our Rameshwar is in Shirdi.
60. Shirdi alone is our Badrikedar, our Nasik-Tryambakeshwar, Ujjain, Mahakaleshwar and also Mahabaleshwar-Gokarna.
61. Sai's sacred company in Shirdi is our Agam (scriptures of which temple worship is mainly founded) and Nigam (Dharmashashtras). That itself is the assuagement of the sufferings and pain of the worldly life and the easiest way to deliverance.
62. Samarth Sai's darshan is for us the Yoga-sadhan and conversing with him is the washing away of our sins.
63. Pressing his feet softly is as the sacred bath at the confluence of the three rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati and partaking of the holy water off his feet means the eradication of all desires.
64. His command to us is as an aphorism of the Vedas or a Gospel Truth. And eating his Udi and prasad is sanctifying, in every sense of the word.
65. Sai alone is to us the Supreme Brahman; in him is our highest goal of human life. Sai himself is Shri Krishna, Shri Ram, and he is our eternal refuge.
66. Sai is beyond the pair of opposites (such as joy and sorrow, anger and love, etc.); he is never elated or depressed, but always absorbed in the Self; and forever, the Ultimate Reality.
67. But Shirdi was only the centre from which emanated Baba's influence very widely, to Punjab, to Calcutta, to Gujarat, to the Deccan, to Karnataka – to all over India.
68. Sai's Samadhi at Shirdi is the place for the gathering of all saints, where, as one makes one's way, the bondage of worldly life breaks down at every step.
69. A mere darshan of this Samadhi is truly a fulfillment of this human birth; how then, can I describe the great good fortune of those who have spent their entire lives in his service?
70. On the mosque and on the wada (Samadhi Mandir), rows of beautiful flags, flutter, high up in the skies, as if beckoning the devotees with their hands.
71. Baba became renowned as Mahant or Sadhu, and his fame spread from village to village. Some prayed to him, taking vows with true faith; some gained peace of mind by his darshan alone.

72. Whatever the thoughts in anybody's mind, be they pure or vile, their minds experienced peace and calm by his darshan. In their hearts people were simply amazed.
73. The same marvelous experience of the darshan of Vitthal-Rakhumai of Pandharpur, was given by Sai Baba to his devotees of Shirdi.
74. Should anyone think this is an exaggeration, let them hear the words of Gaulibua, a dedicated devotee of Vitthal, to remove the doubts.
75. He was a Warkari from Pandharpur, who, out of his devotion to Baba, came to Shirdi once a year, as regularly as he went to Pandharpur.
76. With a donkey and, for companion, a disciple, Bua set out on the pilgrimage with the constant chant of 'Ram-Krishna-Hari' on his lips.
77. Ninety-five years of age, he spent the 'Chaturmans' on the banks of the Ganga and the remaining eight months at Pandharpur, which made it possible for him to meet Baba, once a year, during these journeys.
78. Gazing into Baba's face, he would become humble and exclaim, "This, truly, is Pandharinath incarnate, the Refuge of the friendless and destitute, the All-merciful One!
79. "Does one become a saint merely by wearing a dhoti with a silk border? No, indeed! Here, one has to wear out one's bones, turn one's blood into water, by one's own arduous efforts!
80. "How can one become God, for nothing! But truly he (Sai) and he alone is Pandharirao! With a firm belief that this world is illusory, perceive the divinity behind it."
81. When such are the words of a great devotee of God, who is dedicated to the worship of Pandharinath, then what experience can a base, lowly creature like me, have? Let the listeners experience this for themselves!
82. With his great fondness for chanting God's name, Baba repeated 'Allah Malik', ceaselessly and would often make his devotees hold a naam-saptah (a week-long chanting of the Name), in front of him which would go on day and night, continuously.
83. Once, Das Ganu was commanded to start a Naam-saptah, and Das Ganu said, 'Yes but Vitthal must appear to me'.
84. Laying his hand on his heart, Baba said peremptorily, "Yes, yes, Vitthal will appear in form, before you! Only, the devotee must have faith enough!
85. "Danakpuri (Dakore in Gujarat) of Dakurnath, or Pandharpur of Vitthalraya, or Dwarka of Ranchchod – everything is in Shirdi, itself. You do not have to seek it far.
86. "After all, is Vitthal going to appear from a secret place? Moved by the intense love of his devotees, he will incarnate in this very place, for you.
87. "By his devoted service to his old parents, Pundalik had won over the Lord of Lords, who stood resting on a single brick, just for the love and devotion of Punadlik".
88. And som as the saptah came to an end, it is said that Das Ganu did have the Vitthal-darshan, in Shirdi itself! So much for the truth of Baba's words.

89. Once, Kakasaheb Dikshit was sitting in mediation after his early morning bath, as was his daily practice, when he had the darshan of Vitthal.
90. Later, when he went for Baba's darshan, see the wonder of what Baba said to him, "So, Vitthal Patil had come isn't it? And you did meet him, I'm sure!
91. "But mind you, that Vitthal is very elusive! Hold on to him fast and fix him in place, forcibly. Or else, he will give you the slip, if you are inattentive, even for a moment."
92. But this was just the incident of the morning, while later in the day, as the sun came overhead at noon, see how there was yet another proof of the glorious vision of Vitthal.
93. Someone from another village came to Shirdi bringing with him quite a few pictures of Vithoba of Pandharpur, with the intention of selling them.
94. And Dikshit was simply amazed to find them the exact replicas of the Vitthal who had appeared to him during his meditation that morning! Baba's words at once, came to his mind.
95. With great love Dikshit bought one of the pictures, paying the price to the seller and with great devotion installed it for pooja.
96. Listen now, to yet another fascinating story, which, once again, brings out Sai's reverence towards the worship of Vitthal.
97. One Bhagvantrao Kshirsagar, whose father was a great devotee of Vitthal, used to go to Pandharpur very often.
98. There was an idol of Vitthal for daily pooja, in his house. But after the father's death, pooja, food-offerings, everything stopped. Even the annual rites and ceremonies for the dead ancestors were forgotten.
99. Not a word was even uttered about the annual visit to Pandharpur! When Bhagvantrao came to Shirdi, Baba remembered his father, saying, "He was my friend.
100. "And since he (Bhagavantrao) is the son of that friend, I have draged him over to Shirdi. He makes no food-offerings to the gods any more. He keeps me hungry, too.
101. "Even Vitthal, he had kept without food. So have I brought him to Shirdi. I shall now remind him about everything and thus make him perform the daily pooja."
102. On one occasion, knowing how it was the specially opportune time of Parvakaal, Das Ganu wished to take a dip in the river at Prayag and came to Baba for his permission.
103. Baba replied that there was no need to travel so far, for that. Shirdi itself is our Prayag. Let there be firm faith in your mind.
104. And indeed, what a marvel of marvels! Even as he placed his hand on Baba's feet, water trickled down from both his toes, the twin streams of the holy Ganges and Yamuna oozed out in a trickle!
105. At the sight of this miracle, Das Ganu was choked with emotion. How great was Baba's favour! It moved him to tears of joy and gratitude.

106. Love brimmed up in his heart and stirred him to poetic utterance, which found its satisfaction only after describing Baba's boundless power and incomprehensible leelas, in verse.
107. Charming is this Das Ganu's pada! And, to satisfy the listeners's eager desire to hear it, I give here, at athis appropriate juncture, the sublime song, as promised earlier: 9/18/5

(Pada)

O Sadguru, boundless is your power, marvelous your leelas!
To ferry the dull and the ignorant across the Ocean of life, you are for ever the ark

(Refrain)

Veni Madhav you became and brought Prayag at your feet,
Only to make Ganga and Yamuna flow from your toes. (1)
The Lotus-born (Brahma), the consort of Lakshmi (Vishnu),
and Shiva-Har (Shankar), the quintessence of the Trigunas,
You have yourself become, O Sai Samarth, as you walked on this earth (2)
Wisdom of Brahma pours out of your words, sometimes;
Sometimes, you assume the terrible form of Shiva, to show 'Tamas' (3)
Like Shri Krishna, you indulge, sometimes, in childish pranks;
And at times, you are the fabled swan on the lake of your devotees' hearts (4)
If a muslim, sandalwood-paste was (like Hindus) dear to you,
But if a Hindu, how happily you always stayed in the mosque! (5)
To call you wealthy, -- but you went your rounds, begging for alms.
And should you be a fakir, your munificence has put even Kuber to shame! (6)
If the mosque be your abode, there is always, fire
Burning in the dhuni, to provide Udi to the people. (7)
From dawn gather the faithful to worship you,
Till the sun is at zenith, and the mid-day arati is performed. (8)
All around the devotees stand, as the divine attendants on God,
Holding the chowrie-chamar to wave softly over your head. (9)
Cornets resound, clarions make melody, the bells clang aloud,
As the chopdar, impressive with his belt, stands at the door
proclaiming your glory. (10)
On your resplendent seat, you are as Lord Vishnu, during arati,
But you are Shankar (destroyer of Cupid) as you sit before the
dhuni, in the evenings. (11)
Such leelas of the Trinity, we experience – in you, day after day,
O Baba Sai. (12)
Even so, my mind wanders idly;
To steady it, is all I pray to you, now. (13)
Vilest among the vile, a great sinner that I am; seeking refuge at your feet
I come; avert the threefold afflictions of Das Ganu, O Gururaya! (14)

108. People go to the Ganges to wash away their terrible sins; while Ganges herself takes refuge at the saints' feet to cleanse her own sins.
109. Leaving Sai's holy feet, we need not go on a pilgrimage to the Ganges or Godavari. It is enough to listen to this hymn to a saint, this fascinating story of Sai, with a devout heart.
110. Just as, by great good fortune, Gonai found Nama in the Bhima river, and Tamaal found Kabir in an oyster shell in the Bhagirathi,
111. So also, Shri Sainath first appeared for his devotees, in the Shirdi village, under a Neem tree, at the tender age of sixteen.
112. Even at his first appearance, he was Brahmanjnani, untouched even in his dreams, by sensual desire. Maya he had abandoned, totally, and Moksha rolled at his feet.
113. In which country, which righteous family, or in which parental abode, Baba took birth, this no one knew.
114. None knew his antecedents – who was his farther, or who, his mother? All were exhausted asking him questions, but were none the wiser for all that.
115. Abandoning mother and father, friends and relations, caste and descent – in fact, renouncing the whole worldly life, he appeared in Shirdi for the benefit of the people.
116. An old lady in Shirdi, Nana Chopdar's mother, would often talk about the marvel of Baba's ways and of his behaviour.
117. In the beginning, said she, this lad, fair and handsome, was first seen sitting calmly in deep meditation, under a Neem tree.
118. When they saw his comely youth, people were quite astonished to see him performing such arduous penance, at that tender age. So much so, that the scorching heat or bitter cold were, to him, the same.
119. Such tender age! And oh, what severe austerity! The villagers were simply amazed to see it. People from the neighbouring villages thronged Shirdi to have the boy's darshan.
120. Company, he kept none, during the day. Nor was he afraid of anything or anyone, by the night. 'Where could this lad have come from?', was the one question that puzzled everyone's mind.
121. So comely was his face; so handsome the form! Looking at him love welled up in the heart. He never visited anyone, but remained near the Neem tree, day and night.
122. Everyone was quite mystified. How extraordinary was this lad! Such tender age; so sweet and youthful a countenance! And how could he stay, out in the open, day and night.
123. Outwardly, but a young boy, yet in his demeanour, he surpassed even the greatest among men, the very incarnation of perfect Renunciation! They could not stop wondering.
124. A strange thing happened, one day! A few persons were possessed by the spirit of deity, Khandoba. In their frenzy, they started puffing and gasping

- and panting, emitting loud deep sounds. So people began to ask them questions.
125. 'To which fortunate parents does this boy belong? From where and how has he come up to here? O Khandoba, at least you find the answers for us', one of them said to the god.
 126. And the god said, 'Go, get a hoe, and strike at the spot that I show you. Strike here and your hoes and you will get your answers about this lad.
 127. Then, in the same spot, near the enclosing wall of the village, under the same Neem tree, they struck blow upon blow with their hoes till they came upon some bricks.
 128. The layer of bricks over, they found an underground cell with four metal lamps burning in it, the entrance to which was closed by a quern-stone.
 129. The cell was paved with limestone and contained a wooden seat, a Gomukhi with a beautiful rosary. Then the god said, 'For twelve years this boy undertook penance at this spot.'
 130. All the people were wondertstruck at this and started plying the boy with probing questions. But the lad was full of playful mischief and told them a story, altogether different.
 131. "This is my Guru's seat", said he, "and my most sacred legacy. Listen to me this once and preserve it as it is."
 132. So said Baba, said the listeners who were present. But why is this, my tongue, moved to say that Baba was giving it a different turn?
 133. I was amazed at myself. Why should I think in such terms about Baba? But now I realize that this must have been his spontaneous sense of humour.
 134. Baba dearly loved a joke. Maybe, the cell was his own dwelling. But what does one lose in saying that it is the guru's? how does its importance suffer?
 135. And so on his orders, the cell was, once again, sealed as his guru's seat, by restoring the bricks to their former position.
 136. The Neem tree was to Baba as a great and as sacred as the Ashwaththa (peepul) or Audumbar tree. He loved that Neem tree dearly, and greatly revered it.
 137. Mhalsapati and other old residents of Shirdi village bow to this place as the Samadhi of Baba's guru.
 138. It is common knowledge among the villagers that Baba sat near this Samadhi, in meditation, observing total silence for a period of twelve years.
 139. Sathssaheb, one of Baba's devotees, acquired the land all around it, along with the Samadhi and the Neem tree and raised a building with four verandahs connected at the centre.
 140. This building, this very wada, was originally the common residence of the pilgrims, forever crowded with comings and goings of visitors.
 141. Sathse raised a bank around the neem tree and an upper floor running North-South. When the northern staircase was laid, he pointed out the cell.

142. Under the staircase, facing south, is a beautiful niche. In front of it, facing north, the devotees sit on the bank.
143. "On Thursdays and Fridays, he who washes the floor with cowdung, at sunset, and burns incense for a moment, Shri Hari will surely bless him."
144. Listeners may doubt in their minds, whether this is true, or an exaggeration. But these are the words from Sai's mouth, which I have heard with my own ears.
145. This is no statement of my own making. Have not the slightest doubt. Those who have personally heard this are still amongst us.
146. Later came Dikshit-wada which provided spacious accommodation. And in the fore part a stone building was also built, very shortly thereafter (by Shri Buti).
147. Dikshit was already well-known for his virtuous deeds and was the very embodiment of faith and devotion. The seeds of his spiritual progress were sown during his sojourn to England.
148. Here, the listeners may well ask, how, instead of the holy places of pilgrimage. Like Mathura, Kashi or Dwarka could England which was proscribed by the then Hindu custom, be the beginning of his spiritual-journey?
149. And it is quite natural for the listeners to raise this doubt. But all my listeners will surely forgive me for a slight digression in answering it, which in fact they will appreciate.
150. Dikshit had already accumulated enough religious merit by his pilgrimages to the holy places of Kashi, Prayag, Badrikedar, Mathura, Vrindavan, Dwarkapur etc.
151. Moreover, by his father's virtuousness, his own extraordinary good fortune, and a desert of the accumulated merit of his past births, he had the darshan of Shri Sai. 9/19/5
152. The immediate cause for this darshan was his lameness, decreed as if by Fate. For, while in England, his foot slipped and resulted in an infirmity of the leg.
153. To all appearances a misfortune, it was really a most auspicious and rare event, which led to his association with Sai. It was indeed, the fruit of all his good deeds!
154. Dikshit happened to meet Chandorkar, from whom he came to know of Sai's fame. Chandorkar said, 'You just see the marvel of his darshan! Your lameness will disappear, immediately!'
155. But it was not so much the infirmity of the leg that Dikshit considered to be a deficiency. The real infirmity, he said, is of the mind, which he beseeched Sai to remove.
156. What is this human frame, but a bag of flesh, bones, blood and skin; a mere load-cart of all the transient, worldly affairs! Its mattered little, even if the lameness remained in the leg!

157. It was in the year 1909, on the second day of November, that Dikshit, for the first time had Sai's sacred darshan.
158. In that same year, he then went again to Shirdi, in the month of December, to have Sai's darshan, once again, and this time, he really felt that he should stay there for a longer period.
159. At first, a thought came to his mind that he should sell some twenty-five of his company shares, to build a shed, with corrugated iron sheets for a roof, so that it would also be useful to the pilgrims.
160. But later on, he resolved in his mind to build a wada, instead. And, in the very next year, the foundation stone for it was laid, to mark the auspicious beginning of the building work.
161. The day was 9th December. Baba's consent was obtained, and taking it to be the auspicious sign, the work of laying the foundation stone was accomplished.
162. As luck would have it, Dikshit's brother, who would not have come, normally, even on invitation, happened to be there already, on that very day and at that most auspicious time.
163. Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde had come to Shirdi alone, much earlier, and was in some difficulty over getting Baba's permission to return, home.
164. Both of them got Baba's permission – Khaparde, to go home and Dikshit to lay the foundation stone of the building, on the same 10th of December.
165. This day is significant for yet another reason. From this very day as started, with great love and devotion, Baba's arati before he retired for the night, at the Chavadi.
166. Later in the year 1911, the auspicious occasion of Ramnavami was availed of, for the 'Griha-pravesh' with all the rituals and ceremonials.
167. Later on still, Buti's wada was built, with lavish expenditure and Baba was laid to rest in it after his mahasamadhi. So that all the money was well-spent.
168. Now there were three wadas, in all, where earlier, there was none. But in those early days, it was Sathé's wada that was most useful to everyone.
169. This Sathewada is important for another reason, too. In the beginning, on the very spot, there was a beautiful flower-garden grown by Baba, with his own hands.
170. A short account of this garden will be given in the next chapter. Hemad, with his listeners, bows humbly at Sai's feet.
171. Vaman Tatya (the potter) would supply the earthen pitchers, and Sai Samarth would water the plants, thus raising a garden on the rocky barren soil. Later, Baba just disappeared, one day.
172. Afterwards, he met Chand Patil, near Aurangabad and with that marriage party he returned to Shirdi.
173. Thereafter, he met Devidas; he met Janakidas too! And so also Gangagir, this threesome then got together in Shirdi.

174. The incident of Baba's wrestling with Mohiuddin then took place, and afterwards, Baba came to stay at the mosque. He grew fond of Denge, and gradually, other devotees gathered round him.
175. All these stories will be narrated in the next chapter, which can then be listened to, attentively. Hemad now prostrates whole-heartedly before Sai, as he seeks refuge at his feet.

Weal to be all! Here ends the fourth chapter of
'Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit', called
'Descent of Sai Samarth in Shirdi',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

5

Sai's Disappearance and Return to Shirdi

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Now in continuation with the previous story, listen to this account of how Baba suddenly disappeared from Shirdi, only to reappear, once again, in the company of Chand Patil;
2. How Baba himself carried water to create a garden; as also, the meeting together of Gangagir and other saints; listen to these stories which are sanctifying.
3. Baba, had for a time disappeared; but later, it was in the marriage-party of a Muslim gentleman, which came to Shirdi, that this jewel was discovered.
4. Devidas, however, had already come to stay in Shirdi, before that. Later on came Janakidas Gosavi too, to live in Shirdi.
5. How all this came about, I shall now relate in detail. Be attentive, O listeners, as you respectfully listen to this.
6. In Dhoopkheda, a village of the Aurangabad district, there was a Muslim, of great good fortune, by the name of Chand Patil.
7. While journeying to Auragabad, he lost his mare and for two months she could not be traced. 'No hope now of finding her!'
8. So thought the Patil, completely dejected, and felt very sorry and distressed for the loss of his mare. Finally, he flung the saddle across his back and turned back to go the way he came.
9. Leaving Aurangabad behind, he travelled about nine miles. There was a mongo tree on the way, under which he saw this gem among men.

10. A cap in hi hand, body covered by a kafni (a mendicant's robe), and a baton under the armpit – even as he crushed some tobacco, in the palm of his hand and filled the chillim (clay pipe), a wonderful thing happened.
11. As Chand Patil was passing that way, he heard the fakir calling out to him, saying, 'Oh, you! Come, come here! Some this chillim, then go! Come, rest here a while, under the shade!'
12. The fakir then asked, 'What is the saddle for?' And the Patil replied, 'I have lost my mare, Sir!' Upon this he said, 'Go search along this rivulet'. And lo! The mare was found immediately!
13. Chand Patil was astonished, and said to himself, 'Truly, I have met a sage! There is no limit to this miraculous deed! How can he be called an ordinary human being!'
14. He then returned with the mare, and came back to the same place, again. The fakir made him sit by himself. He picked up with his own hands a pair of tongs.
15. Then he thrust it in the soil, in that same place, and brought out a burning ember from within the soil. He then placed it on the chillim in his hand and picked up the baton.
16. For there was no water to wet the strip of cloth, covering the chillim. So he struck the ground with his baton and water began to flow out.
17. Dipping the strip of cloth in water, he then squeezed it out and then wound it round the chillim. He smoked the chillim himself and made the Patil smoke it, too. The Patil was quite dazed, seeing all this.
18. The Fakir was then pressed to sanctify his home, by the Patil, by paying him a visit. The Fakir, who had come to this earth only for such divine leelas, conferred the favour on him.
19. The next day he went into the village to stay with Patil, and spent some time there. Later, he came back to Shirdi.
20. This Chand Patil was the headman of the village Dhoopkheda and his wife's nephew was engaged to be married to a bride from Shirdi.
21. This nephew of his wife had come of a marriageable age and had the good fortune of marrying, a bride from Shirdi!
22. So, with the bullock-carts and horses, the marriage-party set out to come to Shirdi, in due course. And then, Baba, drawn by his affection for Chandbhai, joined the party, too!
23. The wedding over, the marriage-party returned from Shirdi. Only Baba remained behind. He stayed back and they stayed on, forever! That marked the rise in Shirdi's good fortune.
24. Indestructible and ancient that Sai is, he is neither Hindu nor Muslim. He has no caste, no descent, no family, no gotra. The state of self-realization was the core of his being.
25. And 'Sai, Sai' that people called him, is that his real name? No, indeed! Out of respect he was first addressed as 'Welcome, Sai?' and that is how he got his name!

26. It was on the day that Baba arrived with the marriage-party in Mhalsapati's yard near the Khandoba temple, that this happened.
27. In the beginning this yard was Bhagat Mhalsapati's. Later it belonged to Aminbhai. The marriage-party, as it arrived, got down in this same place, under the banyan tree.
28. The bullocks were all unyoked in the yard, in the Khandoba temple compound. And Baba, too, got down there, with the marriage-party, along with all the others.
29. As this youthful fakir alighted from the cart, it was Bhagat, who first saw him and received him with the words 'Welcome Sai'. From then onwards, that name became his proper name.
30. Thereafter, people began to call him 'Sai, Sai', and the name came to be used commonly by all.
31. He then smoked the chillim, there (in Mhalsapati's yard) and thereafter went to stay at the mosque. He quite enjoyed Devidas's company. Altogether he was happy in Shirdi.
32. Sometimes, he would sit in the Chavadi, sometimes, he would be in the company of Devidas, or sometimes he would sit in the Maruti temple. He would thus be engaged fondly, wherever it pleased him.
33. This Devidas was already in Shirdi, much earlier than the time Baba came there. Janakidas Gosavi of the Mahanubhavi sect came to Shirdi, thereafter.
34. With this Janakidas, Maharaj would sit talking; or Janakidas would go and sit wherever Maharaj might be.
35. Both were very fond of each other's company and would have regular meetings. This – their association with each other – was a source of great pleasure to everyone.
36. So also, one Gangagir, a householder and a very famous devotee of the Vaishanava sect, from Puntambe, used to visit Shirdi, frequently.
37. In the beginning, Gangagir used to be quite astonished in his mind to see Sai carry water from the well, holding earthen pitchers in both his hands.
38. But later, when he met Sai face to face, Bua said, very clearly and quite emphatically, 'Blessed is Shirdi and very fortunate too, to have this jewel among men associated with her.
39. 'Today he carries pitchers of water on his own shoulders. But this is no ordinary figure! It is by the great accumulated merit of this soil, that he has come to this place.'
40. Similarly, one other well-known saint, by the name of Anandnath, had also predicted Baba's wonderful and divine leelas.
41. This very famous Anandnath had set up a math (monastery) at the village Yeole, and in the company of some residents of Shirdi, he came to Shirdi.
42. Anandnath was the disciple of the great saint of Akkalkot. When he actually saw Sai, he exclaimed, 'Oh, he is a diamond, a veritable diamond!

43. 'Maybe, today he lies neglected in the rubbish heap, yet he is undoubtedly a diamond and not a piece of flint!' And remember, these were the words of Anandnath, while Sai was yet of a tender age!
44. 'Remember, well these words of mine! Later on, you will be reminded of them.' Prophesying thus, he then returned to Yeole.
45. Sai then, used to allow his hair to grow and would not have his head shaved, ever! His dress used to be like a wrestler, when this Sai was in his youth.
46. Whenever he went to Rahata he would always bring back with him saplings of marigold and jasmine and would plant them with his own hands in desolate places and would also water them regularly.
47. His devotee, Vaman Tatya would supply him every day with two unbaked earthen pitchers for that purpose. And Baba would water the water the plants with his own hands.
48. From the stone-vessel near the well, he would fill the pitchers and carry them on his shoulders and at sunset, he would keep the pitchers under the Neem tree.
49. The moment they were placed there, they would (of their own) crack on the spot. The next morning Tatya would bring him two new pitchers.
50. When fully and properly baked, a pitcher is always better and lasts longer. But Baba would require only unbaked ones. Thus the potter was able to sell the pitchers, without the labour of baking them in the furnace.
51. For three years this was his preoccupation; in that open space, he raised a garden and in that same place, that today, by lucky chance people are enjoying the convenience of a wada.
52. And, also in the same place, under the Neem tree, a devotee called 'Bhai' has installed the 'Padukas' of Swami Samarth of Akkalkot, for those devotees who wish to offer 'pooja' to Swami Samarth.
53. Swami Samarth of Akkalkot was Bhai's chosen deity and with great devotion, Bhai used to worship his photograph, very regularly.
54. Once he felt that he should go to Akkalkot to have a darshan of Swami's padukas, and offer a sincere pooja, with all attendant rituals, to the Padukas.
55. So he made all the necessary preparations to leave for Akkalkot from Bombay. And he was just about to leave on the very next day, when he had to abandon his resolve and instead, he found himself on the way to Shirdi.
56. Even as he was all set to leave the next day, he had a dream on the previous night, in which Swami Samarth exhorted him, saying 'At the moment my stay is in Shirdi, so you leave for Shirdi'.
57. Such being the command, Bhai obeyed it with great reverence and left Bombay for Shirdi, where he stayed on for six month's in great peace and happiness.
58. Bhai, being steadfast in his faith, installed the padukas of Swami Samarth under the neem tree to commemorate the vision he had had in his dream.
59. In the year 1912, in the month of Shravan (i.e. August – September), during the bright half of the moon, which was also the auspicious Parva-kaal, he installed the padukas under the Neem tree, very lovingly with pooja, bhajans etc.

60. On an auspicious day, the installation was performed at the hands of Dada Kelkar and under the direction of Upasani, with all the rites and rituals prescribed by the Shastras.
61. The arrangement for the daily worship of the padukas was entrusted to a Brahmin, named Dikshit, while Sagun Nayak looked after the overall arrangements. Such is the tale of the padukas.
62. This is how these saints, the true incarnations of God, who are without attachments and desires, appear on this earth for their selfless mission of uplifting the world.
63. A few days later, a very astonishing incident took place, which when the listeners hear attentively, will surprise them, too!
64. Mohiuddin, a seller of betel leaf, areca-nut, tobacco, etc., and Baba had some dispute between them, which flared up resulting into a bout of wrestling, both fighting each other fiercely.
65. Both were skilled wrestlers, but mere physical prowess cannot prevail against destiny. So that Mohiuddin became more powerful and Baba, his strength being unequal to his opponent, was defeated.
66. From then onwards, Baba's mind was made up. He changed his entire dress; he started wearing the long kafni, a langot and a piece of cloth tied around the head.
67. Of the gunny bag, he made his seat and the gunny bag served as a bedding too! He found contentment even in the rags that he wore.
68. "Poverty holds the highest sovereignty, -- a thousand times greater than the grandeur of the nobleman. Allah befriends the poor", so would Sai say, always.
69. Gangagir also had been in the same position once. Fond as he was of wrestling, once, while he was engaged in that sport, he suddenly grew weary of it, wanting to renounce it.
70. As the opportune moment came, the words of siddha came to his ears, 'This body should rather wear itself out, in sporting with God'.
71. These words of Grace fell on his ears even as he was engaged in wrestling. He renounced the world and took to the spiritual path.
72. His math is on an isle, situated between the twin streams of the river Godavari, near Putambe and there are his disciples too, eager to serve him.
73. As time went by, Sainath would only answer the questions put to him and would never talk to anyone of his own accord.
74. During the day, he would be seated under the Neem tree, sometimes he would sit in the shade of a horizontal branch of the Babul tree, that grew by the stream, at the village boundary.
75. Sometimes, when it pleased him, Baba would wander of an afternoon in the vicinity of Nimgaon, a mile or so away from Shirdi.
76. The famous Trimbak Dengele was the Jahagirdar of Nimgaon, and Babasaheb was a descendant of his. Baba was very fond of this Babasaheb.
77. Whenever Baba took a round of Nimgaon, he would go to his house and would love to spend a day talking to him. 9/21/5

78. He had a younger brother, Nanasaheb by name, who had no son, due to which, he would always feel sad at heart.
79. The first wife had dim chances of getting one so he married a second time. But no one can escape the decree of fate. Mysterious are the ways of destiny!
80. Then Babasaheb sent him for Sai's darshan. And by his blessings a son was born to nana.
81. Thereafter Sai's fame began to grow and a large number of people thronged Shirdi for Sai's darshan. The news reached Ahmednagar, which is a district place.
82. In Ahmednagar, Nana used to move much in the Government circles and was influential with the officials, amongst whom was also, Chidambar Keshav, who was the secretary to the District Collector.
83. Nana wrote to him a letter, saying that he should visit Shirdi with his wife, children and friends for the darshan of Sai Samarth. The visit, he said, was worthwhile.
84. In this way, many began to come to Shirdi, one after the other, as Baba's fame began to spread and the ranks of his followers swelled.
85. Though Baba needed no company, during the day he would be surrounded by his devotees. After sunset, however, he would sleep in the dilapidated mosque in Shirdi.
86. Chillim, tobacco and a tumbler, were constantly by his side; Baba wore a long, flowing kafni, covering his head with a piece of white cloth and always had with him his baton.
87. He would tie around his head that piece of clean, white cloth, taken behind the left ear and twisted firmly, like the matted hair of a Gosavi, to form a shapely head gear.
88. Covering himself with such clothes, he would sometimes go without a bath even for eight days at a stretch; barefoot he walked and used only a gunny bag for a seat.
89. That piece of sack-cloth was thus his seat always. The comfort of a cushion, he knew not, and found contentment in whatever he had.
90. That old, worn-out-sack-cloth was his favourite seat, which was forever in that same place – day in and day out.
91. That was all there was for a seat, or as a covering. He wore a kaupin, and no other sheet or covering. To ward off cold, there was the dhuni, of course!
92. Facing the south with the left hand resting on the railing, Baba would sit on his sack-cloth, in the mosque, gazing into the dhuni in front of him.
93. He seemed to be offering into the dhuni oblations of the ego, along with all the desires and the various affections of the mind, -- in fact, all the temptations of the worldly life, by various wiles and ways.
94. That raging fire in the dhuni he fed with logs of conceited knowledge and raised the banner of Allah by chanting 'Allah-Malik', ceaselessly.

95. And just how spacious was that mosque? It was but the space include betwixt two cross-beams, in which he lived, sat, moved about, met everybody, and slept.
96. The mattress, the cushions – they have all come now, when the devotees have gathered around him. But in the beginning, the devotees could not go near him without fear.
97. From the year 1912, everything changed. It was from that year that the transformation of the mosque really began.
98. Where there were knee-deep pits and holes in the ground in the mosque, it was paved overnight and Shahabadi (hewn) stones, on the strength of the devotees' labour of love.
99. Before he came to stay at the mosque, Baba used to live in the takiya or the resting place for the fakirs. He spent a long time there, and was quite happy.
100. It was there, in the takiya, that he used to tie ghungaroo (jingling bells) around his ankles and danced gracefully to the beat of the tambourine. He would also sing melodiously.
101. In the early days, Sai Samarth was very fond of the lighting up the lamps and would himself go and ask the shop-keepers for oil to light them.
102. Tumbler in hand, he would himself ask for oil at the grocers' shops and fill it in the earthen pots.
103. He would then burn the lamps bright, in the temple and in the mosque. This went on continuously for some days.
104. He was very fond of worshipping the lamps and would celebrate Diwali, the festival of light. Strips of cloth he would twist to form wicks and burn lights in the mosque.
105. As for the oil, he used to bring it free, everyday. Once, all the grocers conspired against him, thinking, now enough of this daily wearisome nuisance!
106. Later, when Baba came to ask for oil, as was his daily practice, and all of them refused, what an amazing thing happened!
107. Without a word, Baba turned back and placed the dry wicks in the earthen lamps. The grocers were watching with amusement as to what he would do without oil.
108. Baba picked up the tumbler from the parapet of the mosque. In it there was just a drop or two of oil, which was barely sufficient even to light an evening lamp.
109. He then poured water in that oil and drank it all up, offering it in this way to God; he then took pure water,
110. This he poured into the earthen lamps to wet the wicks and lighting them up, showed how the lamps could burn brightly.
111. Seeing the water thus kindled into a flame, the grocers were astounded and said to themselves that it was not a good thing that they lied to Baba.
112. Without a trace of oil, the lamps burned all night and everybody began to say that the grocers did not deserve Sai's grace.

113. 'Oh, what marvelous powers Baba has!' said the grocers and repeated that they had not only sinned by their falsehood, but needlessly enraged Baba.
114. However, being beyond anger and hatred, all this was farthest from Baba's thoughts. He had no enemy and no friend; to him all creatures were equal.
115. And now let us continue with the tale where we left off, i.e. Mohiuddin triumphed over Baba in wrestling. Now listen carefully to the story that follows:-
116. In the fifth year after this wrestling incident, a fakir, Jawahar Ali by name, who was a resident of Ahmednagar, came to Rahata, along with his disciples.
117. Choosing an open space near the Veerbhadra temple, the fakir set up his camp there. But the fakir was really very fortunate.
118. Had he not been so, how could he have had such a famous and delightful disciple as Sai?
119. There were many people in the village, of whom quite a few were Marathas. Amongst them was one Bhagu Sadaphal, who became his attendant.
120. The fakir was very learned. The Quran-e-sharif was at the tips of his fingers. Many people – some selfish, some spiritual, and some pious and faithful – became his followers.
121. He began constructing an Idgah (a place for prayer). Some time went by; he was then accused of defiling the temple of Veerbhadra.
122. Then the construction work of the Idgah came to a halt and the fakir was driven out of the village. From there he came to Shirdi and stayed with Baba in the mosque.
123. The fakir was a sweet talker. The whole village adored him and people said that he had cast a spell on Baba too, and charmed him completely.
124. 'You be my disciple' said he to Baba, and Baba, with his playful disposition, assented. The fakir was delighted and took Baba out of Shirdi.
125. With an eminent disciple like Baba, Jawahar Ali became the guru. Then they both decided to go and live in Rahata.
126. The guru did not know his disciple's marvelous ways; but the disciple knew the guru's shortcomings. But never did the disciple show disrespect, thereby observing the duties of a good disciple.
127. Whatever command came from the guru's mouth, whether proper or improper, was obeyed, no sooner it was given. And he even carried water in the guru's abode.
128. Thus the days passed in the service of the guru. But then it so happened that he would come to Shirdi only once in a while. When this happened, just listen to what followed.
129. This began happening repeatedly and, in fact he now stayed at Rahata for most part. The people started feeling that Sai was bewitched by the fakir and was almost lost to Shirdi.

130. Whereas people thought that it was by his yogic powers that Jawahar Ali had bound Sai to himself, Baba's plan was altogether different. It was his way of destroying the ego.
131. And yet, how could Sai have any ego or conceit? So the listeners will naturally reason. But then, such conduct was for the good of the people, which was also the mission of his life.
132. But the villagers of Shirdi were Baba's loving devotees and had great affection for him. Staying away from Baba in this way, appeared quite improper to them.
133. The villagers were greatly agitated in their minds to see Sai so much in power of Jawahar Ali and were in serious thought as to how he could be wont back.
134. As gold and its luster, as lamp and its light, so was the inseparable state of this guru and disciple. And they both had this experience of Oneness.
135. A group of devotees from Shirdi then went to that Idgah at Rahata, making plans in their minds, how they would try very very hard and would then return all together, bringing Baba back with them.
136. But Baba too a stand, quite to the contrary, "This fakir is very hot-tempered", he said, "Do not try to persuade him; for he will never let go of me.
137. "You now get out of here quickly for he will return from the village presently. So terrible is his wrath, that he will make a clean work of you all!
138. "His anger is very fierce and will turn him red in the face. Go, go be gone instantly, and take the next road straight to Shirdi.
139. 'What should be done next?' they thought, 'for Baba speaks contrary to all expectation!' Meanwhile, the fakir came back quite unexpectedly, and began to ask them. 9/22/5
140. 'So, have you come for this lad? And what are you discussing? If your intention is to take him back with you, you might as well not take the trouble; it will be in vain.'
141. Though he said so quite emphatically at the outset, in the end even he yielded to the pressure of the villagers and said, 'Take me also with you. We will all take this boy with us to Shirdi.'
142. Thus the fakir came back with them, too! He could not bear to part from Baba and even Baba could not let him go. How was this possible, was something no one could understand.
143. Sai was Brahman incarnate, while Jawahar Ali was full of misconceptions. When put to test by Devidas in Shirdi, all these misconceptions exploded.
144. Devidas had a beautiful figure, lustrous eyes, and a handsome face. He was only ten or eleven years old when he first came to Shirdi.
145. Such was this Gosavi of tender years, with only a langot round his loins, who had, at that time, put up at the Maruti temple.
146. Appa Bhil and Mhalsapati frequently visited him. Kashiram and others provided him with food grains, fuel, etc. He gradually gained importance.

147. Twelve years before Baba came with the marriage party, Devidas had already come to stay in Shirdi.
148. He taught Appa Bhil to write on a slate and made everyone recite Vyankatesh Stotra, which he had taught and which they knew by heart. He conducted these lessons regularly.
149. Devidas was highly enlightened. Tatyaba (Tatya Ganapat Patil-Kote) made him his guru and kashinath and others became his chief disciples and followers.
150. The fakir was brought before Devidas, who engaged him in a religious debate. With his ascetic powers, Devidas totally vanquished the fakir, who was then driven away from Shirdi.
151. As he escaped from Shirdi, the fakir went and stayed at Vijapur. Years later, he came to Shirdi and bowed humbly before Sainath.
152. All his misconceptions about himself being the guru and Sai, his disciple, were dispelled and by repentance he was purified. Baba also accepted him with respect, as before.
153. Such were Baba's inscrutable ways! The issue got resolved when the proper time came, but till then, Baba honoured the guru-shishya relationships.
154. If he considered himself a guru, it was entirely his responsibility; but as a disciple, Baba knew and performed his duty perfectly. This is the moral of this story, which Sainath himself put into practice.
155. There is no better state than that one should completely surrender to one's guru, or that one should totally accept the disciple as one's own. Without his relationship one cannot cross the ocean of worldly life.
156. This is the one lesson of this story. But rare indeed is the man who will be daring enough to firmly resolve to shed his ego and conquer the fortress of the ego-less state.
157. Here ingenious speculations of one's intellect are of no avail; he who wants to attain his highest good must conduct himself without conceit or ego.
158. He who has burned out the conceit in his physical body is the one who will find fulfilment in this human birth. And to attain salvation, he will then accept the discipleship of anyone.
159. Seeing that desireless state, in so young and comely a figure, all the people, both great and small, were struck with amazement and wonder.
160. The bodily functions of a realized soul work out according to his past Karma; but he is not burdened by the Prarabdha Karma, for he is no longer the doer of action.
161. Just as the sun cannot remain in darkness, so also the man of enlightenment cannot remain in a state of duality; for the entire Universe is in his own Self and he dwells in Advait (non-duality).
162. This conduct as guru and disciple has been narrated in detail, as described by Mhalsapati, the great devotee of Sainath.
163. But now, let this story be. The next one is even more profound and will be related in its proper sequence. Be attentive while you listen to it.

164. What was the condition of the mosque earlier, and with what toil was it paved; how no one knew, for certain, whether Sai was Hindu or Muslim.
165. Baba's yogic practices, such as dhoti-poti (cleaning of internal organs) and Khandayoga (severing and reassembling organs of the body, at will), and, how he took upon himself the karmic sufferings of the devotees, -- all this will be narrated in a proper manner, without omissions, later on.
166. Hemad surrenders to Sai, in all humility. This narration of his story is his prasad or grace. By merely listening to this sacred story, all the sins will be destroyed.

Weal to be all! Here ends the fifth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'Reappearance of Shri Sai in Shirdi',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

6

The story of the Festival of Shri Ram's Birth in Shirdi

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Be it a striving after spiritual progress or after material prosperity, where Sadguru is the helmsman, he alone will steer the boat to the other shore.
2. When the word 'Sadguru' stirs the feelings of the heart, it is Sai who immediately comes before the mind. He, in fact, actually stands in front of you and places his hand of benediction on your heart!
3. When his hand of blessing with the udi from the dhuni falls on your head, the heart swells with self-rejoicing, the eyes overflow with tears of love.
4. Such is the marvel of the subtle touch of the guru's hand that it burns up that astral body to ashes, by his merest touch, which even the funeral pyre cannot consume.
5. It brings peace and stability even to those who get a headache or burst out into the wild, meaningless babble, even at an accidental mention about gods and their divine tales.

6. As he places his lotus-hand on the head, the sins of so many past births which have reached a point of culmination, are all washed away, leaving Sai's loving devotees purified.
7. As the eyes rest on that comely form, you are choked by the rapture; tears of joy spring to the eyes; in the heart arise the Ashta-bhava.
8. The feeling that 'I am That' is awakened, giving the experience of the blissful joy within. Dissolving all duality, it celebrates the union with the Supreme One.
9. Whatever sacred books, Puranas, one may read, one is reminded of the Sadguru at every step, so that it is only Sai, who appears as Ram or Krishna and makes us listen to his own story.
10. As you sit down to listen to the Bhagwat, Krishna appears as none other than Sai, right from tip to toe, who is singing the 'Uddhav-Geet', for the benefit of his devotees.
11. Even in your casual conversations, you are suddenly reminded of one or the other of Sai's stories to illustrate a point properly.
12. You pull up a sheet of paper with the intention of writing, but cannot compose even a word. Yet when Sai himself, with his grace, inspires you to write, you know not how to stop the flow of words.
13. Whenever ego raises its head, he firmly presses it underneath his own hands. In addition, by pouring his grace into the devotee, he brings fulfillment to him.
14. When you surrender at the feet of Sai Samarth in act, speech and thought, then dharma, artha, kama and Moksha (the four ends of human life) come into the hands automatically.
15. The four paths of Karma (action) Jnana (Knowledge), Yoga and Bhakti (devotion) are for the attainment of God. Though they proceed in the four different directions, they all lead you to God-realisation.
16. The path of Devotion (Bhakti) is like the way through a forest of the prickly Babul trees, full of pits and holes and difficult to cross. Though it is a narrow pathway, for only one person, it directly takes you near God.
17. The easiest way to traverse it is to take every step carefully to avoid the thorns. Only then will you reach eternal abode without fear. That is what Guru, the Mother, warns you clearly. 9/23/5
18. When the rich, fertile soil of the mind is sprinkled with the water of devotion, renunciation sprouts; knowledge blossoms; kaivalya comes to fruition; and the rapture thereof, bursts forth. Avoiding of birth and death is then a certainty.
19. The primal Supreme soul is by itself perfect. He is also the threefold nature of Sai, Chit and Anand (Being, Consciousness and Bliss). Due to natural properties disguising the Spirit, it is awakened and manifests Itself for instructing devotees.

20. As the Brahman became manifest through its three said attributes, maya (illusion) became active, too, and manifested her properties, by stirring up Sattva (Righteous, Harmony), Rajas (Activity/Motion) and Tamas (Inertia/Darkness).
21. Really, it is clay, moulded to a particular shape, that is called a pot. But when it breaks, the name, form and identity, everything leaves it.
22. This whole world is created out of Maya. They are both thus related to each other as cause and effect. In fact, it is Maya who has assumed a form and has appeared as this manifest world.
23. If the state of this Maya, prior to the creation of the world, is considered, she had not manifested herself but was absorbed in the Supreme and gathered together in the Unmanifest.
24. Manifest or Unmanifest, Maya has always been a part of the Supreme Being. Hence this Maya is the Supreme Being and quite inseparable from It.
25. From Tamoguna (Inertia) Maya created the material objects, lifeless and motionless. This was her first act of creation.
26. Then as the Rajoguna (Motion), combined with the Life force of Supreme Being, it opened up a whole world of consciousness (a variety of moving creatures), by virtue of the aspects of both.
27. The Sattvaguna (Righteousness) of this Maya then created the intellect, which, when permeated with the Divine bliss, brought the sport of Creation to completion.
28. Thus Maya is susceptible to great modifications. So long as she is not stirred into action and does not create the above-mentioned things, the Trigunas remain unmanifest.
29. Maya is not manifest until she becomes active in her three gunas. Know, that as long as she herself remains passive, she can remain unmanifest.
30. Maya is the creation of the Supreme Being, while this world is the creation of Maya. 'All the visible world is Brahman' means that all these three (i.e. the Supreme Being, Maya and the world) are one.
31. Those in whose mind there is a keen desire to know how this unity can be experienced should see the Vedas.
32. A study of Vedas, Shruti and Smriti will give the power of discrimination (between real and unreal), which will give the experience that the guru's word is itself the Vedanta. This will, in turn, be conducive to the highest bliss.
33. Shri Sai's devotees have always known that he gave an assurance to the effect that in the homes of his devotees there will be no want for food and clothing.
34. 'I considered it to be my promise, to look after the sustenance and protection of those who worship me single-mindedly and serve me with reverence in their hearts'.

35. This is the affirmation in the Bhagvad Gita which, Sai says, should be taken as the Truth. There will be no want of food and clothing; do not strive after these.
36. Seek honour in the court of God; beseech His Grace, alone; strive to attain only His blessings and do not hanker after worldly honours.
37. Why should just a nod of their heads by the people in appreciation turn your head? Rather, it should be your chosen deity whose heart should melt in compassion and burst out into beads of perspiration!
38. And may you love to strive after such an objective! May all the senses be seized by a devotional passion and the sensual desires be so transformed as to sprout into devotional worship, instead! Oh, how wonderful it would then be!
39. May such worship be forever, leaving no relish for anything else. May the mind be absorbed in my name, and all else be totally forgotten.
40. The mind will then become detached – from the physical body, household concerns and wealth and will be in divine Bliss. It will attain equanimity and serenity, ultimately finding fulfilment.
41. A contented mind is the surest mark of being in saintly company. How can a restless mind that flits from one object to another be deemed to be one with the Supreme?
42. Hence, O listeners! give all attention as you listen to this narration with loving devotion. And may your mind turn to devotion while listening to this Life-story of Sai.
43. As the story progresses further, it will bring contentment; the restive mind will become restful; all agitation will be quietened, and peace and happiness will reign.
44. But now, let us continue with the story narrated previously, -- about the renovation of the mosque and about the birth of Shri Ram.
45. There was a devotee called Gopal Gund, who had a great devotion for Baba and who spent his time in the ceaseless chanting of Baba's name.
46. He had no issue. But later on, with Sai's blessing, a son was born to him. This made him very happy.
47. Gopal Gund felt that a fair (yatra) or celebration should be held every year at the Shirdi village, which will bring joy to everyone.
48. Taty Kote, Dada Kote, Madhavrao and other prominent people in the village, liked the idea and began making preparations for it.
49. But the celebrations of such annual festivals was subject to a regulation according to which, the permission of the District Collector was necessary.
50. But when attempts were made to obtain it, the Kulkarni (the Revenue Officer) of the village maliciously opposed it, thus creating obstacles in the way.
51. As a result of the objections raised by the Kulkarni, the District Collector passed an order that the fair should not be held at Shirdi.

52. But it was Baba's wish too, that this fair should be held in Shirdi and he had given his consent with the blessings, for it.
53. The villagers pursued the matter with determination and tried their utmost, with the result that the order was reversed by the authorities, in deference to the wishes of all.
54. From then onwards, with Baba's consent, it was decided to hold the fair on Ramnavami day. Taty Kote supervised all the arrangements. Multitudes now gather every year, for this fair.
55. On the day of Ramanavami, pooja and bhajan-singing took place amidst drum beats and sweet music made by musical instruments. Pilgrims from all directions flocked to Shirdi for the festivities.
56. Every year, two new flags used to be taken out in a procession, ceremoniously, to be tied to the spire of the mosque and later to be fixed there.
57. Of these, one was Nimonkar's the other was Damuanna's. both these, taken in a grand procession, would be fluttering high up at the tip of the spire.
58. Now listen to the interesting account of how the idea of celebrating Ramanavami originated from the celebration of the Urus which is the honour that Shirdi gives to the Deity.
59. In the year 1911, Ramanavami was first celebrated and the idea had originated from the Urus. It continues to be celebrated, uninterrupted, to this day.
60. The idea was first conceived by the well-known kirtankar Krishna Jageshwar Bhishma, who felt that the birth of Shri Rama should be celebrated, for it would be beneficial to all.
61. Till then only the Urus and the fair were being held on a large scale, every year. But out of it arose (the idea of) the wonderful celebration of the birth of Rama that year.
62. Once, as Bhishma sat in the wada, at his leisure, Kaka Mahajani was getting ready to go to the mosque with all the articles of pooja.
63. With the purpose of Sai's darshan in mind, and also to enjoy the festivities of the Urus, Kaka would always be present in Shirdi a day earlier for the celebrations.
64. Finding the time to be opportune, Bhishma then asked Kaka, "To my mind has come a really good idea. But will you help me in carrying it out?"
65. 'Urus is held here every year. It is also the day of the birth of Ram, and therefore affords us an extra opportunity to celebrate the occasion, without any extra effort'.
66. Kaka liked the idea and said, "Take Baba's permission. All depends on his word. Thereafter, of course, there will be no delay in the matter'.

67. But there still remained the question of arranging for the kirtan, for that would be necessary for such a celebration. Where could one find a Haridas to perform the kirtan, in a village? The difficulty remained!
68. Bhishma then said, 'I will be the Kirtankar and you accompany me on the harmonium, Radhakrishnabai will prepare Sunthawada as prasad, for the occasion.
69. 'Come then, let us go to Baba. Any delay in an auspicious piece of work always creates problems. A good work, accomplished speedily, ensures success, right away!
70. 'Come, let us go and ask his permission for performing the kirtan. So saying, they both then went to the mosque.
71. As Kaka began performing the pooja, it was Baba who first asked the question, "So, what is going on in the wada?" But it did not occur to Kaka to ask the relevant question.
72. At once, Baba put the same question, differently, to Bhishma. "So Bua, what do you say?" he asked Bhishma.
73. It was then that Kaka suddenly remembered and told him what they wished to do. Baba approved of their idea and the celebration was decided upon.
74. Next day in the morning, as soon as they saw Baba going to the Lendi, they tied up a cradle in the sabha-mandap, amidst the ceremonial preparations for performance of the kirtan. 9/24/5
75. At the appropriate time, an audience gathered together for the kirtan. Baba retuned (from the Lendi); Bhishma got up to begin; Kaka took his seat in front of the harmonium. And suddenly, Kaka was sent for, by Baba.
76. 'Baba has called you' the message came. Kaka was terrified on hearing these words. Why should his mind have any misgivings, he could not understand, but hoped that nothing would mar the spirit of the kirtan.
77. On hearing Baba's message, Kaka trembled in his shoes, with fright. 'Why should Baba be so agitated in his mind? Will the kirtan proceed without a hurdle or not?' he worried.
78. In his nervous anxiety, he faltered at every step as he climbed the steps of the mosque with slow, heavy footsteps.
79. Baba then asked him, why the cradle was tied there. And when it was briefly explained to him about the kirtan and the plans for the celebration, Baba was delighted.
80. Then from a niche in the wall nearby, he took out a beautiful garland and put it round Kaka's neck, giving him another one for Bhishma.
81. Baba's question about the cradle had caused great anxiety. But on seeing Kaka thus honoured with the garland, everyone was relieved.
82. Bhishma was really a versatile man, well-versed in religious lore. Naturally, his kirtan was full of spirit and beauty and enthralled the audience.

83. Baba's face had a pleasant expression too! As he had given his consent, so he now got the celebrations performed by the devotees, along with bhajan and kirtan.
84. In the hour of Ram's birth, particles of gulal (a red powder) got into Baba's eyes (as it was being freely showered during the ceremony), and then, it was as if Baba had become Narsimha incarnate, and not the infant Rama in the palace of Kausalya!
85. But 'gulal' was just a pretext. His furious expression was really a manifestation of his fervour at the birth of Shri Ram who would destroy the demonic forces of the ego and other evil propensities of man.
86. All of a sudden his anger flared up and he appeared to be Narsimha himself, in his rage! A volley of curses and abuses ensued, coming in a torrent.
87. Radhakrishnabai was greatly agitated, fearing in her mind that the cradle would now fall to pieces. How to keep it whole was the problem that confronted her.
88. She kept on urging and pressing that the cradle be taken down quickly. So Kaka moved forward to untie it.
89. This irritated Baba greatly. He became quite fierce and snappish and rushed forward aggressively, as if to attack Kaka. The untying of the cradle was stayed. Slowly, Baba also calmed down.
90. Later that afternoon, permission was sought to take it down, when Baba said in great surprise, "How can you take the cradle down just yet? There is still need for it!"
91. 'What could be this need? I thought, 'for Sai's words are never in vain!' And then I realized that all the ceremonies were not yet complete.
92. The ceremonies had been performed for that particular day, but until the next day dawned and the 'Gopalkaala' was over, the festival could not be deemed as to be over.
93. In this way, kirtan Gopalkaala etc., were performed the next day. And then Baba, gave permission to take down the cradle.
94. Next year, Bhishma was not available. So Balabua Satarkar was approached for performing the kirtan. But he had to go to Kavathe and was not available, too.
95. So Kaka Mahajani brought another kirtankar by the name of Balabua Bhajani, known widely as the 'modern Tukaram.' The ceremonies were performed at his hands.
96. Even if he had not been available, Kaka would have himself stood up for the kirtan, for he knew the katha by heart for Ramanavami, composed by Das Ganu.
97. In the third year, Balabua Satarkar himself came to Shirdi, at the appropriate time. Now listen carefully how this came about.

98. Having heard of Sai Baba's fame, a desire for his darshan arose in his mind. But he wanted some company, on the way. And how to get that, was his worry.
99. Balabua was himself a Haridas and originally came from Satara, but was, at this time, staying at Parel, Bombay.
100. In the Satara district, there is a small shrine called Birhad Siddha-Kavathe and Bua received an annual allowance for performing there, on the occasion of Ramanavami.
101. Bua was really concerned with the two annual festivals there, viz. Ashadhi Ekadashi (in July-August) and Ramanavami in Chaitra (in March-April).
102. According to a Charter of the Moghul Emperor (Akbar), a sum of rupees one hundred and twenty-four had been sanctioned for the expenses and was accordingly allotted for the expenses of the deity as per the original scheme of the (Sangli) Sansthan.
103. And so, for these two festivals, Bua received an allowance of thirty rupees. But that year cholera broke out at Kavathe and the villagers faced a problem.
104. Hence Ramanavami could not be celebrated. Bua received letters from the village, saying that he should come next year, as the whole village was deserted.
105. In short, that year he lost the chance of serving Rama and receiving his allowance. But this was his opportunity to go to Shirdi. So he met Dikshit in this connection.
106. He thought that since Dikshit was such a great devotee of Baba, if he takes it in his mind, then his wish to go to Shirdi will be fulfilled, and thus both his purposes – of self-interest and spiritual benefit – will be served.
107. So he went to Dikshit, 'This year I have missed my annual allowance. So I felt that I should take Baba's darshan, and also perform kirtan at Shirdi.'
108. Bhausahab (Dikshit) then replied, 'About the allowance, there is no gurantee. To give it or not, is entirely in Baba's hands. And as for the kirtan, his permission will be needed for that, too!'
109. Even as they were talking thus, Kaka Mahajani came there, quite unexpectedly, and he gave udi and prasad from Shirdi to everybody, which was considered as a good omen.
110. Mahajani had just come from Shirdi at that time and had come to say that all was well at Shirdi. Soon he went back to his house.
111. So Dikshit then, very lovingly said to Bua that he would seek Baba's permission and if given, he would definitely let him know.
112. And that when the letter came Bua should come to Shirdi, without worrying about the traveling expenses. For that, one should not trouble oneself and entertain any doubts in one's mind.

113. Later on, Dikshit went to Shirdi; Baba had also gave his consent. Balabua then came to Shirdi and had Baba's darshan to his heart's content.
114. Sai Baba also, very lovingly had the kirtan performed in front of him with all the ceremonies and festivities of Ramanavami at the hands of Balabua.
115. Balabua, on his part, was very pleased that his objective was fulfilled, and so was Sai. Everybody was thus satisfied.
116. Bua was remunerated handsomely. A hundred and fifty rupees was paid to him by Baba's command. Bua's joy knew no bounds.
117. For Baba had given him for that one festival, an amount which he should have received after five years of Kavathe. Why then should Balabua not rejoice and be grateful to Baba?
118. However, later on when Das Ganu had once come to Shirdi, the annual festival was entrusted to him thereafter, with Baba's permission.
119. From then till now, the birth celebrations of Ram take place with pomp and pageantry, food being plentifully served to one and all, -- even to the lowliest of the low and to their great joy and satisfaction.
120. On the occasion, at the portals of the Samadhi Mandir and amidst the resounding of the musical instruments rises the chant of Sai's name to fill the skies and suffuse them with waves of joy.
121. As with the holding of the fair or Urus, so was Gopal Gund also inspired with the idea of renovating and beautifying the dilapidated mosque.
122. Devotee Gopal Gund decided that even the mosque should be properly renovated and that too, at his own hands. So he got the stones ready.
123. But it appears that Gund was not to play a part in the renovation work. And later, as per Baba's wishes, a good opportunity came for accomplishing this piece of work.
124. It now seems that Baba wanted this to be done by Nanasaheb Chandorkar, and wished that Kakasaheb Dikshit should then get the floor paved.
125. And so it came to pass, a little later. At first, they tried in vain to get his permission, until they were exhausted. Mhalsapati was then asked to mediate. Only then did Baba give his consent.
126. However, when the flooring of the mosque was paved overnight, then from the very next day Baba started using a cushioned seat.
127. In the year 1911, a portico (sabha-mandap) was built. But oh, what a Herculean effort it involved! What toil and bother! Besides, it made them all tremble with fear!
128. However, that piece of work was also completed with arduous effort by the devotees, in the same way, under the same circumstances, in one night.
129. With great effort, the devotees would ram the columns at night; and the next morning Baba would start pulling them out. Seizing an

- opportunity, the devotees would fix them again. Thus would all effort exhaust them all!
130. All would grind their loins, turning night into day, and toil away to fulfil the one great desire of their hearts!
131. Originally, it was an open space and a tiny yard in it, which Dikshit thought would be suitable for building a portico.
132. No matter how much money it required, but they bought iron columns and angle-brackets and seeing that, Baba had gone to the Chavadi for the night, they accomplished their task. 9/25/5
133. Working at it all night, the devotees would thus ram the columns with great effort. No sooner, Baba returned from the Chavadi in the morning then he would begin pulling them out.
134. Then on one occasion Baba lost his temper. Holding Tatya by his neck with one hand, with the other hand he tried to tug at the column in an attempt to pull it out.
135. Shaking the column vigorously, he loosened it. Then he took out Tatya's turban, and lighting it up with a match-stick, threw it into a pit, in a great fury.
136. At that time his eyes appeared to be like balls of fire. Who dared look him in the face at that time? They all lost their nerve!
137. At once he then put his hand in the pocket and took out a one rupee coin, which he threw into the pit, too, as if to mark the auspicious moment.
138. Curses, abuses came down in a shower. Tatya was terrified, at heart. A very tricky situation had risen. But how did this happen?
139. People were all stunned! Why such an ominous portent today? How can Tatya Patil be rescued from his calamity? they wondered.
140. Bhagoji Shinde made bold and cautiously moved forward, only to fall an easy prey to Baba's wrath. He, too, was belaboured by Baba, to his heart's content.
141. Even Madhavrao got caught and was rewarded with Baba's favour in the form of a few bricks hurled at him. Whosoever else tried to mediate similarly received Baba's Grace (i.e. bricks).
142. Even as people were still wondering as to 'who will dare to go in front of Baba? How can Tatya be freed?' Baba's anger slowly began to cool down and finally, he calmed down completely.
143. A cloth merchant was sent for, at once, and a turban with a gold border was ordered. Baba himself got it tied around Tatya's head, as if to bestow upon him a mark of honour from a Rajah.
144. But people were still puzzled as to the cause of this sudden anger, of the attack on Tatya, with all the abusing and reviling.
145. For what reason did he flare up, so? And in a moment how did he appear so pleased and happy? The reason behind all this could not be understood at all, by anyone.

146. Sometimes he would be so calm and composed and would converse lovingly, sometimes, in a flash, and without apparent reason, his mind would be in great agitation.
147. Such then are the tales of Baba. As you are narrating one, another comes to mind, bewildering the narrator's mind as to which he should narrate and which, keep back. Moreover, it is not really correct to be partial in the selection.
148. Nor can I bring myself to be partial. Whichever tale is appropriate for the occasion will find its way to the reader to satisfy his desire to listen to these tales.
149. And now, listen, in the next chapter to the stories of the past, heard from the mouths of old people, which I shall narrate according to my capacity, -- whether Sai Baba was Hindu or Muslim.
150. How the money taken under the pretext of dakshina was used by him for the renovation of old temples; how he mortified his flesh through dhoti-poti and Khandayoga;
151. How he toiled for the welfare of others and warded off the difficulties of his devotees; -- all this will become clear in the next chapter and will satisfy the listeners.

Weal to be all! Here ends the sixth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'The Story of the Festival of Shri Rama's Birth,
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

7

What was Sai Baba?

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Now, let us recall to our minds the connection of the previous story: how Baba was fond of renovating the old temples;
2. How he would exert himself for the benefit of others, how he would protect his devotees, taking upon himself their sorrows and sufferings and wearing away his body in their cause;
3. How he practiced Khandayoga, dhoti-poti along with Samadhi – sometimes severing from his body, hands, legs and the head, sometimes joining them together, as before.

4. If considered a Hindu, he looked like a Muslim; and if a Muslim, he exhibited all the qualities of a good Hindu. Who, even with all his proficiency and learning, can describe such an extraordinary Avatar?
5. No one could trace in the least, whether he was a Hindu or Muslim, for his conduct towards both these was always the same.
6. Ramanavami is really a Hindu festival; but he himself got it celebrated. He would have the cradle tied in the sabha-mandap, and have the Katha-Kirtan performed.
7. In the square in front, would the cradle be put up and he would have the Ram-kirtan performed. On the same night he would also give permission to the Muslims to take out the 'Sandal' procession.
8. Collecting together as many Muslims as possible, the 'Sandal' procession would be taken out ceremoniously. Thus, he got both the festivals celebrated equally well and with great joy.
9. As the Ramanavami festival came round, he would be greatly interested in arranging wrestling events and would be delighted in giving away horses, todas and turbans as prizes.
10. When the festival of Gokul-ashtami came, he would get Gopal-kala performed. Similarly, when 'Id' came, the Muslims were not prohibited from doing their Namaz.
11. Once, as the festival of Muharram approached, some Muslims came to the mosque proposing that at Taja (Taboot) be made and taken in procession through the village.
12. On being permitted to do so, the Taja was got ready and kept for four days. On the fifth day it was taken down without his feeling nay pleasure or pain.
13. If a Muslim, his ears were pierced; but if a Hindu, his circumcision proved it to be otherwise. Neither a Hindu nor a Muslim – such was this Sai, the very incarnation of sanctity.
14. If he is called a Hindu, he always lived in the mosque, and if he is called a Muslim, the fire burns day and night in the mosque.
15. In the mosque there was a grinding in a quern; in the mosque too, resounded the bells, the conch, and so also in that mosque there was the offering of rice in the holy fire; what kind of a Muslim was this?
16. In the mosque the bhajan went on all the time; and the distribution of food to the people also went on in that mosque. Again, the mosque! How can he be a Muslim?
17. If a Muslim, how was he worshipped by the best among Brahmins, and the Agnihotri prostrated before him giving up their pride in their sovala?
18. So the people wondered in their minds. Those who came to find out for themselves, behaved in the same manner, too! And after having his darshan, fell silent!

19. Indeed, he who seeks refuge in Hari (God), forever, how can he be called a Hindu or a Muslim? He may even be a shudra, or the lowest among the Shudras, or even without a caste; his caste is not at all the criterion or standard for judging him.
20. He who has no bodily conceit and treats all the Varnas among the Hindus, or Muslims as equals, does not differentiate between the castes.
21. Eating in the company of the fakirs, he would eat meat, or if occasion required it, would also eat fish. But even there, should a dog put his mouth to the food, he did not turn away in disgust.
22. A peasant always stores up in large bundles the crop of the current year, so that, if there be a shortage of grain next year, it could be used to make up for the deficiency.
23. Similarly, Baba always had in store a bag of wheat. For grinding, there was a quern in the mosque and there was also a scuttle basket for sifting corn. Nothing was wanting for carrying on the business of life.
24. In the portico there was a beautiful and proper Tulsi-Brindavan. In the same place there was also a wooden chariot engraved with auspicious signs.
25. Some merit must have been accumulated by us in the previous births, that we have met such a saint, a God Incarnate. Hold him firmly in the casket of your heart so that you will not lose him, till you die.
26. It must be some good fortune, earned in the past births that we are drawn to his feet, which have brought us peace of mind and freedom from worldly cares.
27. However great prosperity and happiness I may enjoy, in days to come, this happiness in the company of Shri Sai Samarth, with which I am blessed, will never come back again.
28. Self-rejoicing, Self-absorbed as Sai is, how can I describe his marvelous ways adequately? Whoever remains absorbed at his feet, is confirmed in his faith by Sai.
29. Ascetics with sanyasin's staff and the deer-skin; those residing at holy places of pilgrimage, like Hardwar; religious mendicants; sanyasins; those that have renounced the world; the Udasis, and many such came to Baba. 9/26/5
30. Baba would talk and laugh and move freely with all. The words 'Allah Malik' were constantly on his lips. He disliked arguments and unprofitable wranglings. His staff (i.e. the baton) was always kept near at hand.
31. By disposition an ascetic, he was tranquil and had conquered the senses and the mind. From his speech, flowed perfect Vedanta. Till the end, nobody could gauge Baba's true nature.
32. Be he a king or a beggar, they received equal treatment in all matters. For both a rich man and a pauper, the measure was the same.

33. Somebody's deeds, good or bad, or his innermost secrets were all known to him and he used to astonish the devotees by giving a sign or an indication of them.
34. He was the reservoir of Knowledge and Wisdom under the guise of feigned ignorance. To exert himself for honour and recognition in the world was too irksome for him. Such was the disposition of Sai.
35. Though his physical frame was human, his deeds matched those of the gods, in being unexcelled. It was people's faith that he was God Incarnate, in Shirdi!
36. Oh! for the miracles of Baba! How much can I, a lowly person, describe them! Innumerable were the renovations that Baba got done to the idols and the temples of gods.
37. In Shirdi, the condition of Shani, Ganapati, Shankar-Parvati, Gramdevi (village-deity) and Maruti temples was also improved at the hands of Taty Patil.
38. The money that Baba accepted from people under the guise of dakshina, was, in part, given away for charitable works and, in part, just given away to people.
39. To some, thirty rupees, to some others ten or fifteen or fifty rupees, as and to whom it pleased him, were daily distributed with great enthusiasm.
40. All this money came from charity. Those who received it also believed it to be so and even Baba wished that it should be expended for a good cause.
41. And thus, many became healthy and robust by his mere darshan, some changed their wicked ways and became good; many were cured by their leprosy and so many enjoyed weal.
42. Without the medicated collyrium or a herbal remedy, so many sightless regained their sight and the lame regained power in their legs, just by falling at his feet.
43. Limitless was Baba's power and greatness which no one could fathom. People from all the four directions started coming to Shirdi in multitudes, for his darshan.
44. He would always be sitting at the same place near the dhuni, absorbed in meditation after his morning ablutions, sometimes after a bath or sometimes without having one.
45. A nice white turban on the head, he would wear a clean dhoti round his waist and would don a long shirt. Such was his dress in the beginning.
46. He used to administer indigenous medicines in the village. By observing the symptoms he gave medicine and had a good deal of success so that he became a famous Hakim.
47. Once a devotee had red, inflamed eyes which appeared as red balls due to the swelling. Both the eyeballs were blood-shot. No doctor was locally available in Shirdi.

48. The simple, trusting devotee showed his eyes to Baba. At once Baba got some Bibba seed crushed and made into balls.
49. For such an ailment some will apply Surma, some may put cotton soaked in cow's milk, or some others may use the cooling camphor tablets or collyrium.
50. But Baba's remedy was most unusual. He picked up the balls, one at a time, with his own hands and rammed them into each of the eyes, bandaging finally, with a piece of cloth.
51. The next day the bandage was removed from the eyes and water was poured over them in a continuous stream. The swelling had subsided completely and the eyeballs had become clear and abnormal.
52. Such a delicate organ like the eye! But even the Bibba seeds caused no burning or pain. In fact they cured the eye ailment absolutely! Many are such experiences!
53. Baba knew 'dhoti-poti' (a Hathayoga practice). Without anybody's knowledge, he would go to some secluded spot, take a bath and then bring out his intestines (through the mouth), which he would then wash and hang them up to dry.
54. Equidistant as the well from the mosque, was a banyan tree and beyond this tree was another well. To this latter, he used to go every two days.
55. In the scorching heat, at high noon, seeing that no one was around, he would himself draw water from the well and wash his mouth, face etc.
56. And so, on one such occasion, when he was sitting down to his bath, he hurriedly brought out his intestines and began washing them at that place.
57. When a goat is killed, its intestines are turned inside out, washed clean, and put, fold upon fold, to dry.
58. Similarly, he took out his intestines, and turning them inside out, cleaned them carefully. He then spread them out on the guava tree, to the consternation of the people around.
59. Even now, there are people alive in Shirdi, who have seen Baba in this condition with their own eyes, who say that he was a unique saint.
60. Sometimes he would practice Khandayoga, separating hands, legs, etc., from the trunk. And these parts of his body could be seen fallen off at different places in the mosque.
61. And when the people, in large numbers, came running to see the shocking spectacle of his body thus severed into parts, what they always saw was Baba, whole and in one piece.
62. Once a spectator was terrified on seeing such a scene and thought that some wicked person must have killed Baba and committed such an atrocity.

63. In the four corners of the mosque, parts of the body could be seen scattered at different places. It was the midnight hour and not a soul was around. He became greatly worried.
64. If he were to go and tell anyone, he would himself get implicated. This was his difficulty. So he went and sat outside.
65. But that it could be some yogic practice of Sai, he did not even dream. The sight of the mutilated body struck terror in his heart.
66. He wanted very much to inform somebody of what he had seen, but the fear that, being the first informer, he would himself be accused of the crime, --
67. Prevented him from telling anyone. Doubts and fears crowded his mind. So once again, at dawn, he went to see and was quite astonished.
68. What he had seen earlier had vanished completely, and Baba sat in his usual place, hale and hearty. He began to wonder whether this was a dream.
69. These yogic practices of dhoti-poti, etc., were being practiced by Baba, since childhood. But nobody could comprehend the extent of his yogic powers and the mysterious behavior consequent upon it.
70. Never did he touch even a farthing of anybody. His fame (as a physician) rested only on his success in effecting a cure. He nursed the poor and the weak back to health and became renowned as a Hakim in that district.
71. But this Hakim lived only for the benefit of others. About his own profit, he was most disinterested. And to achieve the good of others, he would bear intolerable pain and suffering.
72. In this context, I shall now narrate an extraordinary incident for the benefit of the listeners, which will bring out Baba's compassion and all-pervasiveness.
73. In the year 1910, on the Dhanteras day, on the eve of Diwali (the Festival of Lights), Baba was sitting near the dhuni, putting logs of wood to the fire, in a casual manner.
74. The fire in the dhuni was raging, and there sat Baba, his hand thrust in the fire, but quite oblivious and unconcerned about it. The hand was naturally, scorched quite severely.
75. Madhav, his attendant, noticed it at once. Madhavrao Deshpande, who was nearby, noticed it, too, and ran instantly.
76. He squatted at the back and putting his hands tightly round Baba's waist, pulled him back, exclaiming,
77. 'Alas! Baba, what have you done!' As he said so, Baba at once came back to the waking state (from the super-consciousness) and said, "Oh, Shama, you know, a child slipped from its mothers' arms suddenly, and fell into the smith's forge!

78. "Hearing her husband call out to her, the smith's wife began to blow the bellows vigorously, out of fear, while holding the child in her armpit all the while.
79. "While doing so quite inadvertently, she forgot the child in her armpit for a moment. The restless, over-active child slipped from there. But Shama, no sooner did she fall than I picked her up.
80. "And as I was picking her up, this is what happened! Let the hand be scorched, but at least the child's life is saved!"
81. 'How should the hand be now treated, and by whom?' wondered Madhavrao. He decided to write a letter to Chandorkar.
82. So he wrote a detailed letter and Chandorkar came to Shirdi at once, bringing with him Parmanand, a well-known doctor.
83. Equipped with a variety of medicines to soothe the burning pain and accompanied by Parmanand, Nanasaheb came and stood before Baba.
84. Making obeisance to Baba, he made the customary enquiries after his well-being and then disclosed the purpose of his visit, requesting him to show his injured hand.
85. Already, from the day the hand was burned, Bhagoji Shinde was massaging it with ghee (clarified butter) and, after covering it with a leaf, was bandaging it tightly, every day.
86. To take the bandages out to have a look at the hand, and show it to Parmanand also, so that proper medication could begin and Baba could get relief – 9/27/5
87. Such was the good intention in Nana's mind, with which he entreated Baba in various ways; even Parmanand made many attempts to induce Baba to take off the bandages so that he could see for himself the condition of the hand.
88. But Baba kept on postponing from day to day, and saying all the while that, "Allah is our Vaidya". So that he never gave him his hand to see and had no regrets about it.
89. The medicines that Parmanand had brought with him never saw the light of day in Shirdi. But it was destined that he should experience the joy of Sai's darshan, on account of it.
90. Bhagoji alone had the privilege of serving him thus, every day. And so, Bhagoji alone would massage his hand. As a result, the hand healed in the course of time. All were relieved and happy.
91. Though the hand healed in this way, one know not what insatiety it could be, that made Baba go through the process of bandaging, massaging and so on, every day, as the usual time for it approached in the morning.
92. Even without any pain or injury, it was unnecessarily tended with great care regularly, being given a massage of ghee, where no wound or injury remained. And this continued to the end.

93. Himself a Siddha, Sai did not need this service from Bhagoji. But out of his intense desire for the welfare of his devotees, he got Bhagoji to render it regularly.
94. As a result of the great sins of his past births, Bhagoji was afflicted with leprosy. But great indeed was his good fortune that he had the privilege of Sai's company.
95. As Baba set out on his daily round to the Lendi, Bhagoji would be his umbrella-bearer. His body was full of bleeding sores, yet he was the foremost among the attendants.
96. Every day in the morning, as Baba sat comfortably leaning against the pillar near the dhuni, Bhagya would present himself for his service.
97. Removing the bandages from the hands and the legs, he would then massage the muscles of those limbs and would rub some ghee into them. Such was the service Bhagya rendered.
98. A great sinner from previous births, with a body festering with bleeding leprosy, severely afflicted that Bhagya was, he was yet a great devotee of Baba.
99. The fingers and the toes had fallen off due to leprosy; the whole body with its stink was repulsive, -- such were the grave misfortunes of him, whose great good fortune was the great happiness of serving Baba.
100. Oh, how much can I describe to the listeners of the marvelous leelas of Baba! Once the epidemic of plague broke out in the village. Just listen to the miracle that took place then!
101. Dadasaheb Khaparde had a very young son who was at Shirdi, with his mother, enjoying the great happiness of Baba's company.
102. The boy was very small. Moreover, he was burning with a high fever, which seemed to break the mother's heart. She grew very restless.
103. As her home was at Amaravati, she thought she should go back thither. So, finding a suitable opportunity in the evening, she came to take Baba's permission.
104. During his evening round, as Baba came near the wada, the lady came and clasped his feet, relating to him what had happened.
105. As it is, women are nervous by nature, and then, the child's shivering would not stop. Moreover, there was the fear of the dreaded plague. She kept on harping on what had happened.
106. Gently Baba said, "The sky is overcast, but it will rain, bringing forth the harvest and the clouds will all melt away.
107. "Why be afraid?" So saying, he lifted his kafni up to the waist and showed the inflamed buboes to everyone.
108. The size of a hen's egg, four inflamed buboes could be seen spread in four directions. "See, I have to take upon myself all your sufferings", said Baba.

109. Seeing this extraordinary divine act, people were amazed. Oh, how these saints take upon themselves the innumerable sufferings of their devotees!
110. They have a heart softer than wax itself, -- as if it were a lump of butter! Their love for the devotees is truly selfless, for the devotees alone are their kith and kin!
111. Once it so happened that Nanasaheb left Nandurbar to go to Pandharpur.
112. Nana was most fortunate, indeed! His devotion and service to Baba seemed to have borne fruit, and he attained Vaikunth, the abode of Lord Vishnu, on this earth itself! For he was appointed the Mamlatdar of Pandharpur.
113. On receiving the order at Nandurbar, he was required to leave as early as possible. So he immediately made preparations to leave, with a keen desire to have Baba's darshan.
114. He decided to go to Shirdi with his entire family, for Shirdi was to him Pandharpur itself and he first wanted to make obeisance to Baba.
115. However, no letter was sent to anyone at Shirdi, no had any message or news preceded his arrival. Packing all his luggage he hurriedly boarded the train.
116. No one in Shirdi could have known that Nana had started from Nandurbar in this (hurried) manner. But Sai, whose eyes were everywhere, knew everything.
117. Nana had started speedily and may have just reached the border of Nimgaon, when a miracle took place in Shirdi. Listen to it!
118. Baba was in the mosque, talking to Mhalsapati, Appa, Shinde, Kashiram and some other devotees.
119. Suddenly he said, "Come, let us all the four of us sing bhajan together. The portals of the temple at Pandharpur have opened. Let us go on singing our bhajan merrily!"
120. Sai, who knew everything – past, present and future – had known about Nana's arrival and when Nana had reached the stream at the village border, Baba suddenly showed great enthusiasm for singing the bhajan:
To Pandharpur, I go, I go
There alone, do I stay,
There alone, do I stay,
In that abode of my Lord!
121. Baba was singing the bhajan himself and the devotees sitting around repeated the refrain. All were overcome by the feeling of love and devotion to Vithoba of Pandhari. And then Nana arrived, quite suddenly!
122. He, with his family, bowed at Baba's feet, saying, 'Maharaj, please be with us as we proceed to Pandharpur, and remain there at your leisure.'

123. But the request was hardly necessary! The people then told him about Baba's enthusiasm to go to Pandharpur and the bhajan that it inspired.
124. In his heart, Nana was wonderstruck. Baba's leela had astonished him absolutely! He was choked with emotion as he placed his head on Baba's feet.
125. After receiving udi and prasad with Baba's blessings, Chandorkar took Baba's leave to go to Pandharpur.
126. And now, if I go on narrating all these stories, the book will become too expansive. Hence I shall now end this subject of Baba's leelas for relieving the suffering of others.
127. So let us now conclude this chapter, for there is no end to Baba's stories. In the next chapter, I shall narrate some miscellaneous stories for my own benefit.
128. Oh, for this self-conceit of mine, which, try as I may, I am not able to overcome! And yet, who is this 'I', I know not, for certain! Really it is Sai himself, who will narrate his own story.
129. He will explain the importance of this human birth and describe his routine of collecting alms, the single-minded devotion of Bayjabai, as also about his manner of having his meals.
130. Listen also, to how Baba used to sleep in the mosque with Mhalsapati and with Taty Kote Patil.
131. Hemadpant submits totally to Sai and regards himself but a slipper on the feet of Sai-devotees. To him, Sai's word is the only Truth, the only Standard. Thus, the narration of Sai's Story has come so far.

Weal to be all! Here ends the seventh chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'Narration of Various Tales',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

**Importance of human birth –
Partaking Food collected by
Alms – Bayjabai's
Devotion – Sleeping with
Tatya and Mhalsapati**

MY OBESIANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAH! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. In the last chapter it has been narrated how no one could say it Sai was a Hindu or a Muslim; how great was the good fortune of Shirdi that Baba made it his own home;
2. How, initially, Baba came as a young lad and had later become a 'mad fakir' to the people; how he made a beautiful garden out of a place which was originally rough and barren;
3. How, after a time, on that same spot came up a wada; also how Baba excelled in the bold yogic practices of dhoti-poti and khand-yoga.
4. And, Protector of the Devotees that he was, how Baba wore out his body, taking their suffering upon himself. How can I describe all these adequately.
5. Now listen further, to the great significance of being born a human, to the description of Baba's practice of collecting alms and of Bayajabai's selfless service to the saints as also, of Baba's astonishing way of taking meals.
6. How the three of them i.e. Tatyā, Baba and Mhalsapati, used to sleep in the mosque and how Sai Samarth used to go to the house of Khushalchand at Rahata.
7. The day dawns and sets in the evening. Years are devoured thus. Half of lifetime passes in slumber and even the remaining half brings no peace and happiness.
8. Childhood is spent absorbed in play; the youth, in amorous pursuit of the youthful maiden and old age, in the weariness brought on by debility and disease – and forever plagued by maladies.
9. To come into this world only to fatten the body, to keep on breathing and live up to a ripe old age – is this the fulfilment of this human birth?
10. Attainment of the Supreme is really the highest achievement of human life. Or else, what is so wanting in this existence of dogs, pigs and other animals?
11. The dogs also fill their bellies and go on procreating to their heart's content. Then what is the great significance of a human birth, when both, a dog and a human being, are in the same position?
12. If nurture of the physical body and copulation alone are the means of fulfilment of the ultimate goal of human existence, then this human birth is meaningless, indeed!
13. If the life be spent, only in the fourfold activity of eating, and drinking, sleep etc., then what is the difference between dogs and humans? Think for yourselves and judge.

14. If this alone is the fulfilment of the human body, then what is the deficiency in the existence of bees and plants? The bellows too, breathe in and out, and even dogs nourish and fatten their bodies!
15. But a human being is emancipated; he is fearless and he is free and he is everlasting. To have this awareness itself is the fulfilment of this birth.
16. From where do I come? Who am I? Why have I a human birth? He who knows the principle of all this is a proficient man. Without his knowledge everything is futile.
17. Just as the flame of the Nandadeep appears to be the same from the beginning to the end but undergoes change from moment to moment, so also is the state of the body.
18. Childhood, youth and old age – these are states apparent to all people, but they come and go most naturally without anyone ever realizing it.
19. The state of the flame what we see this moment ends in that same instant and appears to be the same, though constantly changing; similarly, what this body is this moment, it will not be the same the next moment.
20. This body is the outlet for excreta, dirt, phlegm, pus, saliva. Such are the ill-boding qualities it bears.
21. This human body is the habitation of worms and insects, is a storehouse of various diseases, is mortal and transient.
22. It is a cart loaded with flesh, blood and muscle, a frame of skin and bone, a stinking pit of excitement and urine, an encumbering appendage of the soul, indeed!
23. This body, with its skin, flesh, blood, muscle, fat, marrow, bones, air (as one of the humors of the body) and certain loathsome parts like the genitals and the anus – is but short-lived.
24. But unpropitious, destructible and transient as this human body is, yet it is the only instrument of attaining God, the home of all sanctity.
25. Pursued as we are, all the time, by birth and death, the horror of its very idea dogs our footsteps. And yet when life departs, it leaves all of a sudden.
26. Who keeps count of how many come and how many go, by day and by night? Some are even born with the longevity of the sage Markandeya. But even they cannot escape death.
27. While in such a transient human body, the time spent in listening to the stories of the saints – by remembering, whom, merit is acquired – is the time well spent. The rest of the time is wasted.
28. When such awareness comes with a certainty, it is in itself the advantage of being born a human. But without personal experience, nobody is convinced of the truth of this.
29. And yet, one has to undertake a deep study even to get this experience. Hence he who desires lasting happiness should endeavour to attain this glory.

30. Wife, son, prosperity, wealth, in fact the kingdom of this boundless earth, a man may attain by God's grace. And yet his heart is insatiated.
31. But with lasting happiness and peace as the objective before the mind, when God is worshipped by seeing Him in every living being, it will lead to attainment of salvation or Moksha.
32. By putting together the skin, flesh, blood and bones, this human frame is made up, which is a great obstacle in the spiritual path. Hence give up all attachment to it.
33. Treat it only as your servant. Do not exalt it unduly. Do not pamper it all the time and allow it to pave the way to Hell.
34. Give it food and clothing enough for subsistence, as also nurture, for the time being. So that I may be made use of for your spiritual upliftment and final liberation from birth and death.
35. Subject to calamities of birth, death etc., about to be destroyed any moment, -- such is this perpetually unhappy human existence! Of what use is its momentary happiness?
36. As the lightning which disappears in a flash, or the ripples that momentarily appear on the ocean, such are the short-lived pleasures of the body. Give some thought to this.
37. Knowing full well that the body, house, wife and children, and the people around him are all destructible, and having borne the biers of the parents on his shoulder to the grave, a man yet does not awaken to the truth.
38. He still continues the same way as those who have already departed before him, thus making the rounds of the birth-death cycle; but does not stop a moment to think as to the means by which these could be restrained.
39. In attending, all the time, to the well-being and prosperity of the family, life passes away swiftly, but Time is diligent in counting the years as they pass and will never forget its duty.
40. And when the last moment comes, he will not pause even for a moment, but will, like a fisherman, pull the net tightly, and then, in that moment of death, the human being will toss about in helpless agony, like a fish caught in the net.
41. It is by a plenitude of great good fortune, and by accumulating, scores of meritorious deeds that this human body is acquired. Hence make the most of this opportunity you have.
42. Even with the gigantic efforts of a Bhagirath, this human body cannot be attained. Only by destiny it comes in our hands quite unexpectedly. Do not throw it away in the dust in vain.
43. One who postpones anything to the next birth is a fool to believe that though in this birth this human body slips out of his hands, he will definitely get it back in the next.

44. So many sinners mingle with the male semen and appear at the entrance to the womb to get a human body, according to their karma.
45. Many, even more vile, as a result of their karma, move from the lower order of mobile creatures to be born as immobile beings.
46. In accordance with the knowledge attained and the karma performed, one is ordained to get a particular body. This is acknowledged by the Shrutis, also.
47. For, Shruti, the compassionate Mother says, 'According to one's knowledge, one is born'. As is the store of knowledge, so is also the birth that a being gets.
48. Incomprehensible are the ways of God. It is impossible to understand them fully. Blessed is that human being who can attain even a fraction of knowledge about them.
49. By greatest good fortune one gets human birth and by great accumulated merit is one born a Brahmin. But God's grace alone brings one to Sai's feet. Rare indeed, is the perfect gain to have all three!
50. Varied are the species of created beings; but that of the human beings is the highest among them. For it is only possible for the humans to think, 'Who has created us? From where do we come? And the like.
51. Other species do not understand anything. They are born and one day they die, without any understanding of the past, present or future, or of the existence of the Supreme Being.
52. So God was happy to create the human being, thinking that man will use his discretion and wisdom, will embrace renunciation and detachment, and will worship Him.
53. Since other is none other in this Creation who is endowed with the means as that of the human body, to attain salvation, He thought, man will use that body for sadhana and will attain the immortality of Narayan Himself.
54. A magician is himself very clever. He never performs his tricks before an audience that is ignorant. He anticipates an audience that will appreciate the secret of his deftness.
55. Similarly, after having created innumerable birds, animals, trees, worms and insects, the Lord of this creation was left with a feeling of great astonishment and regret thinking that all His achievement was meaningless.
56. Oh, such a boundless expanse of this universe (totality of all worlds including all the galaxies), with the sun, the moon, the countless stars! And yet – no one has the least thought or admiration for this marvelous achievement of the Creator!
57. 'Not a creature knows for certain, what is my purpose as the Lord of the Universe in creating this sport!

58. 'Until, therefore, a creature is created with so smart an intellect as to understand and admire the incomparable glory of my work, all this achievement of mine is in vain!'
59. So, the Almighty created a being in human form. He thought, 'With the power of his discriminating intellect, man will know me.'
60. 'He will be amazed with the knowledge of my inconceivable grandeur, as also my unexcelled prowess and will realize that the entire universe is but a sport of my Maya.'
61. 'Only he will be able to acquire Knowledge, reflect and meditate upon me and be filled with awe and wonder. And that will bring my sport to completion.'
62. 'The happiness of the spectators is in itself the fullness of my sport. Seeing my perfect control over the world, man will feel fulfilled.'
63. To perform pleasurable karmas or to earn wealth is not the purpose of nurturing the body; the fulfilment of human life lies in acquiring the Supreme Knowledge, till breath leaves the body.'
64. Realization of non-duality (between Jeevatma and Paramatma) is this Supreme Knowledge. It is what the Upanishads call 'Brahma-jnana'. And the worship and service to the Lord is also the same. This is what is implied in saying 'Bhagvan of the devotees'.
65. He who has gained this knowledge of non-duality (that the Guru and the Brahman are not separable), and worships in this spirit, will find it easy to overcome Maya.
66. Those men of faith, who have attained knowledge and renunciation are alone fit to enjoy self-absorption. Know, that such devotees are truly fortunate.
67. To regard oneself as fulfilled and perfect, without having removed the ignorance arising out of an awareness of the true Self, creates a strange impediment.
68. Knowledge and ignorance are both states of mind that give rise to illusions and errors. As one thorn is pulled out by another thorn, so remove the one with the other.
69. Dispel ignorance by knowledge. However, the highest purpose of human existence is to go beyond knowledge and ignorance and merge in the Pure Self.
70. Unless the oil of sensual attachments is burnt out completely, the darkness of ignorance is reduced to ashes, and the wick of 'me' and 'mine' (i.e. the ego) is burnt to cinders, Knowledge will not shine forth in all its radiance.
71. Know, that all actions pertaining to the human body, whether evitable or inevitable, are performed with a conscious determination or plan.
- 9/29/5

72. If one has no other work to do, one should quietly enjoy comfort and prosperity or take Ram-naam. It will bring freedom from cares and from desires.
73. The bodily organs, mind and intellect are all limitations to which, the Atman is subject. Due to these, though himself without a beginning and a non-enjoyer, the Atman brings upon himself the suffering, resulting from karma.
74. Thus, though a non-enjoyer by nature, the suffering of the Atman is due to his limitations. And for this Nyaya-shastra has given proof by making use of Anvaya-Vyatirek.
75. Know this to be the one vital principle and leave the necessary karma or action, as also the various processes of the mind, to the intellect. As for yourself, act as a non-doer of action.
76. Conduct yourself according to the dictates of your own dharma. Always contemplate on the Atman (Self), distinguishing him from the Anatman (non-self). This is the ultimate goal of human life, which lies in the contentment that comes from Self-absorption.
77. There is no other means of obtaining the four objectives of human life (viz. Artha, Dharma, Kama and Moksha), except the human body. And the man who devotes himself to the study of how this can be done will attain the status of Shri Narayan Himself.
78. Hence, while this body is not yet fallen, endeavour to know your true Self. Do not waste even a moment of this human birth.
79. The salt waster of the ocean undergoes a transformation in the clouds to become sweet water. Happiness follows similarly when one is absorbed at the guru's feet.
80. No one except the guru knows how this human body can be truly liberated and it is only when the guru takes them in hand that the dull and ignorant beings are uplifted.
81. Mantra, places of pilgrimage, God, Brahmins, practitioners of astrology and astronomy, Vaidyas, and lastly, the seventh one, that is, Gururaj – all these are effective only according to one's faith in them.
82. In the same proportion as the degree of faith is reposed in any of these, will the measure of success be achieved.
83. Saints turn a worldly man into a spiritual seeker and such a seeker into a man emancipated. And to do this, they become manifest from their unmanifested state, all for the benefit of others.
84. That which cannot be accomplished by lectures or Puranas, is easily accomplished by merely observing the behaviour of the saints. Their movements, their conduct are wordless instruction.
85. Rare indeed is a man who practices forgiveness, calm, detachment, compassion for all beings, benevolence, self-restraint and humility.

86. What cannot be learnt by reading a book is easily learnt by observing a person in action. The light that the numerous constellations of stars cannot give is given by the sun alone.
87. So it is with these benevolent saints! All their natural actions liberate the living beings from worldly bondage, bringing them great happiness.
88. Sai Maharaj was one of these great saints, with boundless spiritual wealth and grandeur. Always Self-absorbed, his conduct was yet like a fakir.
89. He always looked upon all equally, had no attachment to 'me' and 'mine', and was compassionate towards all beings, as he saw the Supreme Being in all creatures.
90. Pleasure brought him no elation; sorrow, no grief; the wealthy and the pauper were to him the same. How can this wonderful state of mind be commonplace!
91. He who could make a wealthy man of a pauper by merely lifting an eyebrow, would however go himself from door to door, a jholi in hand.
92. Blessed indeed are those at whose door Baba appeared to collect alms and, spreading out his palms, called out, "O my daughter, bring me a quarter from your bhakari (bread made from jowar, etc.)."
93. Picking up a tumbler in one hand and in the other hand the jholi, he would himself go from door to door to a few fixed households every day.
94. Vegetables, curried or dry, milk, buttermilk – all these food items were poured into that one tumbler by the people. O, what an extraordinary way of collecting food!
95. And, to receive the cooked rice or bhakari, he would spread out the jholi. But the liquid dishes, whatever they might be, were all poured together into that one tumbler.
96. And, from where should the relish from each separate dish arise? When the palate knew not the indulgence of enjoying tastes and flavours, how can such a desire arise in the mind, at all?
97. Whatever fell into the jholi fortuitously, he would be content to eat. Whether it was tasty or tasteless, it mattered not – as it the tongue was devoid of all taste!
98. Every day, in the morning, he would collect alms in the village, with which he would satisfy his hunger and be content.
99. And the alms – were they even collected regularly? No, indeed! Only when he felt so inclined would he go for them! With the result, sometimes he would go into the village for the alms as many as twelve times in one day!
100. The food so collected would then be put into a wide-mouthed earthen jar in the mosque, from which crows and dogs freely partook of the food.

101. The lady who swept the mosque and the courtyard also took home some ten or twelve bhakaris from it. And no one prohibited her from doing so@
102. He would not even dream of shooing away cats and dogs – how will he ever refuse food to the poor and weak? Blessed, blessed was his life!
103. In the beginning, he became well-known to the people as the ‘mad fakir’. What greatness could they expect in one who filled his belly by begging for morsels!
104. But the fakir was generous, friendly and without any expectations; volatile outwardly, inwardly he was steadfast and tranquil. His ways were beyond all comprehension!
105. But even in that mean petty village, there were some who were very kind by nature. They considered him to be a sadhu.
106. Taty Kote’s mother, Bayjabai, used to carry a basket on her head with bhakaris and take them to the forest, at noon.
107. Mile after mile she would wander in the forest in search of the fakir, trampling over the thick shrubs and bushes, and would trace this mad fakir, falling at his feet when she found him.
108. How great was her kindness and nobility! Going into the woods and forests, she used to feed Baba a simple meal of dry or curried vegetables and bhakari, in the afternoon.
109. And to the end of his days, Baba also did not forget this devoted service of hers. Remembering it full well, he saw to her son’s welfare.
110. Both Bayjabai and her husband truly had a firm faith in the fakir. In fact, the fakir was to them both the Lord Almighty, Himself! After all, it is only to the faithful that God really belongs.
111. The fakir used to be in deep meditation. Bayjabai would set out a leaf, serve food from the basket on it, and with some effort would feed him.
112. Baba always said, “Fakiri is the true kingship. For fakiri is everlasting, but see how transient riches are!”
113. Later, Baba abandoned the forest and came to stay in the village. He began to take food in the mosque, thereby saving mother (Bayjabai) all the arduous effort.
114. From then onwards, this regular practice (of taking food for Baba) was kept up by the couple, and after them, by Taty.
115. Blessed, blessed are the saints in whose hearts dwells Vasudev (God), for ever! Blessed are those devotees too, who, by rare good fortune, are enriched in their saintly company!
116. Taty was very luck indeed! Mhalsapati also must have accumulated great past merit! For they both enjoyed the privilege of Baba’s company, equally.
117. Taty and Mhalsapati both slept in the mosque itself. The love that Baba had equally for both was just indescribable.

118. Their heads used to be in three directions – east, west and north, while their feet would touch each other's at the centre.
119. Thus spreading out their sheets, they would keep on talking, of all manner of things. And if one of the appeared to be dozing off, another would waken him.
120. If Tatya started snoring, Baba would suddenly get up and, turning him upside down, would press his head down.
121. Taking Mhalsapati with him, both would clasp Tatya closely, squeeze him tight, press his legs and would also rub his back vigorously.
122. In this way, for full fourteen years, Tatya slept in the mosque with Baba. Oh, how wonderful were those days! They were etched in their memory permanently.
123. Leaving the parents at home, Tatya, out of his fondness for Baba, used to sleep in the mosque. With what measure can that love be measured? Who can assess the value of that Grace?
124. Then his father died; the responsibility of the household fell on Tatya. He became the head of the family and himself became a husband. Then he started sleeping in his own house.
125. Only when there is such steadfast faith will there be Sai's marvelous experiences, even without being asked for. And to the devotee, it is a miracle.
126. Similarly, there was a very well-known gentleman of Rahata called Khushalchand, who was a wealthy Nagarshet of the village.
127. Just as the well-known devotee Ganapat Kote Patil was a great favourite with Baba, so also was Khushalchand's uncle very dear to him.
128. Though of the Marwari community, he had great fondness for Baba and they used to meet frequently, to the great pleasure of both.
129. After some time, as God willed it, the senior Shetji passed away. But Baba did not forget the friendship. In fact, his loving concern for the family redoubled.
130. Later on too, Baba's affection for Khushalchand grew steadily and so long as he lived, he watched over his welfare, day and night.
131. Taking with him his loving companions, Baba would go to Rahata, a mile and a half away from Shirdi; sometimes in a bullock-cart, sometimes in a tonga.
132. At the village boundary, he would be received by the villagers amid a clash of musical instruments like drums, shehnai, etc. With loving devotion they would then bow at his feet.
133. Lovingly, Baba would then be taken into the village with ceremony to the delight of everyone.
134. Khushalchand would then take Baba to his own house and make him comfortable in his seat, would offer him some refreshment.
135. Both would then recall old times, which made them very happy. Who can describe their joy?

136. When the joyful meeting, light refreshments of fruits, etc., were over, Baba would return to Shirdi with his companions, filled with rejoicing in the Self.
137. Rahata village was situated on one side; on the other was Nimgaon. Between these two stood Shirdi.
138. From this central point of Shirdi, although Baba never physically went beyond these two villages, during his lifetime, yet he knew everything that happened anywhere.
139. To no other place did he ever go, nor had seen a train; but the arrival-departure and the time-table of the trains he knew perfectly.
140. To catch the train in good time, the devotees would make great preparations. But when they went to take his permission, Baba would merely say, "Why have you become so impatient?"
141. 'But Baba, if I don't make haste now, I will miss my train to Bombay and my job will be in jeopardy, for my boss will surely sack me.'
142. "There is no other master here! Go, have a piece of bhakari. Have your meal at noon and then go!"
143. And who had the intrepidity to defy these words? Young and old, wise and discerning – they all had experienced their truth!
144. Whoever obeyed his order, never missed the train; but he who disobeyed him readily experienced difficulty.
145. Innumerable are such experiences, one after the other, and each a new and unique one, which I shall narrate briefly.
146. Hemad now seeks refuge at Sai's feet. In the next chapter, the same narration of how the devotees had to take Baba's permission to return home, will be made.
147. How, he who had the permission would go and he who did not have it would stay back; but he who disobeyed, would come to harm, will be described in the next chapter.
148. Similarly, Baba's adopting the 'madhurkari' practice and why Baba chose to eat food collected as alms; how he absolved himself from sins such as 'Panchsoona', etc., will be explained later.
149. Hence, with great insistence, I pray to my listeners, from moment to moment, that they should listen to this Story of Sai, for their own benefit.

Weal to be all! Here ends the eighth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'Importance of Human Birth – Partaking Food collected by
Alms – Bayjabai's Devotion – Sleeping with Taty and Mhalsapati,
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

**Consequences of Disobeying Baba —
Baba's Alms collection and
Panchsoona and other sins –
Stories of the Devotee Tarkhad**

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Now, to continue from the stories in the previous chapter, (I shall describe) how devotees suffered, if they returned to their respective places, without Baba permitting them to do so;
2. Similarly, about Baba's practice of collecting alms, which he followed till the end of his life, to avert Panchsoona and other such sins, only for the benefit of his devotees –
3. And also, how Sai pervades this whole Universe, -- right from Brahma to all the inanimate objects; that Sai himself, by his Grace, impresses upon us that God dwells in all beings.
4. Hence, O listeners, I entreat your full attention while listening. For when these sacred stories are heard with reverence, you will attain your weal.
5. There is one special characteristic of the pilgrimage to Shirdi. If a pilgrim returns home without taking Baba's permission, he invited only trouble for himself. 9/30/5
6. But once such permission is granted, then he cannot stay even a moment longer in Shirdi. Should he persist, sure enough, he would bring trouble upon himself. All have experienced this already!
7. Those who disobeyed Baba's orders had to face a great many difficulties on the way. Many were robbed by thieves, an experience which they remembered all their lives.
8. Those who started out on an empty stomach, in a hurry, despite being told to have their meal before leaving, not only missed the train, but were wearied out by hunger and exasperation, as many devotees have seen for themselves.
9. Patil Taty Kote once wanted to go to Kopergaon, for the weekly market and so came to the mosque.
10. The tonga was kept waiting outside; he had Baba's darshan and, as if to take Baba's permission, he, in fact, only bowed at Baba's feet to take his leave.

11. Time and again would the devotees avoid or put off (taking his permission). But Baba knew the good times and the bad. Seeing Tatya's impatience to go, he said, "Just wait a moment!
12. "Let the marketing be; it can be done later! But do not go outside the village." Yet, on seeing Tatya's great insistence, he added, "Do take Shama with you."
13. 'O where is the need for Shama!' thought Tatya to himself disregarding Baba's words he went and sat in the tonga to go to the market.
14. Of the two horses of the tonga, one was swift-footed and had cost three hundred rupees. As they approached Saool Vihir (a village 3 km from Shirdi), the horse began to gallop ever so fast, becoming wild and wayward.
15. The horse, that had never known the whip and was accustomed to making his way to the market in no time, tripped and fell giving a sudden jolt to the tonga and spraining Tatya's loins sorely, as a result.
16. Alas! What marketing and shopping ! Tatya at once remembered Sai, his Mother! 'Had I but heeded Sai's words, this mishap could have been averted', he thought, regretfully, 'Now what has happened, nothing can be done'.
17. On another occasion, a similar thing happened! This time Tatya was all set to go to a place called Kolhar. Horses were harnessed to the tonga, and as he came, all ready, to ask for permission, he just bowed at Baba's feet.
18. 'I will be back in no time', he said, and although he had not obtained Baba's clear consent, Tatya set out. But now just listen to what happened.
19. Already the tonga was small and light-weight; in that the horses ran unbridled and wild, and would not stop even at the cavities and pits. Tatya's life stood in imminent peril!
20. But Sai's Grace saved him. The tonga banged into a Babul tree and it was as well that it broke down there. For it averted further disaster.
21. Similarly, once a highly-placed English gentleman from Bombay came for Baba's darshan, with some definite purpose in mind.
22. He carried a recommendation from Chandorkar in a letter, which had been addressed to Madhavrao. He asked for a tent to stay and was quite comfortable in it.
23. Everyone knew well, how impossible it was for anyone to climb up the steps of that mosque and take Baba's darshan to his heart's content, against Baba's wishes.
24. Three times did the gentleman make an attempt to climb the mosque, but it was all fruitless! The visitor was greatly disheartened!
25. In his innermost heart he had wished to go up to the mosque, make obeisance to Baba on bended knees, kiss his hands, and sit for a while.

26. Such indeed, was his wish; but Baba would not allow him to come up and sit near him, at that time, in the mosque.
27. Baba wanted him to be in the sabhamandap below – to sit there and take darshan from that place itself, if he so desired. But he definitely did not want him to come up.
28. So he got up to go and came to the courtyard to take leave, before returning home. “But you can go tomorrow”, Baba said to him, “Why all this hurry?”
29. People around were also trying to persuade him, entreating him in many ways not to go, and telling him how those who went without taking permission, regretted it greatly.
30. But nobody can prevail against the pre-destined! He was not convinced and set out without permission, only to face troubles and tribulations on the way.
31. Initially, the tonga ran smoothly enough. But afterwards, the horses went off the track. And hardly, had they gone past Saool Vihir, when all of a sudden, a bicycle crossed their path.
32. The gentleman was sitting at the back, while in the front the horses ran amuck startled by the sudden interruption. The gentleman was knocked off his balance and fell flat across the road.
33. With enormous effort the tonga was stopped. The man had gone sliding down, but was then lifted up and seated in the tonga. And then the tonga proceeded on its journey.
34. Alas! Shirdi remained on one side; Bombay on the other! Instead, it was to a hospital in Kopergaon that the tonga drove to.
35. Tormented by remorse, suffering as an expiration of the sin of disobeying Baba, the gentleman had to spend some days in that hospital.
36. People had innumerable such experiences. As a result they began to have doubts and apprehensions on such occasions, and started obeying Baba’s orders. No one dared to disobey.
37. Sometimes the wheel came off the carriage; at other times, the horses were tired out. Trains were missed, people starved, and so many were left moaning and fretting with frustration!
38. But those who obeyed his command always caught the train – sometimes even running out of its schedule, and had a pleasant comfortable journey, which they remembered all their lives!
39. Should anyone have a doubt as to why Baba preferred the practice of collecting alms and followed it, for years together, listen to now this explanation.
40. Actually, if one considers Baba’s lifestyle and conduct, as a whole, one will realize that collecting of alms was most befitting. For by so doing, he gave an opportunity to people to perform the duty of a householder, all for their own good, which brought them great satisfaction.

41. It is the devotee, steadfast in the faith, and who surrenders everything – body, speech, mind and wealth – at his feet, who is very dear to Sai.
42. In Grihasthasharam (i.e. the householder's or the second of the four stages or ashrams), whatever food is cooked in the house, is first to be offered by the householder to the sacred fire, in the name of the sanyasin and the Brahmachari.
43. If however, the householder partakes of the food without first making such an offering, then he has to perform the chandrayana ritual, for the purification of his speech, mind and action, according to the shastras.
44. Sanyasins and Brahmacharis are forbidden to cook food. If they start doing it, they too will most certainly be saddled with this Chandrayana ritual.
45. Hence the Shastras have entrusted the responsibility of feeding them to the householders. Sanyasins never take up any occupation to satisfy their hunger.
46. Baba was not a householder; nor was he in the Vanaprastha stage, but he was a celibate who had renounced the world from childhood. For such a one then, subsisting on collected alms was most fitting.
47. He who regards the whole universe as his home, knows for certain that he is himself Vasudeva and Vishwambhar (all-pervading), that he is the everlasting Brahman,
48. Only such a member of the world-family has the true, perfect right to the food collected by alms. As for all others, just look at the vulgar display and the mockery they have made of this practice!
49. First a man should give up the desire for a son (for childhood and family); then the desire for wealth; and also, for fame (for honour in the world). He who is free from these threefold desires can alone think of subsisting on alms.
50. Or else the verses of Tukoba Maharaj, where he says, 'It is a disgraceful existence to resort to the begging bowl', will become meaningless and futile.
51. The young and the old, the great and the small, all knew too well what a great siddha Sai Samarth was. It is we, who are always bound by our worldly hopes and desires and are not steadfast in our devotion to his holy feet.
52. The five great sacrificial offerings without which a householder was forbidden (by Shastras) to take his meal, Sai himself got performed everyday in Shirdi, thereby sanctifying the food prepared.
53. Every day he would go to five houses (for alms) to remind the householders of their duty to offer food first to a guest. Fortunate indeed were those who learnt his lesson, sitting in their own homes.
54. After making the five great sacrificial offerings, those who partake of the remaining food will have their five great sins (Panchsoona) which

- are so difficult to understand and committed quite unknowingly, destroyed altogether.
55. Among the people, these Panchsoona are known as the five great sins of Kandani, Choolli, Peshani, Udkumbhi and Marjani.
 56. When the stone-mortar is fed with food grain which is then pounded with the pestle to remove the chaff and bran from it, tiny little creatures are killed unknowingly.
 57. But until it goes through this entire process the grain will not get cooked. Hence this is the very first sin of the Panchsoona and is called Kandani.
 58. When wood is kindled in the fireplace to cook the food, there too living beings are destroyed quite unknowingly. This is the second sin, called Choolli. 10/01/05
 59. Taking a quern or a hand-mill, when the grain is ground into flour, once again innumerable little beings are crushed, unawares. This sin is called Peshani.
 60. When in a pitcher water is taken out from a well, or a tank, or a lake, or when men and women wash their clothes, again, numerous creatures die.
 61. In order to clean the pitchers, when they are scrubbed or washed by hand (with mud or ash), living beings are unintentionally killed. This is the fourth sin called Udkumbhi.
 62. Similarly, when bathing with hot or cold water, or sprinkling the cow-dung for cleaning the floor, the great destruction of life that takes place is called Marjani.
 63. To free himself from five great sins, a householder has to make the five great sacrificial offerings. Once these sins are warded off thus, the householders will attain self-purification.
 64. It is by the power of self-purification that pure, sacred knowledge is attained and after such knowledge, these fortunate ones attain salvation which is ever-lasting.
 65. However, in describing Sai's practice in collecting alms, the book has become expansive! But now, listen to a true story in this connection and then we shall end this chapter.
 66. Whatever you send for Baba, and with whosoever you send it, provided it is sent with sincere, heart-felt love, Baba will ask for it, without fail, even if the bearer of that small offering forgets!
 67. Be it then a simple offering of a bhakari or vegetable, or be it a sweetmeat like a pedha (made from milk and sugar), so long as it was offered with loving devotion, it did not matter! And oh, how Sai's heart overflowed with love when he met with such unswerving faith!
 68. This is the story of one such loving devotee, listening to which you will be filled with joy. If any devotee failed to carry out a responsibility undertaken by him, Sai himself guided him to the path of his duty.

69. And so gentle and sweet was his manner of instruction that at the proper time he would awaken the devotee to his duty. Blessed are those fortunate ones who have themselves experienced this! Their happiness is beyond all description.
70. One of Sai's great devotees was, by name, Ramchandra, his father Atmaram, and his surname Tarkhad, who had taken refuge in Sai, the Abode of Peace.
71. But he was always called Babasaheb Tarkhad. And it is about him that we shall narrate story, there being no better reason for this narration.
72. Oh, how delightful it was to listen to Tarkhad, when, his heart overflowing with Sai's love, he would begin to describe his own experiences!
73. And when he narrated, one after the other, with gestures and expressions of deep feeling, the novel experiences that he had had at every step, O, what a grand devotion it revealed!
74. Incomparable as his love was, Babasaheb had installed a drawing of Sai in a beautiful sandalwood shrine at home for the purpose of worship, every morning, noon and evening.
75. Tarkhad was very fortunate in having also a son who was equally devoted to Sai. So much so, that without offering naivedya (food-offering) to Sai, he would never touch food himself.
76. Every morning, after taking his bath, he used to offer pooja to Baba's picture, with all his heart and soul and body, which ritual he ended with offering naivedya.
77. Even as he continued this regular practice untiringly, all his efforts bore fruit in the excellent, most unique experience that he had.
78. His mother, who was a great devotee of Sai, was eager to go to Shirdi and the father felt that the son should be with her in the journey.
79. She wished to go to Shirdi, take Shri Sai's darshan, spend a few days there and serve Sai, in person.
80. Although such was the father's wish, the son did not really want to go. For he was worried as to who would regularly perform the pooja in the house in his absence.
81. The father was a Prarthana Samajist (who did not believe in ritualistic idol-worship). 'Would it then be proper to trouble him with pooja?' was the son's doubt.
82. And yet, knowing his secret wish, the son was ready to go. And just listen to what he, very lovingly, entreated his father.
83. 'Unless I am promised that nobody in the house will take food without first offering naivedya to Sai, I certainly cannot go.'
84. The father was already aware of the son's vow. 'Go, I will offer the naivedya regularly, you may rest assured', he said.
85. 'Without first offering naivedya to Sai, none of us will take food. Trust my word and have no doubts. Go with an easy mind.'

86. On getting such an assurance the boy went to Shirdi. As the next day dawned, Tarkhad himself performed the pooja.
87. On that day, right at the beginning of the pooja ritual, Babasaheb Tarkhad prostrated before Sai's picture and prayed,
88. 'Baba, let my service (of performing pooja) to you be the same as that of my son. Let it not be a mechanical exercise at my hands, but let true love spring in my heart while performing it.
89. Early morning before the sunrise, which is the most perfect time for worship, Tarkhad would begin the pooja with this prayer, every day and offer naivedya at the end.
90. This he continued without a break and offered a piece of sugar-candy by way of naivedya, until one day there was a lapse in this daily routine.
91. His mind preoccupied with business matters, one day, Tarkhad did not remember the naivedya. Everybody had their meal without making the food offering to Sai.
92. Tarkhad was the chief officer, in charge of a well-known textile mill, and had to go out every morning for his work.
93. Later in the afternoon when he returned, he was served at mealtime the prasad of sugar-candy, offered to Sai in the morning.
94. Such was the daily routine, when one day he forgot to offer sugar-candy as naivedya and consequently had no prasad at lunch.
95. It was the cook who used to serve the remaining sugar-candy on his plate every day when he sat down to his meal, that itself serving as purification of the food.
96. But on that day, for some reason, he was in a hurry while performing the pooja and the offering of naivedya was forgotten. So the prasad too, was not served, as every day.
97. At once, Tarkhad got up from the meal, full of remorse, and prostrating before Sai's picture, said with tearful eyes,
98. 'Baba, what is this Maya of yours! How did you stupefy my mind so? Really, it was just a mechanical exercise that you made me perform! But now, please grant me your forgiveness, first!
99. 'It is no mere bewilderment of mine, but a great sin that I have committed and am filled with remorse. Oh, it is my fault, entirely my fault, shameless as I am! Be compassionate to me, O Maharaj!'
100. He prostrated at Baba's feet in the picture and with a heart overcome with regret and repentance, said, 'O Compassionate Maharaj, have mercy on me!'
101. So saying, he wrote a letter to the son, in a helpless, wretched state of mind, saying, 'Entreat Baba's forgiveness; say that a great sin has been committed at my hands!
102. Pray for his mercy on one who has totally surrendered to him. With these words, invoke this compassion and pray for an assurance of forgiveness and grace, on behalf of this humble servant.'

103. While this was happening at Bandra, at about 200 miles away in Shirdi, the news reached instantly. Listen to what Baba said there.
104. Here is the actual proof of Sai Maharaj's knowledge of past, present and future, that knew no barriers of space and time.
105. Although the boy was at Shirdi, all this while, listen O listeners, carefully to what happened when he went to pay obeisance to Baba, on that same day and at the same time!
106. As the boy came very eagerly, with his mother and bowed at Baba's feet, he was quite astonished to hear what Sai said to his mother.
107. "What could I do, O mother? Today, as every day, I went to Bandra. But there was no rice, no gruel, nothing to eat or drink. And hungry, I had to return!
108. "Just see the 'rinanubandha' (the ties of the past births); though the door was closed, I entered at my own sweet will. Who is to prevent me?
109. "The master was not at home. My intestines were groaning with hunger. But in the same instant, at the height of noon, I turned back without a morsel!"
110. On hearing these words, the son at once guessed that most probably his father forgot and missed making the food-offering!
111. He pleaded with Baba, 'Let me go home!' But Baba would hear none of it! Instead, he made him offer pooja there itself.
112. The same day the son sent a detailed letter from Shirdi, on reading which the father's heart simply melted!
113. The letter from Bandra reached Shirdi, too! The son was amazed. His eyes too, filled with tears, which freely flowed down the cheek.
114. Just see this wonderful sport of Sai! How will love not well up in the heart? Can there be such a heart of stone that will not melt by this?
115. It was the loving mother of this same boy, who was blessed by Sai Baba, while she was once at Shirdi. And now, listen to this marvelous tale!
116. She was in the dinning hall; food was served and everybody was about to begin, when suddenly, at that hour of the noon, a hungry dog came to the door, where the lady sat.
117. The lady at once gave a quarter of the bhakari from her plate to the dog. But at the same moment, there also came a hungry pig, smeared all over with mud (who too she fed the bhakari).
118. It all happened so naturally, that the lady soon forgot all about it. But in the afternoon, Baba himself brought up the subject.
119. In the afternoon, after lunch, when the lady came to the mosque as usual and sat down at some distance, Baba said to her affectionately,
10/2/5
120. "Mother, you fed me today and with all that food my stomach is full, almost to the throat. I was suffering acutely from hunger but you appeased me by giving me food.

121. "This is what you should always do. For truly, this alone will stand you in good stead. It can never be, that sitting here, in the mosque, I would speak an untruth.
122. "Always have such compassion. First feed those who are hungry, then eat yourself. Preserve this truth carefully in your heart."
123. The lady could not understand what Sai Samarth was saying. What could he mean? For, his words are never without significance!
124. So she said, 'How is it possible that I have given you food? I myself depend on others and eat whatever I get, after paying a price for it.'
125. "After eating the bhakari, given to me so lovingly, I am satiated most truly, -- nay I am still belching with satiation!
126. "When you sat down to lunch, you suddenly saw that a hungry dog with an empty stomach, who came to the door. Know that I am one with him.
127. "And, so also the pig that you saw suffering from pangs of hunger, and smeared all over with mud, -- I am one with him, too!"
128. As she heard Baba's words, the lady was quite astonished in her mind. So many dogs, pigs, cats roam around. Is Baba one with them all?
129. "Sometimes I am a dog, and sometimes a pig; sometimes I am a cow, sometimes a cat, and sometimes an ant, a fly, an aquatic creature – in such various forms do I move about in the world.
130. "Know, that I like only him who sees me in all the living beings. So give up the sense of differentiation. This is the way to worship me."
131. These were not just words; they were the purest nectar; listening to them the lady was choked with emotion. A lump rose in her throat and her eyes filled with tears of joy.
132. There is another sweet tale about this lady's loving devotion, which is also a mark of Sai's oneness with his devotees.
133. Once Purandare (another devotee) set out for Shirdi with his wife and children. This lady (i.e. Mrs. Tarkhad), very lovingly, sent with him some brinjals for Baba.
134. She requested Purandare's wife to prepare 'bharit' (i.e. dressing the roasted brinjal with seasoning) for Baba with one brinjal and with the other, to slice and fry it crisply with seasoning, etc.. called 'kachrya', and serve a liberal helping thereof to Baba.
135. 'All right', she said as she took the brinjals. On reaching Shirdi, she took 'bharit' to serve Baba at lunchtime, after the arati.
136. As usual, she offered naivedya and went away, leaving the plate of food for Baba. After collecting together everybody's naivedya Baba then sat down to the meal.
137. When he tasted the 'bharit' everyone thought that he found it delicious, so that he then felt like having fried brinjals slices. For he said, "Bring them just now!"

138. A message went to Radhakrishnabai at once that Baba wished to have fried brinjals slices and was waiting for them to begin his lunch; and they were at a loss of what to do.
139. This was really not the season for brinjals; then how can a dish be prepared? A frantic search began for Purnadare's wife because of the 'bharit' she had served.
140. For it was in the plate that she had brought, that 'bharit' was served. So, maybe, in her baggage there are some more brinjals, they thought.
141. And hence, when she was asked, the mystery behind the sudden desire for fried brinjal slices was solved and everyone understood why Baba had such a great love for them!
142. The lady explained that she had made 'bharit' out of one brinjal and served it in the afternoon, and had thought she would fry the slices of the other one later, which she had already sliced for the purpose.
143. Later on, when everyone came to know, by and by, this story of the brinjals, right from its beginning, they were all amazed to see Sai's all-pervasiveness.
144. On another occasion, in the month of December, in the year 1915, this same lady (Mrs. Tarkhad) sent a pedha (a sweetmeat made with milk and sugar) for Baba, with great affection.
145. Balaram (Mankar) had passed away and his son was to go to Shirdi for performing the obsequies and came to Tarkhad to tell him.
146. He came to Tarkhad to say that he was going to Shirdi. So Tarkhad's wife wanted to send with him, something for Baba.
147. As she searched in the house, there was nothing to send but just one pedha and that too, had been already offered as naivedya. But the boy was in a hurry to leave.
148. Moreover, that boy was in mourning; the one pedha in the house was also used already as naivedya, but she sent the same with him to offer to Sai.
149. Saying, 'There is nothing else. So now, take this pedha and offer it with love. Sai will eat it with relish.
150. Govindji (Balaram Mankar's son) took the pedha with him. But when he went for Baba's darshan, it was forgotten at his lodging. Baba was patient with him.
151. Later, in the afternoon, the boy came again in Sai's court, but as before he forgot again and came to the mosque empty-handed.
152. Baba tried asking him, "What have you brought for me?" And he replied, 'Nothing', then He reminded him gently.
153. "Had no one given you anything for me?" 'No', he said. Then Sai Samarth asked him directly.
154. "My boy, did not mother very lovingly send with you some sweets for me, when you left home?" It was only then that he remembered!

155. And, Oh! he never felt so ashamed of himself! How could he have forgotten it! His head hung in shame, he prayed for forgiveness and touching Baba's feet, he set out at once!
156. Running, he went to the lodging, brought the pedha and offered it to Sai. The moment it came in the hand, Baba at once put it in hi mouth and gratified the mother's feelings.
157. It is thus that this Sai, the great Mahatma, glorified love and devotion by giving each devotee the experience according to his faith.
158. Another significance that emerges from these stories, is that one should always see God in all living creatures. This is also recognized by all the Shastras. And this is the demonstrated conclusion here, too.
159. Now, in listening to the next chapter, you will come to know how Baba lived; where, at which place, he slept, etc. Listen to it attentively.
160. Hemadpant surrenders at Sai's feet. The listeners should reflect with reverence, on the stories narrated, contemplate on them, for it will be beneficial to them.

Weal to be all! Here ends the ninth chapter of
 "Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
 'Consequences of Disobeying Baba – Baba's Alms
 Collection and Panchsoona and other Sins –
 Stories of the Devotee Tarkhad",
 as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
 and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

10

The Mahima of Shri Sai Samarth

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. He, who is engaged in the welfare of all the people; but is himself, for ever, one with the Brahman, remember him ceaselessly, with a loving heart.
2. He, whose mere remembrance is enough to free us from the entanglement of birth and death, is the best among all the means (of redemption), a means which does not cost even a farthing.
3. And, with the least effort, most easily and naturally, comes to hand, the fruit, which is not trivial, by any means. Hence, when the bodily organs

- are yet strong and healthy, every passing moment should be fully utilized (for achieving the goal).
4. All other gods are illusory, unreal; the guru alone is the God Eternal. Once you repose faith in him, he will help you overcome even the predestined.
 5. Where there is pure, sincere service of the guru there is a total extirpation of worldly life. No hair-splitting discussions of Nyaya, Miamamsa etc., or any other strenuous intellectual effort is required.
 6. When the Sadguru captains the ship the faithful devotees overcome all the threefold afflictions – the adhibhoot, adhyatimic and adhidaivic.
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 7. To cross over this ocean of worldly affairs, you need to trust the Helmsman. The same trust is to be reposed in your guru to cross the ocean of life.
 8. Seeing the devotee's faith and devotion, he (the guru), gives the Supreme Knowledge, made as easy of comprehension, as it is rested in the palm of your hand, and enables you to attain with natural ease Moksha which is characterized by pure Bliss.
 9. Let us now sing the praises of him (Sadguru), by whose darshan alone, all the confusion of the mind (caused by the illusions of duality between the mind and the soul) is cleared, all the sensual desires cease and Sanchit and Kriyaman are slowly destroyed.
 10. In the eighth chapter the purpose of human birth has been related. In the ninth, we have heard about the inconceivable mystery behind Baba's vow of collecting vows.
 11. Bayjabai's bhakari-vegetable at noon, Baba's concern for Khushalchand's well-being, his sleeping in the company of Tatya, Mhalsapati, etc., has also been described, which has delighted the listeners.
 12. And now, O listeners! Listen attentively to the following part of Baba's story – how he lived, where he slept, in what an incomprehensible manner he moved about.
 13. How praiseworthy was Baba's life! To both, Hindus and Muslims, he was a mother; a trusted refuge – to a tiger and a goat alike, where both moved about in an atmospheres of fearlessness and mutual affection.
 14. So much for the business of living! Now listen respectfully, O listeners, to how Sai lived; where, at what place he slept, and so on.
 15. A wooden plank, four times an arm's length, wide as an outstretched palm (the measure of the thumb and little finger extended) would be suspended from the rafter, like a swing, fastened at both ends by pieces of rags.
 16. On such a plank Baba used to sleep. Earthen oil-lamps burned at the head and foot of his bed. No one ever understood when he climbed up or down from it.

17. He would either sit up there, with head bent, or would be sleeping on it. But when he climbed up or got down from it, nobody ever saw him doing so.
18. The plank was secured by strips of rags – but how did it balance Baba’s weight? Well, when all the Mahasiddhis reside in you, is not the plank only for name’s sake?
19. Where even the tiniest particle pricks the eye, a man who has attained the siddhi of Anima (ability to reduce oneself to an atom) can hide quite comfortably in it. Hence Baba’s power to move with ease in the form of a fly or a worm or an ant.
20. He who has Anima as his slave, will he take long, transforming himself into a fly? And he who can stay suspended in the mid-air, of what consequence is a wooden plank to such a one?
21. The Ashtasiddhis like Anima, Mahima, Laghima, etc., and the Navanidhis stood by his side with folded hands. The plank was to him but an instrumental cause!
22. Worms and ants, pigs and dogs, birds and even human beings, all great and small, kings or paupers – he looked upon them all, equally.
23. Apparently, he resided in Shirdi; possessed nothing else except a physical frame measuring three and a half cubits in length; yet Sai Maharaj, the Storehouse of Virtue, dwells in the hearts of all.
24. Inwardly, detached and ascetical; yet outwardly, there was a strong urge to guide people on the right path; totally desireless from within, forever there was a genuine attachment to the devotees, from without.
25. There was no expectation of the fruit of action, whatsoever, in the innermost heart, but the desire for the welfare of the devotees that appeared outwardly, was genuine. An Abode of Eternal Peace within, he yet exhibited anger, occasionally.
26. One with God, always, at times he showed ghoulish tendencies, outwardly. Firmly committed to non-duality, within, he was yet involved in the complexities in the world.
27. Sometimes he treated people with great affection; sometimes he charged at them, stone in hand. There was a volley of curses and abuses, on occasions, as there was an embrace of blissful joy on other such occasions.
28. But in truth he was calm and self-restrained; detached and patient, forever in deep meditation; one with the Self and totally absorbed in It; pleased and gracious to his devotees.
29. Always Self-engrossed, sitting still in one asana (posture), without the botheration of going or coming here and there; with his baton as the treasured staff of a sanyasin, – his was indeed a quiet peaceful existence, free from worldly cares!

30. Without the least desire for wealth or fame, and alms collection as the sole means of subsistence, he passed his days in this yogic state of withdrawal of all the senses (from the attraction of sensual pleasures).
31. He dressed exactly like a yati sanyasin, with his baton serving as a sannyasin's staff, in his hand. On his lips were the words "Allah Malik", repeatedly, and for the devotees, his love and affection flowed constantly.
32. Such was the physical manifestation of Sai who had appeared in a human form. Only by our accumulated past merit has this treasure come so unexpectedly, to our hands.
33. Those who thought of him as just another human being were indeed, dull-witted and unfortunate. Strange is their destiny! For, how will they enjoy this rare good fortune?
34. Sai is a mine of Self-knowledge; filled with pure joy is Sai's person. Cling to him for protection instantly, to be able to cross over the ocean of worldly life, safely.
35. The most constant, undifferentiated Supreme Spirit, which is personified in Baba, is boundless and infinite and fills this entire Universe from Brahma right down to a tiny shrub.
36. The time span of the Kaliyuga is four lakh thirty two thousand years. After about five thousand years had elapsed, Baba incarnated on this earth.
37. Listeners may raise a doubt here, that without knowing Baba's birth date, on what grounds could this period be fixed? So, listen attentively, now.
38. With a firm determination to remain a resident of the holy Shirdi village, to the end of his life, Baba spent sixty years there, like a Kshetrasannyasin.
39. In the beginning, Baba had appeared at Shirdi at the age of sixteen and had stayed on, at that time, for three years.
40. Then, he slipped away from Shirdi only to be rediscovered in the distant Nizam Kingdom. Thereafter he returned with the marriage party and remained in Shirdi for ever.
41. He was then twenty years old, and for the next sixty years he constantly remained in Shirdi, as everyone knows.
42. Baba left his mortal coil on the Vijayadashami day in the month of Ashwin, in the year shake eighteen hundred and forty (i.e. October, 15 1918).
43. Thus Baba's life-span was eighty years and his birth date can thus be roughly determined to be shake seventeen hundred and sixty (i.e. 1838).
44. Can one ever determine for certain, the life-span of great saints, who have conquered death itself? It is a task most difficult to accomplish!

45. These great Mahatmas always abide in their own place without birth or death even, as the sun never rises or sets, but is constant and steady in its place.
46. In the year 1681, Ramdas took Samadhi. Hardly had two centuries gone by, when this unique personality appeared.
47. Bharatbhoomi (India) was invaded by the Muslims; the Hindu kings were vanquished. The path of devotional worship slowly disappeared and people began abandoning the dharma (path of righteousness)/
48. It was then that Ramdas took birth. With the help of Shivaji Maharaj he protected the kingdom, the Brahmins and the sacred cow from the Muslims.
49. Hardly had two centuries elapsed after this, when once again, disorder set in and there was a divide between the Hindus and the Muslims, which Baba tried to Bridge.
50. When Ram and Rahim are one, without even the least difference between them, then why should their followers insist on their separateness? And why should they fall out with each other?
51. Oh! what foolish children you are! Let the ties of friendship bring Hindus and Muslims together; let generous, benevolent thoughts take a firm root in your minds. Only then will you reach the Shore Beyond!
52. Disputation, arguments are not profitable nor do we want to compete with each other. Let us always be mindful of our own good and Shri Hari (God) will protect us.
53. Yoga, ritualistic sacrifices (Yajna), penance and Knowledge -- these are the means of attaining God. But with all these, if God does not dwell in the heart, in vain is the life, the devotion of such a man.
54. 'Even when someone harms you, you should not retaliate; but do him a good turn, instead, whenever possible.' This was the essence of Baba's teaching.
55. For one's material as well as spiritual welfare, this advice is most beneficial. This straight-forward course can be followed by all – high and low, women and Shudras.
56. Just as the grandeur of a dream-kingdom disappears on waking up, so will the illusory quality of this worldly life, said Baba.
57. He, whose philosophy of worldly life regarded the pleasures and pains as false, had dispelled their dream-like quality by Self-absorption and attained Emancipation.
58. Seeing the devotee's attachment to the material world, his heart was moved with compassionate concern. And he was anxious, day and night, as to how the devotee would overcome this attachment to the physical body.
59. An attitude of mind that 'I am Brahman', a disposition of blissful happiness, personified, and a lasting state of desirelessness – in such a one, detachment and renunciation had taken refuge.

60. Veena (the stringed musical instrument) and cymbals in hand, to wander from door to door, with a pitiful countenance and an outstretched hand – this was something he had never known. 10/04/05
61. There are many such gurus, who get hold of people to make disciples of them, whispering forcibly into their ears, some mantra and cheating them for the sake of money.
62. They teach, 'dharma' to the disciples, while themselves following the path of 'adharma', all the while. How can they take the disciple safely across the worldly life and help them to avoid the birth, death cycle?
63. But here was this unique personality of Sai, in whose mind there was no thought, no desire for publicizing his righteousness or to win the public acclaim for it.
64. Such was this wonderful personality (of Sai) that in him there was no place for ego. On the other hand, there was always an inclination to love his devotees deeply.
65. Among the gurus, there are two types: Niyat (ordained by God) and Aniyat (not so ordained). Let me explain to the listeners the specific functions of each.
66. To encourage the growth and the ripening of the virtuous qualities so as to purify the heart and to guide the disciple on the path of Salvation – such alone is the gift of an Aniyat guru.
67. But the association with a Niyat guru results in removing all duality and in an awakening of a feeling of 'Oneness', thereby proving the truth of the Vedic aphorism, 'You are That' (i.e. Brahman) (Sama Veda), through actual experience.
68. These (Niyat) gurus pervade this Universe in an unmanifest state and incarnate for the benefit of their devotees. And once their life's mission is over, they give up their mortal coil.
69. It is to this second category that Sai belongs. How can I describe his leelas adequately? As he guides my mind, so will this narration take shape.
70. There are many gurus for material sciences and arts. But only he who gives you Self-Knowledge is the Sadguru. He alone, who shows you the shore beyond, is all-powerful. Inconceivable is his greatness, indeed!
71. Whoever went to have his darshan would be told the whole secret of his past, future and present, without his asking for it.
72. He who saw the Brahman or God Himself in all the living creatures; who looked equally upon friend and foe, made not the slightest distinction between them.
73. He expected nothing from anyone, but treated them all alike and showered blessings even on those who were ungrateful. Fortune or misfortune, did not disturb his equilibrium; nor was he ever touched by doubts and misgivings.

74. While in the mortal body, he had no attachment to material objects, like the physical body, house, etc. Thus, only outwardly in the physical body, but inwardly he was totally detached from it. To such a one salvation comes in this life, itself!
75. Blessed are the people of Shirdi, to whom Sai himself symbolized God-worship; who incessantly remembered Sai, while eating and drinking or sleeping.
76. Blessed, blessed is their devotion and love that makes them sing his praises all the time – while at work in the barn or the courtyard, grinding at the quern or pounding the grain or churning buttermilk.
77. Sitting at leisure, or while at meals, or even while sleeping, it was Baba's name constantly on their lips. And, but for Baba, and Baba alone, they worshipped no other god!
78. Oh, how wonderful was the love these ladies cherished for Baba! How very sweet their loving devotion! It is only such pure love, and not erudite learning, that inspires such delightful poetic compositions!
79. No doubt, the language is simple; the expression direct, without a touch of learning. But the poetry that shines forth through the words will earn a nod of appreciation even from the learned!
80. Real poetry is the expression of sincere, genuine love and the listeners can feel it in the words of these ladies!
81. If Sai Baba so wishes, maybe, I will be able to have a whole collection of these verses to make into a complete chapter, which will satisfy the listeners' desire to hear them.
82. Formless as God is, He appeared in Shirdi in the form of Sai. But to know Him, the ego, all passions and desires, must first disappear. For it is only by love and devotion that He can be known.
83. Or, maybe, it was the collective merit of the devotees that came to fruition, and, reaching the point of saturation, sprouted into a shoot at the appropriate moment, in the form of Sai, which, in the course of time, bore fruit in his manifestation in Shirdi.
84. The Indescribable found expression; the One without a birth was most truly born; the Formless assumed a form when love and compassion was poured into the mould of a human being (i.e. Sai).
85. Success and Wealth, Renunciation and Wisdom, Power and Munificence – such were the six most excellent qualities that adorned this form.
86. Extraordinary was Baba's restraint! Himself without any possessions and in an unmanifest state, he yet took on a physical body for bestowing grace on his devotees.
87. Oh, how kind he was! He won the love and trust of his devotees. But as to his real nature, perhaps, even God Himself could not have understood him fully!
88. Such were his (wise and powerful) words that even the Goddess of Speech would not have ventured to utter and they would have shamed

- their listeners into humility. These were the words that Sai spoke for the benefit of the devotees.
89. And these words – which, rather than translate them, it is better to remain silent – have yet, perforce to be narrated, since it would not be proper to neglect one’s duty.
90. Full of compassion for his devotees, Baba said, with utmost humility, “A slave of slaves that I am, I am indebted to you and have set out to have your darshan.
91. “It is indeed, by your great kindness that I have met you. I am but a worm in your feces, by virtue of which position, I am most blessed in this Universe.”
92. Oh, what modesty Baba had! What fondness for being humble! And what a perfect state of egolessness, too! Such was also his courteousness!
93. Baba’s above words have been cited as being genuinely true. Should anyone think that I am being disrespectful, I can only beg their forgiveness!
94. If my speech is defiled thereby, and if you are to be absolved from the sin of listening to it, let us chant Sai-naam repeatedly, which will clear the blemishes of all.
95. Sai’s Grace is the fruit of our penance of several births. It brings us joy as boundless as that of a thirsty traveller, who finds a ‘paan-poyi’.
96. Although it appeared to all, as if the palate relished the different tastes and flavours, he was not even conscious of it, for the tongue knew no relish for the food it tasted.
97. When there were no sensual desires at all, how could he enjoy the pleasures thereof? And when such pleasures had not the power to rouse the sense organs, could he get entangled in them, ever?
98. The eyes saw whatever objects came in front of them; but he was not conscious of what they saw. For here again, there was no desire to take notice of anything.
99. The langot (symbolizing celibacy) with which he was born, as the myth goes of Shri Hanuman, it is said was seen by none, except his mother and Shri Ram. Who then, could stand compassion to his Brahmacharya (Celibacy)?
100. And, if even the mother had never seen the genitals, what to say of others? Such was also the strict celibacy of Baba, the perfection of which was most unique!
101. He always wore the langot round the loins. Except for micturition, the private parts were as redundant as the ball of flesh near the throat of a he-goat – an organ just for the sake of an organ!
102. This was the position so far as Baba’s physical body was concerned. Though the bodily organs performed their normal functions, there was

- not the least desire or even an awareness of a desire for sensual pleasures.
103. To all appearances, the three gunas – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas were present in the bodily organs; he even appeared to be the doer of action. But in reality, he was without any attachment to the body and beyond the Trigunas.
 104. Totally detached, Pure Knowledge Incarnate, and Self-rejoicing that Baba was, passions, like anger or lust, took repose at his feet. He was always desireless, totally satiated.
 105. Such was his perfect state of Emancipation, that for him, even the sense objects became Brahma. Beyond sin and merit, it was the ultimate resting place for all.
 106. He had no ego, nor did he ever dream of making a distinction between people. And when Nanavalli asked him to get up from his seat, he at once moved aside, making room for him.
 107. He had nothing to gain in this world, nor was anything left in the other world to be gained. Such was this saint who had appeared on this earth only to bestow grace on others.
 108. These most compassionate saints incarnate on the earth for no other purpose than to bestow grace on others. They are kindness itself in the cause of others.
 109. Their heart is as soft as butter, say some. But whereas the butter melts only on being heated, the hearts of the saints melt on seeing others scorched by suffering.
 110. He, who clothed himself with a kafni, patched in a hundred places, whose seat and bedding was made up of coarse sack-cloth; and whose heart was free of all passion – of what value is a silver throne to him?
 111. Such a throne would, if anything, be only an obstacle to him. Yet if the devotees were to slide it underneath from behind, he would not try to resist it, in deference to their feelings of love and devotion.
 112. On the placid lake that was Shirdi, bloomed a beautiful lotus in the form of Baba. The faithful inhaled its fragrance joyously; but mud and slime fell to the lot of unlucky, unbelieving frogs, who continued to wallow in mud.
 113. Baba prescribed no Yogasanas, no Pranayama, no violent suppression of sense organs, nor mantra, tantra or yantra pooja. And he did not ever whisper mantra in the ears of his devotees. 10/05/05
 114. Outwardly, he seemed to follow the ways and customs of the people, but inwardly he was totally different. And so watchful, so correct in his worldly dealings was he, that no one could have matched his skill there!
 115. For the benefit of the devotees, the saints incarnate; for the devotees alone, are all their feelings, their emotion, their worldly dealings. Remember this!

116. Sai Maharaj is the Abode of Peace, a dwelling of Pure, Blissful Joy! I prostrate before him in obeisance, with a heart pure and unconceited.
117. The place to which Maharaj came walking, of his own free will, is a holy place of great merit. Without tremendous merit from the past, such a treasure is hard to come by.
118. 'A pure, robust seed will bring forth juicy, delectable fruit', so goes the well-known adage, which has been tested by the people of Shirdi.
119. Baba is neither Hindu nor Muslim, and he is beyond Ashrama and Varna. But he can eradicate and totally destroy the afflictions of this worldly life.
120. Unbounded, unending as the sky above, Baba's life is beyond all comprehension. Who but him and he alone, can comprehend it fully?
121. The function of the mind is to think, to reflect, without which it will not rest even for a moment. Offer it sensual pleasures and it will dwell on them; offer the Guru as its object, and it will reflect on him.
122. Hence, concentrating all your senses in the ears, when you heard about the importance and greatness of the guru, it was itself an effortless remembrance of the guru; it was a kirtan, a bhajan of Sai that occurred naturally and easily.
123. Panchagnisadhan, Yajna (ritual sacrifice), Mantra, Tantra, Ashtanga-yoga – these are the ways of worship possible only to the twice-born. Of what use are they to the others?
124. But the stories of the saints are not like that. They guide all the people to the path of virtue; they destroy the fear and sufferings of worldly life and bring realization of how salvation can be attained.
125. By listening to them and reflecting upon them; by a concentrated study and contemplation of these saints' stories, not only the twice-born, but even the Shudras and women are purified.
126. There, cannot be a man in whom love is altogether absent. In some, it is for one thing; in others, it is for another. The object of love varies with different people.
127. For some, the object of love is their children; for others, it may be wealth, honour, riches – the body, the house, fame and glory; and for some, it is the acquisition of knowledge.
128. When all the love one feels for an object is concentrated and boiled down to its essence and poured into the mould of the feet of God, it is that which then appears in the form of devotion (to God).
129. Hence surrender your Being at the feet of Sai, offering up to him all the material objects of worldly life. He will then bless you. This is easy way to get his blessings.
130. Such are the means, small and easy, by which people can reap the highest benefit. Why then all this disinterest, this indifference?

131. The listeners will naturally have a doubt in their minds, that if so much gain lies in such effortless and easy means, why are people in general so indifferent as to neglect it?
132. There is only one reason for this. Such a desire will not arise without God's Grace. But when God is pleased to bestow His Grace, the fondness, the desire to listen will arise at once.
133. So, seek refuge in Sai and Narayana will bless you. The desire and longing to listen (to these stories) will arise and you will have found an easy way to spiritual progress.
134. Keep the saintly company of the Sadguru; disentangle yourself from the meshes of this worldly life. It is in this that your fulfilment lies. Of this, have no doubt whatsoever, in your mind.
135. Give up all your ingenious arguments. Instead, repeat 'Sai', 'Sai', constantly, and see how smoothly you sail to the shore beyond! Let there be no doubts about this.
136. These are not my words; they are words of Sai, with a profound significance. Do not consider them vain; do not even try to evaluate them (for they are priceless!).
137. Bad company is always detrimental; it is the home of excessive sorrow and suffering and will lead you astray without your knowledge. It drives all happiness away.
138. Who else but Sainath or the Sadguru can remove the evil resulting from such bad company?
139. Preserve carefully, O devotees, these words of such compassionate concern that fell from the mouth of the guru. They will ward off the evil influence of bad company.
140. As this created universe attracts the eye, the heart, always captivated by beauty, is lost in admiration. But when the same eye is turned inwards, it gets engrossed in the company of the saints.
141. So great is the importance of this Satsang (the company of the holy) that it completely destroys the ego. Hence no other means is as effective as Satsang.
142. Always keep the company of saintly men; the company of all others is always defective. Only the holy company is free from blemish, for in all its aspects it is pure.
143. Satsang will free you from bodily attachment. So immense is its power that once you devote yourself to it, you are at once liberated from the bondage of worldly life.
144. If you are fortunate enough to have Satsang, perfect spiritual instruction will come to you effortlessly, and in that instant, the attraction for bad company will disappear. Instead the mind will get totally absorbed therein (i.e. Satsang).

145. For initiation into the spiritual path, detachment from the sensual pleasures is the only way. And unless there is a strong urge for the company of the holy, the true Self is never discovered.
146. After joy come sorrow, and only after suffering will there be happiness. But many always welcomes happiness and turns away from pain.
147. Whether welcomed or abhorred, what will be, will be. And saintly company alone can take us beyond pleasure and pain.
148. Satsang destroys ego; Satsang breaks the birth-death cycle; Satsang helps reach God by severing the bonds of this material world, instantly.
149. To attain an excellent spiritual state, holy company is the most perfect means of purification. If you surrender to the saints whole-heartedly, you attain lasting peace.
150. Saints incarnate on this earth to turn towards God, the minds of those who never utter His Name, or make an obeisance to Him, have no faith nor devotion and never praise for Him.
151. Ganga-Bhagirathi, Godavari, Krishna, Venya, Kaveri, Narmada (although pure and holy in themselves), also wish for the touch of the lotus feet of the sadhus and await their visit to bathe in their waters.
152. Though these rivers wash away the sins of the world, their own sins can never be washed away without the touch of the holy sadhu's feet.
153. It is our great good fortune of several births that we have discovered the holy feet of Sai Maharaj. The cycle of birth and death has thus been stayed; the fear of worldly life is totally destroyed.
154. And now, my virtuous listeners! Let us reflect on what we have heard, while we rest ourselves awhile. Further narration will follow thereafter.
155. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet. I am but a sandal of his foot and will go on narrating his stories, for it will only enhance my pleasure.
156. Oh, what a comely figure was Sai's! He would stand on the edge of the mosque, distributing Udi to the devotees, one by one, with the sole purpose of their welfare, at heart.
157. He who knew how illusory this worldly life is, and was constantly engaged in blissful Self-absorption, with a mind like a flower in full bloom, before him I prostrate in obeisance.
158. He who gives Brahmajnana or Supreme Knowledge, by applying the collyrium of Knowledge into the eye, to that great Sai, I bow in obeisance.
159. The next chapter is even better than this, which, as it enters your heart through the ears, will purify it and cleanse it of all its impurities.

Weal to be all! Here ends the tenth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'The Mahima of Shri Sai Samarth'
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.10/06/05

<http://suratiundhiyu.wordpress.com/>

A Narration of Sai's Greatness

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. To continue from the previous tale, Baba slept on a narrow wooden plank, from which his descending or ascending had never been seen by anyone and which only revealed his incomprehensible ways.
2. A Hindu or a Muslim, to him both were equal. And so, we have surveyed, so far, the life of Baba who was the deity of Shirdi.
3. And now, we begin this eleventh chapter, which, adorned as it is with sweet tales of the guru, should, I feel, be offered with unswerving devotion, at Sai's feet.
4. By doing so, we will be contemplating on Baba's manifest form, which will be as meritorious as the eleven readings of the Rudra, and will give us a proof of Baba's power over the five elements, thereby revealing Baba's greatness.
5. Now let me narrate how Indra, Agni, Varun, etc., obeyed Baba's command. Be attentive, O listeners!
6. A personification of the highest renunciation, Sai's manifest form is the repose of his faithful devotees. Let us bring him to mind with love and affection.
7. We offer him as to seat our unswerving faith in our guru's Word. And with the 'Sankalp' to renounce all desires, we begin our worship.
8. Greater even than all the most sacred places of pooja – i.e. idol, sacrificial altar, fire, light, sun, water and the Brahmin – is Gururaj. Hence let us worship him with steadfast devotion.
9. Once you surrender at his feet with single-minded devotion, not only the guru, but God Himself will be moved. Such is the marvel of guru-worship, which the guru-devotees should experience for themselves.
10. Only so long as a guru-worshipper is keenly aware of his physical self does he need a guru in a human form. But for one who has gone beyond his physical self, a formless guru suffices. Such is the proclamation of the Shastras.
11. Devotion cannot arise without a physical form to meditate upon and in absence of such loving devotion the unbloomed flower of the mind does not open up.
12. And unless it blooms, the bud, by herself, can give out no fragrance, no honey. Nor will the buzzing been hover around it, even for a moment.

13. That which is with attributes (saguna), also has a form; without attributes (nirguna) is the formless One. But they both do not differ from each other. With or without form, they are both one and the same.
14. Ghee (clarified butter), when frozen is ghee solidified. But when melted, it is still called ghee. That with form and that without it, in harmony with each other to fill the universe.
15. To be able to gaze at it till the eyes are satiated; to be able to lower the head at its feet, from where Knowledge flows freely and directly, it is there that the heart grows fond.
16. He with whom one can converse lovingly, whom one can worship, with all the elaborate rituals; he has to be in a manifest form.
17. Truly, it is so much easier to comprehend a manifest Form rather than the unmanifest, the Formless One. And when love and devotion for the manifest is once rooted firmly in the mind, comprehension of the Formless One follows automatically.
18. In innumerable ways did Baba try to bring to the devotees a comprehension of the Formless One. According to the spiritual authority of each, he would make them sit apart or deny darshan for long periods.
19. He would send one away from Shirdi, while another would be confined in solitude in Shirdi itself. Yet another would be restricted to the Wada and made to read the Pothi (sacred text) regularly, as prescribed by himself.
20. The purpose of the whole exercise was that after such a deep study is pursued over the years, the longing for Baba's presence in an unmanifest form would intensify and his Presence would be felt all the time – sitting, sleeping or eating.
21. Mortal as this body is, it is going to die someday or other. Hence the devotees should not grieve for it but concentrate their minds on Him who is without beginning or end, i.e. God.
22. This Creation, spread out before us in its rich variety, is all an illusory manifestation of the Unmanifest. It has taken shape out of the Unmanifest and it is to the Unmanifest that it will return.
23. The whole of it (Creation), right from the Brahma down to the smallest bush, taken either as individual components of the whole, or as the aggregate of all the component parts, merges with the Unmanifest, from which it came into being.
24. Hence no one ever dies. How can it be true, then, of Baba? Shri Sai is eternally pure, Wisdom Incarnate, Perfect and Immortal.
25. Some may call him a devotee of God; some may call him a great Vaishnav (devotee of Shri Vishnu); but to us, he appears as God Incarnate!

26. As the Ganga wends her way to merge with the vast ocean, she brings a soothing coolness to those oppressed by the sun's heat, along her way; gives life to the trees on her banks and quenches the thirst of all.
27. Such is also the case with the incarnation of saints on this earth. They appear and depart. But by the manner in which they conduct themselves, they purify the world.
28. Forgiving to the utmost, remarkably unruffled and calm, guileless and forbearing by nature, and incomparable in their perfect contentment – such a one was Baba.
29. Though he appears to be in a human form, he is formless, tranquil, unruffled. He is self-contained and liberated inwardly, even as he moves about in this world.
30. Though Godhead Himself, even Shri Krishna says that 'the saints are my heart and soul; saints are my living image; the loving compassionate saints are none other than myself.
31. 'And yet, even to call them my 'image' would not be correct. For they are a constant, unchanging image of mine. And it is for their sake that I carry the burden (of the responsibility) of my devotees.
32. 'I bow too, at the feet of him, who surrenders himself whole-heartedly to the saints.' Thus has Shri Krishna himself proclaimed the greatness of the saints to Uddhav.
33. Most perfect among those with a Form and among those without it, the most excellent attribute of those with attributes and possessing the highest virtue among the virtuous, and king among them all;
34. Satiated in all his desires, he who is filled, is always content with what is ordained; constantly Self-absorbed and beyond joys and sorrows;
35. Who is the splendour of Blissful Joy – who can describe the glory of such a one? He is Brahma Incarnate and therefore always beyond any description.
36. It is this power, which defies all description that has appeared in a visible form on this earth. He is indeed that same Truth, knowledge and Joy, personified; it is the full awareness of Knowledge.
37. He whose heart is one with the Brahman, who is liberated from worldly life and is exempt from the mundane, worldly concerns; he always enjoys a state of Oneness with the Brahman and is an image of unalloyed Happiness.
38. Listeners have always heard the Shruti proclaim that 'Pure Joy is God Himself'; the readers too have read it in the sacred texts. But the faithful actually experience it in Shirdi.
39. Strange indeed is this worldly life, characterized by dharma, adharma, etc., about which, only those who have not realized their true Self, find it necessary to bother and take care of.

40. But is of no concern to the realized souls, for they take refuge only in their real Self. They are forever free and full of joy, who are the very image of pure Knowledge.
41. Baba was himself the refuge, the support for all. Wherefore then, a seat to support him? And that too, the seat of a silver throne? But Baba was indulgent and cared for the devotees' feelings.
42. There was his old, old seat – a piece of sack-cloth, on which the devotees would very lovingly put a cushioned seat for him to sit on.
43. And would also place a cushion against the wall at the back that he used to lean on. Honouring the feelings of the devotees, Baba too complied with their wishes.
44. Though he appeared to be stationed in Shirdi, Baba moved everywhere quite freely. This was the experience that Sai always gave to his devotees.
45. Unruffled, detached as he was, Baba would accept from his devotees the various rituals of pooja – from each according to his faith, and in deference to his feelings.
46. Thus, some waved the Chowri (to whisk away the flies), as some fanned him gently with a fan; some others offered worship by playing musical instruments like kettle-drum, clarinets, etc.
47. Some washed his hands and feet, some applied fragrant perfumes and sandalwood paste; some made a special food offering followed by the ceremonious betel-leaf (paan), made with thirteen ingredients.
48. There were still others who applied sandalwood paste, drawing to lines with two fingers, as on a Shivalinga, while some mixed the fragrant musk with it before applying.
49. Once and only once, Dr Pandit, who was a friend of Tatyasaheb Noolkar came to Shirdi to have Sai Baba's darshan. 10/07/05
50. The moment he put his foot into Shirdi, he at once went to the mosque and making obeisance to Baba, sat down there for a moment to rest.
51. Baba, then said to him, "Go, go to Dadabhat's, go this way!" So saying, he pointed the way with his finger, packing him off, thus!
52. Pandit went to Dada's house and was received by him with courtesy. Dada then, was all set to leave for the mosque to perform Baba's pooja and asked Pandit whether he would like to accompany him.
53. Pandit agreed and went with Dada. Dada then performed the pooja. Till then, no one had dared to apply the round sandal pasted marks on Baba's forehead.
54. Whoever the devotee and for whatever reason he might come, Baba would not allow him to apply sandalwood paste on the forehead. Only Mhalsapati would smear it on the throat; the rest applied it to the feet.
55. But Pandit was naive, simple and devout. He grabbed the small dish of sandalwood paste from Dada's hands and holding Shri Sai's head with one hand, drew a neat 'Tripundra' on his forehead, with the other.

56. On seeing Pandit's daring, Dada felt some trepidation at heart. 'O what daring, indeed! And wouldn't Baba flare up by it!' (He thought).
57. But although the most improbable had actually taken place, Baba said not a word! Rather, he looked quite pleased! He showed not a trace of anger.
58. The incident was allowed to pass. But in Dada's mind rankled uneasiness, disquiet. And on the same evening he asked Baba about it.
59. 'When we try to put even so tiny a mark of sandal past on your forehead, you do not even allow us to touch it. What is this that happened this morning?
60. 'For our sandal paste mark there is so much distaste and disinterest; and for that Pandit's 'tripundra', so much love? What a very strange behaviour! There is no consistency in it.'
61. With a smile playing on his face Baba then uttered these sweet words very lovingly to Dada. Listen to them carefully.
62. "Dada, remember, his guru is a Brahmin, and I, a Muslim. Yet, regarding me to be the same as his own guru, he offered me guru-pooja.
63. "Not once did the doubt arise in his mind that, 'I am a Brahmin, pure and holy and he, an impure Muslim. How can I worship him?'
64. "And that is how he deceived me, leaving me no other option. Far from my denying him, it was he who won me over completely."
65. Dada heard this explanation, but treated it lightly, as a joke. And it was not until he returned home that its true significance dawned on Dada.
66. Dada was deeply offended by the inconsistency in Baba's behaviour. But it was while talking the incident over with Pandit, that he realized at once, how consistent Baba had been in his behaviour.
67. Raghunath of Dopeswar (1812-1910) was a Siddha, who was well-known as 'Kaka Puranki', at whose feet Pandit was devotedly attached as a disciple, from an association of past births.
68. He called out to Kaka, his guru, and the experience that followed confirmed him in his faith. As is the steadfastness of faith, so is also the power of devotion.
69. However, these pooja rituals were allowed only when it pleased Baba. Otherwise Baba would throw away the pooja offerings, exhibiting the wrath and temper of Narsimha himself.
70. And while in this terrible form, which had the courage to stand near him? Seeing him so incensed, each and every one ran for the fear of his life.
71. Suddenly flying into a rage, he would sometimes take out his anger on the devotees. At other times, softer even than wax, he would be the very image of Tranquility and Forgiveness.
72. Sometimes he appeared as ferocious as the Fire of Universal Destruction and kept the devotees as on the sharp edge of a sword. But sometimes he was cheerful and even softer than butter.

73. Outwardly, he may tremble with rage; rotate his eyeballs vigorously; but at heart, there flowed a spring of compassion, as in a mother for her child.
74. In the very next moment, he regained his usual calm and composure and called out loudly to the devotees to come to him, saying, “Even if I seem to be angry with someone, my heart knows no anger.
75. “Should a mother push her child away with a kick, or the ocean sends the river back, only then it is possible that I will repulse you or harm you in any way.
76. “I am absolutely in the power of my devotees and stand by their side. Forever I am hungering after their love and readily answer their call in distress.
77. Even while narrating this part of the story, another, most appropriate tale comes to my mind which I shall narrate. Listen to it attentively, O listeners!
78. Siddique Phalake, a Muslim resident of Kalyan, once came to Shirdi, having just returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca-Medina.
79. The old Haji put up in the northward-facing Chavadi. For the first nine months, Baba did not favour him with any notice and seemed displeased.
80. Time was not ripe yet, and all his wearisome trips to the mosque were wasted. He tried in different ways, but Baba would not even look at him.
81. The doors of the mosque were open to all; nobody had to manoeuvre a secret entry. But Phalake had no permission to come up the steps of the mosque.
82. Phalake grew very sad at heart. ‘How strange is this Fate, that I cannot even put my foot in that mosque! I wonder what terrible sin I could have committed!
83. ‘By what means can I win his grace? This was the only thought that tormented Phalake’s heart, like a disease, day and night.
84. Suddenly, some said to him, ‘Do not despair; seem Madhavrao’s held and your wish will be fulfilled.
85. ‘If you neglect to take the darshan of Nandi first, how do you expect Shankar to be pleased?’ To Phalake, this appeared to be a better course to follow.
86. Prima facie, this may appear to be an exaggeration to the listeners. But such indeed had been the experience of the devotees when they went to Shirdi for Baba’s darshan.
87. Those who wished to have a quiet, undisturbed conversation with Baba, would always take Madhavrao with them, initially.
88. He would then introduce the topic in soft sweet tones as to who had come, from where and for what purpose. On this introduction, Samarth would then be induced to converse.

89. Hearing all this, Haji importuned Madhavrao, saying 'Please remove this restlessness agitation of my mind, once for all, and help me attain the unattainable.'
90. Under such urging upon this consideration, Madhavrao resolved firmly, that whether the task be easy or difficult, he would give it a try.
91. He went to the mosque and ventured to bring up the topic slowly, cautiously, 'Baba, that old man is so sad, so distressed! Oh, why don't you oblige him?
92. 'That Haji has been to Mecca-Medina and has now come to Shirdi for your darshan. How can you not feel compassion for him? Oh, do please allow him to come to the mosque!
93. 'Countless people come, take darshan in the mosque, returning instantaneously. Why then is he singled out to waste away in languor?
94. 'Do be kind and compassionate towards him, at last, and let him come to the mosque. Then he will be able to say to you what he wishes and go away immediately.'
95. "Shama, you are as a new-born infant, as yet! Unless Allah favour him, what can I do?
96. "Can anyone step up to this mosque without being Allahmiya's debtor? Inscrutable are the ways of this Fakir here. Over him, I have no control.
97. "All the same, go and ask him clearly whether he will carefully walk up the narrow path, which goes straight, beyond the Baravi."
98. When asked, the Haji said, 'However difficult it may be, I shall carefully treat on the path. But give me personal audience, O Sai, let me sit at your feet.
99. On hearing this reply from Shama, Baba said, "Ask him further, 'will you give me forth thousand rupees in four installments?'"
100. To Madhavrao, who conveyed this message, the Haji said, 'Is this any question to be asked! Oh, will I not give even forth lakhs when asked? What the, of thousands!'
101. When Baba heard this, he said further, "We intend to kill a goat in the mosque today. Ask him which part of the meat he wants.
102. "Does he want the meat-covered bones, or is his heart set on having the sex organs? Go, ask that old fellow what it is that he definitely wants.
103. Madhavrao conveyed Baba's message fully to the Haji. And the Haji categorically, 'I want none of it.'
104. 'If he wishes to give me something, then I have only one wish – that even if I can get a morsel from that earthen vessel of food, I shall be blessed.'
105. Madhavrao duly conveyed Haji's reply. But as he heard it, Baba at once flew into a rage.
106. Himself, he picked up the earthen vessel of food and pitchers of water and flung them out of the door. Fiercely biting his own hands, he came and stood next to the Haji.

107. Catching his Kafni with both his hands, he lifted it up in front of the Haji and said, “Who do you think you are that you boast vainly in my presence?”
108. “You are flaunting the wisdom of your old age! Is this how you read your Quran – which a pilgrimage to Mecca has made you so proud and haughty? But you do not know me yet!”
109. He reviled him thus, hurled at him unutterable abuses! The Haji was absolutely stunned! Baba then went back. 10/8/5
110. On entering the courtyard of the mosque, he saw some farm-women selling mangoes. He bought all their baskets of fruit and sent them to the Haji.
111. At once he turned back and once again, went to that Phalake and taking out fifty-five rupees from his pocket, counted them, one by one, on the Haji’s head.
112. The affection between them grew thereafter. The Haji was invited for a meal – as if both had forgotten all that had passed before! And the Haji was absorbed in the experience of pure joy.
113. Later, the Haji left Shirdi, but returned once again, and became more and more attached to Baba. And even afterwards, Baba continued to give him money, from time to time.
114. Once I saw Sai Samarth praying to Indra, the god of thunder, who rules over the clouds, and I was struck with amazement.
115. It was a most terrifying moment. The entire sky was overcast and dark. Birds and animals were stricken with fear. There was a fierce gale, accompanied by heavy showers.
116. It was late evening; the sun had already set. Suddenly there was a whirlwind and as the wind roared there was a great commotion everywhere.
117. To add to it, the clouds thundered overhead; the lightning cracked, the squally wind continued to roar and there followed a heavy downpour of rain.
118. The clouds rained cats and dogs; pit-pat came the hailstones, thick and fast; the villagers were full of apprehensions; the cattle bellowed helplessly.
119. Under the eaves of the mosque the beggars thronged together for shelter. The cattle with their calves huddled there, too! The mosque was over-crowded.
120. There was water, and nothing but water, everywhere, and in each quarter! The grass was forcefully borne away on the torrent of water, and the crop in the barn, all cut and ready, was soaked through and through. Among the people chaos and bewilderment reigned supreme.
121. The villagers panicked and huddled into the Sabha-mandap; some took shelter under the eaves of the mosque. They had all come in supplication to Baba.

122. Jogai, Jakhai, Marai, Shani, Shankar, Ambabai, Maruti, Khandoba, Mhalsapati – all these gods and goddesses were in Shirdi, in some place or the other.
123. But in times of trouble, none was of help to the villagers. It was Sai alone – their living God, who came running to their rescue in the hour of need.
124. And he needed no animal sacrifice – of a goat or a cock; nor any offering of money. Sincere love and faith was all that he hungered after and then, all their troubles would be destroyed.
125. When he saw how terrified the people were, Maharaj's heart was deeply moved by compassion. Leaving his seat he came forward and stood on the edge of the raised front portion of the mosque.
126. The sky thundered; the lightning flashed and cracked. And in the midst of all this stood Sai Maharaj, raising his voice to the highest pitch and straining every nerve, as he roared.
127. Dearer than their own life are the devotees, the sadhus and saints, to the gods and it is according to their wishes that the gods act. For them, the gods even appear on the earth.
128. When the devotees implore their help, gods have to take up the cudgels on their behalf and rush to their rescue, recalling their great devotion.
129. Roar followed upon a terrifying roar and the sound seemed to fill the sky above. The mosque itself seemed to shake, to tremble as the sound deafened the ears of all.
130. The high-pitched voice resounded, like a mountain-echo, through mosques and temples. At once, the Cloud restrained its thunder; the pouring rain checked itself.
131. Baba's mighty voice shook the entire Sabha-mandap. Perplexed and motionless, the devotees stood still, wherever they happened to be.
132. Truly, how inscrutable are Baba's ways! The rain abated; the wind receded at once; the haziness of the fog melted away.
133. Gradually, the rain tapered off; the squally wind subsided; clusters of stars appeared as the veil of darkness lifted from the sky, at that time.
134. Later, the rain ceased altogether. The fierce wind was becalmed; the moon appeared in the sky. Everybody was happy and at peace.
135. Lord Indra seemed to have taken pity! Moreover, a saint's word had to be honoured. Thus the clouds dispersed in every direction and calm reigned after the storm.
136. The rain ceased, altogether; a gentle breeze began to blow; the rumblings in the sky subsided completely and the birds and animals took heart.
137. The cattle wandered off, with their calves, from the shelter they had found under the eaves of houses and roamed around freely and fearlessly. The birds flew high into the sky.

138. Being witness earlier to the terrifying spectacle, people now thanked Baba profusely and went back to their respective homes. The cattle, now reassured, scattered here and there.
139. Such is this Sai, Kindness incarnate! Great is his love for his devotees, and as tender as a mother's love for her child! How can I ever describe it adequately?
140. Equally great was his power over fire. Listen attentively, O Listeners! to a brief story in this connection. It will illustrate Baba's unique power and control over the elements.
141. Once, the fire in the dhuni suddenly flared up at midday. At such a time, who had the courage to stand near it? The flames soared up in a tumultuous surge.
142. The fire raged wildly as tongues of flame leapt up, touching the wooden planks of the ceiling. The mosque, it seemed, would be reduced to ashes in no time in this conflagration.
143. Yet Baba was unruffled and calm. Utterly amazed, the people in their worry and anxiety exclaimed, 'Oh, how perfectly calm and composed Baba is!'
144. Someone cried, 'Hurry up! Bring some water! Another said, 'But who will pour it? If you try to do so, the baton will come down heavily on you. Who will dare to come forward?'
145. Their minds were all agitated and impatient. But none had the courage to ask. Then Baba himself stirred restlessly and put his hand to the baton.
146. Looking at the blazing fire he took the baton in hand and struck blow upon blow, saying, "Move, move back! Go!"
147. He struck hard at the column, which stood at about an arm's length from the dhuni, and staring at the flame kept on saying "Calm, calm down!"
148. With every stroke the flame began to cower, losing its fierceness. Gradually the dhuni became calm. People too lost their fear.
149. Such is this Sai, the greatest among the saints, an Incarnation of God Himself, who will place his hand of benediction on your head as you place it on his feet in total surrender.
150. He who will read this chapter regularly with faith and devotion will enjoy peace of mind and be free from all trouble.
151. What more can I say? Purify your heart, be regular in religious observances and worship Sai whole-heartedly and you will attain the Eternal Brahman (i.e. God).
152. All your desires – even the most uncommon ones – will be fulfilled and you will become completely free from all desires in the end. You will thus attain to a state of 'Sayujya-mukti', which is difficult to attain. Everlasting peace and contentment will fill your heart.

153. Hence the devotees who wish to enjoy a never-ending awareness of spiritual bliss, should read this chapter with reverence, again and again.
154. Such repeated readings of the stories will purify the mind and turn it towards the attainment of spiritual welfare; all that is undesirable and evil will be warded off and that which is desirable and good will be attained. Everyone can experience Baba's wonderful power (by such readings).
155. Hemadpant surrenders to Sai. The next chapter is very sacred and describes the greatness of guru-shishya relationship and how a guru-putra had his guru Gholap darshan.
156. 'However sore the trial, a devotee should never abandon his own guru-dev.' This is the truth of which Sai gave an actual experience to his devotees and confirmed them in their faith in their own guru.
157. All the devotees who surrendered to him were given the marvelous experience of seeing their own guru in Sai's place as they took his darshan. Some in one way, others in another, but each was confirmed in his faith and devotion to his own personal guru.

Weal to be all! Here ends the eleventh chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'A Narration of Sai's Greatness'
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.
10/09/05

12

Shri Sant Gholap – Ramdarshan

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Glory be to you, O Sadguru Sainath. I bow my head at your feet in obeisance. Unperturbed by passions, forever Self-absorbed that you are, have mercy on him (i.e. me), who has taken refuge at your feet.
2. Truth, Knowledge and Joy Incarnate, a store of blissful happiness you are the source of comfort and pleasure of the suffering (humanity), who are scorched by the worldly sorrows. Your teaching of non-duality removes the illusion of duality from the minds of even the most slow-witted of people.

3. Most fortunate indeed are those who have not only described you as all-pervading, and as expensive as the sky above, but have actually experienced these qualities.
4. To protect the sadhus and to destroy the wicked – this is the purpose of the incarnation of God on this earth. But stranger still is the case with these saints.
5. To them the sadhu and the wicked are both equal. Their heart knows not to differentiate between them as one being great and the other, mean. Both are the same to them.
6. In fact, the saints are, in a sense, greater than gods themselves. For, moved by compassion and love for the meek and the poor, they first set the unrighteous on the path of righteousness.
7. To the ocean of worldly life, they are as the sage Agasti; to the darkness of ignorance they are as the sun. If it is thus, in them, that God dwells, in fact, they are not different from God at all.
8. My Sai is one amongst these, and has appeared on this earth for the welfare of his devotees. He is Jnandev incarnate, fixed in the grandeur and light of Kaivalya (Oneness of God).
9. With great compassion and love for all the living creatures, he was yet totally without any attachment to all else. But though, had affection for one and detachment for the others, he looked upon all, equally and without hostility.
10. Without enmity or friendship, treating rich and poor alike – such was this Sai, the great Mahatma. And now listen to his greatness and glory.
11. Saints expend freely of their accumulated merit in the cause of their devotees, to whom they are drawn by their loving devotion. And no obstacle, neither the hill nor the dale, is too great for them to overcome when they rush to the rescue of their devotees.
12. There are people who, in their ignorance, know not what spirituality is. They are caught up in their attachment to their wife, sons, wealth. Leave out these poor, ignorant creatures.
13. Even God is merciful, loving and tender to these ignorant, guileless beings. But those who turn their backs to God and move away from Him burn in their own conceit.
14. A saint will be moved to compassion and will take the ignorant under his wings so that faith may spring in them at once. But vain is the arrogant pride of learning.
15. The foolish, who consider themselves learned, are puffed up with empty pride and deride the path of devotion. But not for us the company of these fools!
16. We want neither the revolt against the Varnas nor yet an undue, exaggerated pride in them. We should not turn rigid adherents of

Varnashram-dharma nor be the pretentious, learned Pandits who deny the very authority of the Vedas.

17. Those who have mastered the Vedas and the Vedangas and are thereby intoxicated with pride in their learning, it is they who come in the way of devotion and have no hope of being saved.
18. An ignorant man will overcome the fear of worldly life on the strength of his faith. But no one can ever solve the puzzles of these learned Pandits.
19. By reposing faith in the saints, the ignorance of the ignorant will be dispelled and the learned who pride themselves on their own learning, will be spared numerous doubts and surmises, giving rise to good thoughts and feelings in their hearts.
20. And now, just listen to what a strange thing once came to pass, out of sheer good fortune! A rigid ritualist was thus destined to enjoy the rare good fortune of meeting Sai.
21. His avowed purpose of the visit was quite different from what Fate willed it to be. As a result, he gained by his visit to Shirdi where he had darshan of his own guru.
22. You must listen, O listeners to that most interesting tale which brings out the greatness of the guru and he gives an actual experience of his love to the guru-devotees.
23. Once, a rigid ritualistic Agnihotri Brahmin, Mulay by name, came from Nasik, the holy place of pilgrimage, to Shirdi, by virtue of his accumulated past merit.
24. Without a store of such merit, no one could stay in Shirdi, even for a moment. However firm one's resolve to stay might be, all machinations failed before Baba's wish.
25. One may well say, 'I will go and stay there as long as I wish'; but it is not in his hands to do so, for he is totally in the power of another.
26. Many who had firmly resolved and were absolutely certain of succeeding, gave up the effort, ultimately, in helplessness. Sai is a deity with his own indomitable will before whom the conceit of others falls off altogether.
27. Till such time as it is destined, Baba will not remember us, nor even will his praises fall on our ears. Where, when, is the question of our being inspired to take his darshan?
28. Many had cherished the fond wish to go for the darshan of Sai Samarth. Finally, Sai attained Nirvana, but such an opportunity never came their way.
29. There were others who kept on postponing their visit from time to time and their propensity for delaying itself came in the way of their visit. Ultimately, they never made it to Shirdi and Baba too, passed away.

30. Postponing it from morrow to morrow, in the end, they missed the opportunity to meet him in person and regretted it forever. Thus they lost the chance of having his darshan altogether.
31. It is the unfulfilled wish of all such people that will be satisfied by listening respectfully and with faith, to these stories; although it can be but a poor substitute.
32. But then, even those who, by their good fortune, did go; and were satiated by his darshan, by his touch – were they able to stay in Shirdi to their heart’s desire? Well, it is Baba who must permit!
33. By his own efforts alone, none could go; nor could one stay on, however keen his desire. One could stay only as Baba commanded and return, the moment he said, “Go back”.
34. Kaka Mahajani once travelled from Bombay to Shirdi, intending to stay there for a week and then come back.
35. Preparations for the birth celebrations of Lord Krishna would be in advance. The Chavadi would be decorated beautifully; a cradle would be tied in front of Baba’s seat, amidst great rejoicing.
36. Kaka had arrived at Shirdi a little early, intending to participate in the festivities of the joyous Gokulashtami celebrations, in person.
37. But, right at the beginning, as he went for darshan, Baba said, “So when do you return home?” On hearing this, Kaka was taken aback!
38. ‘Why this question the moment I met him?’ wondered Kaka. In fact, he was very keen on staying in Shirdi for eight days.
39. But as Baba put the questions, he himself prompted the expected answer to Kaka. The answer that Kaka gave was thus the most appropriate one.
40. ‘Whenever Baba gives me the command, I shall return home’, he said. And even as these words came from Kaka’s mouth, “Do go back tomorrow”, Baba said.
41. Obeying the command with great reverence, he made obeisance to Baba and left on that same day, although it was very special occasion of the Gokulashtami festival.
42. But later, when he reached home and went to his place of work, he saw that his employer was anxiously waiting for his return.
43. The munim (managing clerk) had suddenly taken ill and the employer was in urgent need of Kaka’ help. In fact, he had already dispatched a letter to Shirdi, calling Kaka back, at once.
44. And when the postman came enquiring after him Kaka had already left for Shirdi. The letter was then sent back and Kaka received it on reaching home.
45. Running contrary to this is the short take about how the devotees do not understand their own welfare, whereas Sai know it clearly. Just listen to it!

46. Once, a renowned lawyer of Nasik, Bhausahab Dhumal by name, and one of Baba's loving devotees, came to Shirdi, just to have Baba's darshan.
47. He intended to take the darshan quickly, make obeisance to Baba's feet and on getting Baba's blessings and udi, to return at once.
48. On his return journey, Dhumal had to get down at Niphad where he had to attend a court case.
49. Though such had been his plan, Baba knew what was right for him and what was not. So when he asked leave to return, Baba refused it to him.
50. Moreover, Baba detained him for a week, refusing permission, in no uncertain terms. And the hearing of the court case was also delayed, the matter being adjourned thrice.
51. Dhumal was made to stay a few days over a week; while on the dates set for the hearing, the judge too, would become unwell.
52. Never before had the judge offered such unbearable colic as he did on those days! With the result, the hearing was inevitably adjourned. As for Dhumal, his time was put to the best possible use.
53. For Dhumal, it was the privilege of Sai's company; for his client a relief from anxiety and worry; everything came about so easily and effortlessly by just reposing full trust in Sai.
54. Later, at the right time, Dhumal was granted leave to go and his work was accomplished satisfactorily. Such is the inscrutable leela of Sai.
55. The court case went on for four months, the matter passing through the hands of four different judges. But in the end, Dhumal succeeded in getting an acquittal for his client.
56. Now listen to shit incident, when Sai once, took up the side of Mrs Nimonkar, wife of his most excellent devotee, Nanasaheb Nimonkar.
57. A 'vatandar' of the village Nimon, the government had also vested in his hands the powers of an honorary magistrate. He was therefore, very influential.
58. Eldest among Madhavrao's cousins, he was very advanced in age and very highly respected. His wife was also a devout lady and Sai was the tutelary deity to them both.
59. Leaving their 'vatani' village, they both had come to stay in Shirdi and pledging their trust in Sai, they spent their days in contentment.
60. Long before sunrise would they be up and would finish their early morning bath, pooja etc. they would then come with unfailing regularity to the Chavadi to perform the arati at daybreak.
61. Thereafter, Nana used to stay with Baba till sunset, busy in his service as he recited to himself his daily 'stotras'.

62. He would accompany Baba on his daily round to the Lendi, bringing him back to the mosque at the end. Very lovingly he served Baba, in whatever way he could.
63. The lady would also serve Baba during the day with loving devotion, doing everything in her power, to be of use.
64. Only for having a bath, cooking the meals or sleeping at night, would she repair to her lodgings.
65. The rest of the time was spent by this devout couple, in Baba's company morning, noon and evening.
66. If the dedicated service of these two were to be narrated in detail this book will far exceed its limit. Hence, I shall now narrate only what is relevant in the present context.
67. The lady wanted to go to Belapur where her son was slightly unwell. So, after conferring with her husband, she made preparations to go thither.
68. Later, she consulted Baba too, as was the usual practice and when he gave his consent she conveyed it to her husband.
69. Everything was thus fixed for her visit to Belapur. But Nana then said that she must return the very next day.
70. Of course, Nana had his reasons for so saying. And so, he said, 'Go, but return immediately'. His wife was rather sad at heart on hearing this.
71. The next day was the new moon of 'Pola', which she wanted to spend there. Nay, it was her ardent wish. But Nana would not agree.
72. Moreover, it was the new moon and inauspicious for travel. The lady was greatly worried as to how the problem could be resolved.
73. Unless she went to Belapur her mind would not be at rest. Yet, she did not want to hurt her husband's feelings. How then, could she disobey his word?
74. All the same, she made preparations for the journey and as she was about to set out she came to make obeisance to Baba when he was going to the Lendi.
75. Whenever people are going on a journey, they bow in obeisance to the gods for a safe journey. This same custom was followed in Shirdi, too.
76. And since Sai was their god in Shirdi, whatever may be their hurry and urgency, people always bowed at his feet before leaving.
77. Accordingly, the lady bowed at Baba's feet, as Baba stood for a moment in front of the Sathe-wada.
78. All, young and old, including Nanasaheb Nimonkar, who had come there for darshan, made obeisance to Baba. 10/11/05 8 pages from today + 5 tomorrow = 13 pages.
79. In front of all these people and especially in the presence of Nana, Baba spoke to the lady, words which were most befitting the occasion.

80. As she lowered her head on his feet and asked for permission to leave, "Go quickly", he said "and let your mind be at rest.
81. "And having gone so far, all the way, stay on for 3-4 days happily at Belapur, meet everyone there and then return to Shirdi".
82. Baba's words, coming quite unexpectedly, brought great relief and satisfaction to the lady. Nimonkar also took the hint. Both were thus satisfied.
83. In short, we may make plans, but we know not what has gone before or is to follow after. Only the saints know what is good or bad for us; for there is nothing that they do not know.
84. Past, present and future, is to them as clear as a myrobalan in the palm of their hand. It follows then that when devotees act in obedience to their command, they enjoy happiness and peace.
85. And now, I shall proceed with the narration of the main story, to continue what has already been told as to how Sai was gracious to Mulay and gave him the darshan of his own guru.
86. Mulay had really come to meet Shrimnat Bapusaheb Butti, in Shirdi, wanting to return immediately thereafter.
87. Although such had been his plan, Baba had another purpose for his visit. Listen carefully now, to that miracle, to that secret purpose.
88. Mulay met Shrimant (Butti) as he had intended. Thereafter Butti and some others go up to go to the mosque, seeing which, Mulay also, felt a desire to join them. So he set out with them.
89. Now Mulay had not only studied the six Shastras deeply, but was also proficient in Astrology and well-versed in chiromancy or Palmistry. He was absolutely delighted on having Baba's darshan.
90. The loving devotees made sincere offerings to Baba, of a profusion of fruit and sweetmeats like pedhas, barfi, coconuts etc.
91. Moreover, there came to the door, the farm women to sell guavas, bananas, sugar-cane etc. When Baba so wished, he would buy these things spending money from his own pocket.
92. He would spend his money to buy baskets of mangoes or call for large quantities of bananas and distribute them to the devotees to his heart's content.
93. Picking up the mangoes, one by one, in his hand, he would press and rub the fruit between his palms to soften it. And then he would pass it on to the devotees to suck the juice.
94. Thus softened, the mango had just to be put to the lips and all the juice could be sucked at once as if from a dish filled with the mango juice. The skin and the stone could then be thrown away.
95. Most remarkable was his way with the bananas! The devotees were given the sweet fleshy part of the fruit while Baba would eat only the skin. O how marvelous were Baba's ways!

96. And this fruit would be distributed to all his devotees by Baba, with his own hands; while as for himself, only once in a while would he taste just one out of it all.
97. According to his usual practice, Baba had brought baskets full of bananas on that day and was distributing them at that time.
98. Shastribua (i.e. Mulay) was, however, quite astonished when he saw Baba's feet and had a great desire to read the lines, signs of good fortune, etc., on his feet.
99. Kakasaheb Dikshit was nearby at the time. He picked up four bananas and placed them in Baba's hands.
100. Somebody urged Baba, 'Baba, this is Mulay Shastri who resides in the holy city of Nasik and by his great good fortune has come here to bow at your feet. Do give him that fruit as prasad!'
101. Entreaties or otherwise, unless Baba himself wished it, he would never give anything to anyone! So what could they do?
102. Moreover, Mulay too, did not want the bananas; he wanted Baba's hand to read the lines, and he stretched out his own for it. Baba paid no attention, but continued to distribute the prasad to all.
103. Mulay pleaded with Baba, 'Not the fruit, but give me your hand I can read the lines and the signs on it.' But Baba just would not give him his hand. 16 pages pending + 5 regular = 21 pages.
104. Still, Mulay kept on forging his way ahead, stretching out his hand for Baba's, for palm-reading. Baba continued to take no notice, as if he was totally unaware of any such happening!
105. And in fact, he just placed those four bananas on Mulay's out-stretched hand and asked him to sit down. But, to give his hand in Mulay's, he just refused.
106. He, whose body has been worn out in the service of God, all his life, what had he to do with Palmistry? Sai, the Father and Mother to his good devotees, was fulfilled in all his desires.
107. Observing Baba's detached state, his utter disinterest in Palmistry, Shastribua then restrained himself and gave up the attempt as hopelessly.
108. For a while, he sat in silence and then returned to the wada with the others. He then took a bath, clad the 'sovala' and began daily ritual of Agnihotra.
109. Baba, here, set out, as usual, to go to the Lendi and said, "Let us take with us today, an ochre walk. We will wear ochre-coloured robes today."
110. Everyone was surprised and wondered what Baba was going to do with an ochre walk, why he should suddenly walk think of this ochre chalk on that particular day.

111. Such cryptic style was characteristic of Baba. What could one make of it? But carefully stored in our ears, when one pondered over it, many interpretations could be found for it.
112. Moreover, the words of a saint are never without meaning, but are full of profound significance. Who can weigh their importance adequately?
113. Careful thought first, and then the utterance – such is the usual practice of these saints. And their utterances too, are really translated into conduct directly afterwards.
114. As per this established truth, words of the saints are never without meaning and when carefully examined reveal deep significance.
115. Baba then returned from the Lendi. At once the kettledrums, horns etc., began to resound. Bapusaheb Jog quickly suggested to Mulay;
116. 'It is time for the arati. Are you coming to the mosque?' But Shastribua, with his rigid adherence to the rules of sovale, felt all the awkwardness of his situation.
117. So he replied, 'I will take darshan later in the afternoon'. Jog then began to make preparations for the arati.
118. Baba had already come back and was sitting on his seat, talking to people. The people offered their pooja and now, everything was ready for the arati to start.
119. Suddenly Baba said, "Go, bring dakshina, from that Brahmin who has just arrived." At once, Bapusaheb Butti himself set out to ask for dakshina.
120. Mulay had just finished his bath and having donned the sovale, was sitting in an asan (yogic posture), with a calm and steady mind.
121. As he heard Baba's message, doubt at once assailed his mind, 'Why should I give dakshina? I am a pure, Agnihotri Brahmin.
122. 'Baba may be a great saint, but I am not beholden to him in any way! Why does he ask me for dakshina?' His mind was divided.
123. '(On the other hand), a saint like Sai is asking for dakshina, a millionaire brings me the message'. Mulay had doubts in his mind, yet he took some dakshina with him.
124. There was one more doubt. How could he go to the mosque, leaving incomplete the ritual he had already begun? But, he could not bring himself to say 'no' to Baba.
125. A doubting mind has no firmness of resolve, for his mind always wavers. It never decides one way or the other. His state was like a Trishanku.
126. But then, he made up his mind to go, entered the Sabhamandap and stood at a distance.
127. 'I am 'sovala', but the mosque is 'ovala'. How can I go near Baba? So thinking, he showered flowers on Baba, from the palms overclosing each other. But all this took place only from a distance.

128. And lo! Before his very eyes a miracle took place! Baba became invisible on his seat; instead he saw there his own revered guru, Gholap!
129. Everyone else saw only Sai Samarth, as usual, but for Mulay's eyes, it was Gholapnath, who had already taken Samadhi, long ago. Mulay was astonished beyond words.
130. Although the guru had, in fact, taken Samadhi, Mulay was amazed when he saw him in person, in front of him. Fresh doubts arose in his mind.
131. To think that all this was a dream, he was certainly not asleep. And yet, if awake, how could his guru be sitting before him in person? How was his mind so confused, so flustered? For a moment he was left speechless!
132. To make sure, he pinched himself, saying, this cannot be all false. Why should I have needless doubt and suspicions? I am here, not alone, but with all these others, too!
133. Mulay was really, a Gholap-devotee. And though he had doubts about Baba earlier, later on he became Baba's devotee, with pure unblemished mind.
134. Himself a high-caste Brahmin, who had acquired proficiency in Vedas and Vedangas, the darshan of guru Gholap in the mosque had left him wonderstruck!
135. He then went up the steps, bowed at the feet of his own guru and stood, at a loss for words, with folded hands.
136. As he saw his Gholapswami in ochre robes, in the ochre 'chhati' of the sanyasin, Mulay rushed forward at once and embraced his feet.
137. The pride in his high Varna fell off in an instant, the eyes were purified with the collyrium of knowledge as he met his guru, the Light Eternal, and his soul was enriched with that 'Treasure of Knowledge'.
138. The proclivity to doubts and suspicions melted away; love for Baba gushed out; with half-closed eyes he stood gazing at Baba's feet.
139. It was the accumulated merit of several births that had come to fruition, when he had Sai's darshan, and as he bathed in the sacred water, that was Sai's feet, he felt that good fortune had smiled upon him.
140. Everybody wondered what had happened all of a sudden, that after throwing flowers at Baba from a distance, how was he, now actually lowering his head on Baba's feet!
141. All the others were singing Baba's arati; but Mulay proclaimed in loud tones, Gholap's name and sang his arati at the top of his voice as he got more and more absorbed in the love of his guru.
142. The pride in the special purity and sacredness of his 'sovala' evaporated; the rigidity about touching and not-touching softened.

Instead he prostrated himself before Baba in obeisance, as his eyes closed in blissful joy.

143. But as he got up and opened his eyes, Gholapswami had disappeared and in his place he saw Sai Samarth, asking for dakshina.
144. He saw Baba, the Joy Incarnate with his marvelous Power. The mind stood still in awe and wonder, he forgot his earlier attitude towards Baba.
145. Having seen Sai's wonderful leela, he forgot hunger, thirst everything! Mulay was in ecstasy to have his own guru's darshan.
146. His mind was satiated. He prostrated before Baba and tears of joy welled up as he bowed his head at Baba's feet.
147. He offered whatever dakshina he had brought. Once again, he lowered his head on Baba's feet and his eyes filled up with tears of love, the hair on his body stood on end with rapturous delight.
148. A lump rose in the throat and the ashta-bhavas choked his heart as he said, "Not only are all my doubts resolved, but I have also met my guru'.
149. All present there, including Mulay himself, were overcome by powerful emotions of love and awe at Baba's unique leelas. It was only then, after the actual experience, that they understood the significance of the ochre chalk!
150. It was the same Sai Maharaj, Mulay too, was the same person. How then, did the transformation come about at that particular time, was what they wondered at. But who can comprehend Baba's mysterious ways? Inscrutable indeed, are his leelas!
151. Equally wonderful was the experience of the Mamlatdar, who was keenly desirous of Sai-darshan and set out for Shirdi, taking with him a doctor friend.
152. The doctor, a Brahmin, was righteous man and a great devotee of Shri Ram. He was a scrupulous follower of the discipline of rites, rituals, vow, etc., as prescribed by the Shastras.
153. Sai Baba was a Muslim; whereas his tutelary deity was Shri Ram. Hence he had already warned his friend that he would not bow before Baba in obeisance.
154. 'I cannot bring myself to make obeisance at the feet of a Muslim and therefore I have had reservations about going to Shirdi, right from the beginning.'
155. 'No one will press you to touch his feet. Nobody will be obdurate on this point. Do not entertain any such ideas and make up your mind firmly to go.
156. 'Never will Baba say "Make obeisance to me". When the Mamlatdar gave his firm assurance, the doctor had the inclination to go.
157. In deference to his friend's words he made up his mind firmly, pushing aside all his doubts and set out to have Baba's darshan.

158. And, the wonder of wonders! When he arrived in Shirdi and went to the mosque for darshan, it was he himself, who first prostrated before Baba! His friend stared in amazement.
159. So he asked him, 'How did you forget your own firm resolve? And how did you prostrate before a Muslim? And that too, in my presence?'
160. It was then that the doctor narrated to him the marvel of his experience! 'It was Shri Ram, He of the dark blue complexion, who I saw and I at once bowed to that pure, beautiful, comely figure!
161. 'See it is he who is sitting on the seat; He it is, who is speaking to all.' But even as he spoke these words, in an instant, he began to see Sai's figure in the place of Shri Ram.
162. At this, the doctor was all astonished! 'How can I call this a dream? How can he be a Muslim? No, indeed! He is a yogi, an Incarnation of God!'
163. The great saint Chokhamela was a Mahar, by caste; Rohidas was a cobbler; Sajan was a butcher, who killed animals for a livelihood. But who ever thinks of the castes of these saints?
164. The saints incarnate in this world, leaving their formless, attributeless state, only for the benefit of the world, to free the devotees from the cycle of births and deaths.
165. And this Sai is the veritable Kalpa-druma, the wish-fulfilling tree! This moment he is Sai, in the next moment he becomes Ram! Truly, he has destroyed the illusion of my self-conceit, by making me bow my head in obeisance!
166. On the very next day, he took a vow that he would not put his foot into the mosque unless Baba blesses him with his grace. And to this end, he undertook a fast in Shirdi.
167. Three days passed by. As the fourth day dawned, listen attentively to what happened.
168. A friend of his, who had settled down in Khandesh, suddenly arrived in Shirdi for Sai's darshan.
169. Meeting him after nine long years, his joy knew no bounds. At once, the doctor too followed his friend to the mosque!
170. He immediately made obeisance when he went. So Baba said, "So doctor, did anyone come to call you? Then tell me first, why have you come?"
171. As he heard this pointed question, the doctor's heart was overcome with emotion. He remembered his own resolve and was filled with sadness and regret.
172. But on that same day, in the hour of midnight, Baba's Grace descended on him, as he tasted the sweetness of blissful happiness in his sleep.
173. Later, the doctor returned to his own village, but continued to experience that state of Perfect Bliss for the next fifteen days. His faith

and devotion towards Sai grew steadily thereafter. 10/13/05 15 old + 5 new = 20 tomorrow.

174. Innumerable are such experiences of Sai which are, one more marvelous than the other, and will only enhance the glory of this book. But I restrain myself from narrating them all for the fear of lengthening of the book.
175. My listeners must have been amazed on reading the main story of Mulay that came in the beginning. But they must know its essence, the moral of the story.
176. 'Whoever may be one's guru, one must repose one's full and firm trust in him. It should not be placed anywhere 'else.' This is the real significance of the story, which should be firmly fixed in our minds.
177. There seems no other purpose than this in this marvelous leela of Baba. Whatever else others may draw from it, this is the true significance here.
178. Far greater may be the fame of other gurus; our guru may have none of it. But full faith must be reposed only in our own guru. This is the moral of the story.
179. Whichever sacred texts or Puranas you search, in essence they are full of the same significance. But faith does not come easily, unless one gets a direct proof of it, as in this particular experience.
180. Without a steadfast faith, those who parade themselves as 'Self-realized souls', suffer all thorough their lives, as we see clearly, time and again.
181. They are neither here nor there, are perpetually wrapped up in cares and worries, without having a moment's peace or rest. And yet, they boast of being emancipated!
182. Now, the next chapter will be even more absorbing than this one. Sai's darshan, taken over and over again, will bring the experience of joy, unbounded.
183. I will narrate how his devotee Bhimaji Patil was cured of tuberculosis and how Baba confirmed his faith in Chandorkar, through a vision.
184. Such is the immense power of the mere darshan of Sai, which frees us from all our sins, and gives us, in abundant measure, highest pleasures of this world as well as those of the life hereafter.
185. Just a merest glance of the great Yogis can wash away the sins of the atheists, then what of the believers? Their sins are destroyed most equally.
186. He, who has fixed his mind in the Brahman, has directly experienced. Revelation, such a mahatma, by the power of his merest glance, will enable one to overcome the most unsurmountable of sins.

187. Such are Baba's incomprehensible leelas! Baba has love for you. Hence all of you, learned or ignorant, listen to this story with a pure heart.
188. Where there is tender, loving devotion, where there is a fond attachment to Baba, there alone is the manifestation of a true yearning of love. There alone is to be seen a real joy in listening to his story.
189. Hemad bows at Sai's feet, which alone are a sure and true refuge of the faithful. To their power, there is no limit. They are strong enough to destroy the fear of the worldly life.

Weal to be all! Here ends the twelfth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarath Satcharit", called
'Shri Sant Gholap – Ramdarshan',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

13

The Cure of Bhimaji's Tuberculosis

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. In expression, very brief and aphoristic, but in the gravity of their meaning, most profound; wide and comprehensive in their application, and yet, equally compressed –
2. Such were Baba's words, which were very deep in significance and substance; and so perfectly well-balanced and precious—they were never meaningless or in vain!
3. Follow you goal, consistent with what has gone before and what is to follow; act in compliance with what has been ordained. For ever be content and never leave place for worry or anxiety.
4. "Look! Even though I have become a fakir, freeing myself from all care, without the encumbrances of a house and a family and am sitting in one place, calm and still, abandoning all the cares and vexations of life.
5. "Still this irresistible Maya harasses me, time and again. I may well forget her, but she never forgets me, but clings fast to me, all the time!
6. "She is the Adimaya of Shri Hari, who has distracted even Brahma and other gods! What then, is the case of a weak fakir like me, before her?

7. "But when Hari Himself is pleased, only then will she be destroyed. Without ceaseless Hari-bhajan, there is no release from his Maya.
8. Such was the great importance of Maya that Baba explained to his devotees. And to ward off her influence, he advised God' service through constant singing of His praises.
9. 'Saints are my living image'. So said Shri Krishna Himself in the Bhagvat. Who does not know these words pronounced so clearly to Uddhav by Hari?
10. Hence, listen with humility to the profound Truth that Sai Samarth the Compassionate One, uttered for the welfare of his devotees.
11. "Only those virtuous souls, whose sins had all been obviated worshipped me and recognized my mark.
12. "If only you will utter 'Sai, Sai' all the time, I will with my grace present you even the seven seas (i.e. protect you even beyond the seven seas). Trust these words of mine and you will achieve your welfare, most certainly.
13. "I do not, need either all the elaborate articles of pooja or the sixteen, even eightfold ceremonies or rites of pooja. Where there is boundless faith, I abide there."
14. So Baba had said, time and time again, out of his love for his devotees. Now we can find comfort only in remembering his affectionate words.
15. And just see, what a marvelous thing was done by this Sai, the Compassionate Friend, the Protector of all who seek refuge, clearly espousing the cause of his devotees!
16. Without allowing the mind to be diverted, with full concentration, listen to the whole of this new story and you will find fulfilment.
17. Where the shower of nectarine words from Sai's mouth is itself the fountain of strength and satisfaction, who, with his own welfare in mind, will tire of the effort to come to Shirdi?
18. In the last chapter, the story of an Agnihotri Brahmin was narrated, where he was given darshan of his own guru, who had already taken samadhi, thereby bringing him great joy.
19. Now this chapter is even sweeter than the last. A devotee, enfeebled by tuberculosis, was restored to good health by breaking off his evil habit, in a dream.
20. And so, listen, O faithful ones, with full concentration, to this marvelous Life of Sainath, which destroys all sin.
21. This 'Life' is as purifying, as sanctifying, as the water of the Ganges, which helps attain liberation in this world as in the next. Blessed, blessed are the ears of those who listen to it!
22. We may compare it with the 'Amrit' (or the drink of the Immortals), but can it be sweeter than this? And if 'Amrit' protects life, this 'Life' protects us from future births altogether.

23. Living beings think they are all powerful. But he who thinks he can do what pleases him, should listen to this story.
24. If the living being were truly free, why should sorrow and suffering alone be his lot, when he toils for happiness, day and night? But such indeed, is the power of his Fate.
25. Though always quick to avoid suffering, here, there, everywhere – yet it follows him promptly.
26. In trying to ward it off, it embraces him more closely; in shaking it off, it clings faster than ever! In vain does the creature struggle! In vain is the arduous effort, day in and day out!
27. Had the creature been really free, he would have sought nothing but happiness and would not have touched anything with even a suspicion of sorrow or suffering.
28. Because of his free will he would never have committed a sin, but would have accumulated merit in abundance, to ensure greater happiness for himself.
29. But a creature is not free. He is pursued by a chain of karma. And strange are the workings of this karma, which pulls the strings in the life of a living being.
30. With the result, though we may set our sights on virtue, we are drawn compellingly towards sin. While looking for good, virtuous deeds, the body always comes in contact with evil deeds.
31. But now, listen my listeners, to the story of Bhimaji Patil of Narayangaon, which is in the Junnar taluka of Pune district. In sweetness, the tale is a veritable overflow of Amrit.
32. Bhimaji was well-to-do and hospitable to the visitors, especially in the matter of serving food. Never touched by sadness, his countenance always had a glow of happiness.
33. But inexplicable are the ways of Destiny, which brings us gains and losses for which we cannot account. Suffering resulting from our karma come to our lot, and disease afflicts us that we do not seem to deserve.
34. In the year 1909, misfortune dogged Bhimaji, when he had an attack of pulmonary consumption and began to run a temperature.
35. Then started fits of unbearable coughing; the fever began to rise sharply and waxed stronger, day after day. Bhimaji was dismayed.
36. There would be froth at the mouth, all the time and mouthfuls of brackens spittles of blood. The stomach would have a nauseating sensation and the restless tossing of the body would not cease.
37. The patient was bed-ridden; his body became emaciated and began to shrivel up, though remedies were tried to the utmost. He was greatly troubled in his mind.

38. He did not relish any food or drink, nor was even gruel or any other regimen tolerated. All this made him feel restless and quite lost. The suffering of the body was beyond all endurance.
39. Propitiation of gods, exorcising – everything was tried; the doctors, the vaidyas, they had given up all effort. Patil too, had given up all hopes of survival and felt quite puzzled in his mind.
40. He was distressed; his days seemed numbered. Day by day the exhaustion grew. Many days passed in this manner.
41. He propitiated the family deity, but to no avail. It did not restore him to good health. He now grew weary of consulting astrologers and exorcisers.
42. Some said, 'What physical malady is this! O, what Fate is this to bring on such suffering! Human remedies all seem futile!'
43. Doctors were tired. Hakims were summoned. But in treating him, they all came to their wits' end. No one could do anything. All their efforts failed.
44. Patil became weary and despondent, saying to himself, 'O God, what have I don't? why has everything failed? What terrible sin could I have committed to deserve such suffering?'
45. And yet, how strange are God's ways! He is not remembered even for a moment by one who is enjoying happiness. Inscrutable is His leela!
46. When He Himself, so wishes, he sends a chain of calamities of various kinds thereby making man remember Him and cry out in anguish, 'Help me, O Narayana!'
47. And when God heard Patil's anguished cry for help, He was at once, moved by compassion! And Bhimaji suddenly thought that he should write a letter to Nana (Chandorkar).
48. 'Nana will surely do something that others will not be able to do'. Such was the great confidence that Patil felt.
49. And that was indeed a good omen for him; that was the beginning of the cure of his disease! Later, he wrote a detailed letter to Nana.
50. To have remembered Nanasaheb at that moment was nothing but Sainath's prompting. It was the cause of the removal of his disease. The ways of the saints are most wonderful.
51. Even in the rotation of the wheel of Fortune there seems to be a Divine Plan. Hence no one should imagine it to be otherwise and boast vainly.
52. To all the good actions and bad, it is God who holds the strings. It is He who preserves and He who destroys. He alone is the Doer.
53. Patil wrote to Chandorkar, 'I am tired of taking medicines. I am really fed up of this life, itself! The world, to me, seems so cheerless and dreary!'

54. 'Doctors have given up hope, concluding that the disease is incurable. Vaidyas and Hakims too, are at a loss for a remedy. And as for me, my hopes are sunk to the lowest.
55. 'And so, I have to make only one last humble request! It is the one strong desire of my heart – to be able to meet you, with the utmost certainty.'
56. On reading the letter Chandorkar's heart was filled with sadness. For Bhimaji Patil, he knew, was a good man and his heart was deeply touched with compassion.
57. 'In reply to your letter', he wrote, 'I suggest only one remedy. Hold fast to Sai Baba's feet! This is the only ultimate remedy. For he alone is our Father, our Mother!
58. 'He is the only Compassionate Mother to all, who will come running at our call for help, will pick us up with a mother's affection and will understand her child's need.
59. 'When even a dreaded disease like leprosy is cured by hi mere darshan, what of tuberculosis? Have not the slightest doubt. Go, and catch Sai's feet tightly!
60. 'Whatever anyone asks him for, he always gives it to him. This is his Promise, to which he is bound. Hence I say, hurry up and take Sai's darshan.
61. 'What is the greatest among all the fears, but the fear of death? Go and clasp Sai's feet firmly. For he alone will make you fearless.'
62. So unbearable was Patil's agony, so precariously balanced his life, that he became very impatient, thinking, 'When will I meet Sainath? When will I achieve my purpose?'
63. Great was Patil's restlessness. 'Pack everything, at once', he said, 'Prepare to leave early, tomorrow. Let us be on our way to Shirdi, quickly.
64. Having made this firm resolve, Patil took leave of everybody and set out for Shirdi to have darshan of Sai Maharaj.
65. Taking his relatives with him, Bhimaji started at once, with a heart full of anxious anticipation as to how he would reach Shirdi as quickly as possible.
66. Patil's cart came to the square near the mosque and thence to its front door. Four people bore Bhimaji on their hands and brought him up.
67. Nanasaheb was accompanying him and Madhavrao, because of whom it was easy for everyone to meet Baba, had already come there, too!
68. On seeing Patil, Baba said, "Shama, how many more thieves are you going to burden me with? What, is this right on your part?"
69. Bhimaji lowered his head on Sai's feet and said, 'Sainath , have mercy on me, this friendless destitute! Protect me, O Dinanath!

70. Sainath was moved by pity seeing Patil's suffering. In that moment, Patil felt assured in his mind, and his suffering was allayed.
71. On seeing Bhimaji's great distress, Sai Samarth, the Ocean of Compassion, was deeply touched and said, with a smile on his countenance.
72. "Rest assured, give up all anxiety. The thoughtful and the reflective do not bemoan. The moment you put your foot in Shirdi, your suffering has ended.
73. "You may be up to your neck in the sea of obstacle, you may have sunk deep into the great pit of sorrow and suffering, but know, that he who once climbs the steps of this mosque will enjoy the greatest happiness.
74. "The Fakir of this place is very kind; He will eradicate you disease and pain. He who has compassion for all, will look after you very lovingly.
75. "Hence you rest assured. Stay in the house of Bhimabai. Go now, and in a day or two you will get relief."
76. Just as one, who has no hope of survival, suddenly, by a stroke of luck gets a shower of nectar and instantly gets a new lease of life, such was the satisfaction that Patil felt.
77. As he heard the words coming from Sai's mouth, Patil experienced a deep satisfaction as that of one his death-bed receiving a draught of nectar or one parched with thirst, a drink of water.
78. The mouthfuls of spittle of blood that rose to the mouth every five minutes, subsided when Baba sat with him for one hour.
79. Baba did not examine the patient, did not ask about the causes that gave rise to the disease. His Glance of Grace alone, was enough to destroy the very roots of the disease, in an instant.
80. Enough is his glance of kindness, and even a withered log would sprout into leaf, and the flowers would bloom before it is Spring; and the trees would be heavy with luscious fruit.
81. What is disease or health? Unless one's merit or sins cease to be, or unless one works out one's karma, no other remedy will work.
82. Only by working it out will the karma cease to be. This one thing is most certain, birth after birth. Unless we work out our karma, no other means will liberate us.
83. Yet, if by one's extraordinary good fortune, one has the darshan of a saint, it is able to remove the affliction and the afflicted one will then bear the painful malady, easily and without pain.
84. Disease brings severe pain and suffering; the saint, with his compassionate glance, removes the disease without causing any suffering.

85. It is Baba's word that is the authority. That alone is the most infallible remedy. Malaria was once cured, similarly, when a black dog was fed on rice and curds.
86. These shorter tales may be looked upon as a digression from the main story, but when heard in their gist, their appropriateness will be evident. Moreover, is it not Sai himself, who brings them to the mind?
87. "I will always narrate my own story", Sai has said, and it is he who has reminded me of these stories, at this juncture.
88. A very devout tailor, Bala Ganapat by name, once came to the mosque and stood in front of Sai, entreating him with a piteous face.
89. 'What is such a great sin that I have committed? Why does this malarial fever no leave me? Baba, numerous are the remedies that I have tried, but this fever does not leave my body.
90. 'O, what shall I do now? I have tried herbal remedies, decoctions, everything! At least you tell me a remedy whereby this fever will go!'
91. Baba's heart melted, and in reply, he suggested a novel remedy for malaria. Just listen to it!
92. "Feed a black dog, near the temple of the goddess Laxmi, with a few mouthfuls of rice and curd and you will be cured, instantly!"
93. With some trepidity, Bala then went home to look for the food. Luckily, he saw some rice under a cover. Curd too, was found nearby.
94. Bala thought, it is good that curd and rice are found. But will there be a black dog, near the Temple, at the right time?
95. Baseless was Bala's worry! For, no sooner did he reach the place indicated than he saw a black dog approaching him, wagging his tail.
96. Bala was simply delighted to find everything happening according to Baba's indications. He then fed the curd and rice to the dog and afterwards narrated to Baba everything that had happened.
97. In short, whatever one may say about this incident, the fact is that, from that moment, the malarial fever left Bala and he got relief.
98. Similarly, Bapusaheb Butti once had severe diarrhea and repeated bouts of vomiting due to a chill in the stomach.
99. The cupboard was full of medicines of all sorts. But not one of them was effective. Bapusaheb was frightened in his heart and began to worry.
100. Repeated motions and bouts of vomiting left Bapusaheb exhausted and weak. He had not the energy even to go for Baba's darshan, as was his daily practice.

101. News reached Baba's ears. He sent for Butti and made him sit in front of himself, "Mind you!" he said, "From now on, you will not go for evacuation of bowels!"
102. "And remember, even the vomiting must cease". Facing him, he waved his forefinger and once again, repeated the same words to him.
103. In short, such was the awe produced by those words, that in fright, both the afflictions took to their heels, at once! Butti, however, experienced great relief.
104. Once before, too, Butti, had suffered similarly from loose motions and vomiting, when there had been an outbreak of cholera at Shirdi. His throat parched with thirst, the stomach had a constant sick, queasy feeling.
105. Near at hand was a Doctor Pillay, who tried all remedies. And when nothing worked, in the end he went to Baba.
106. Humbly, he related everything to Baba and then Pillay asked Baba, 'Should he be given coffee? Or, is water preferable?
107. And Baba said to him, "Give him milk! And almonds, pistachio, walnuts to eat! Give him 'taran' to drink.
108. "That will quench his thirst and his suffering will cease, instantly". The point is, when the 'taran' was given to him to drink, his complaint disappeared, altogether!
109. Oh, that the words 'Eat walnuts, pistachio, almonds' should bring relief to a victim of cholera! The seat of faith was really Baba's words. There was no room for any doubts there.
110. Once a Swami of Alandi came to Shirdi, wishing to have the darshan of Sai Samarth. He arrived at Baba's abode (i.e. the mosque).
111. He was suffering from an affliction of the ear, which had brought on restlessness and a loss of sleep. He had an operation performed, but it was not of the slightest use.
112. There were unbearable, shooting pains and no remedy worked. So he decided to leave Alandi and came to Baba for blessings.
113. The Swami bowed at Sai's feet, received udi prasad and then asked for blessings, praying that Baba's grace should always be with him.
114. Madhavrao Deshpande entreated on his behalf, to Baba, to have mercy on his afflicted ear. "Allah will make everything all right", Maharaj assured him.
115. On receiving this blessing, Swami returned to Pune. After eight days, a letter was received from him that the shooting pains had stopped immediately.
116. Swelling however, was still there and another operation was recommended, 'for which purpose I came to Bombay, once again.

117. 'I went to that same doctor. I wondered if Baba found himself in a strait. But as the doctor examined my ear, he could not locate the swelling.
118. 'And so the doctor said there was no need for an operation.' The Swami was relieved of his greatest anxiety. Everybody was amazed at Baba's leela.
119. A similar story comes to my mind, in this context. I shall narrate that to the listeners and then I will end this chapter.
120. Just eight days before the work of paving the floor of the Sabhamandap commenced, Mahajani suffered from a severe attack of cholera.
121. He began to pass many loose motions. But in his innermost heart, his entire dependence was on Baba and so, he would not take any treatment or medicine, though he was wearied out by the illness completely.
122. Mahajani knew what a great seer Baba was. Hence he did not tell him of his great discomfort.
123. He went on bearing the pain and suffering in the full faith that when Baba wishes it, he will, on his own, remove the afflictions.
124. His only strong desire, all along, was that even though he was prepared to undergo all the suffering, there should not be break in his daily pooja and arati.
125. And when the motions – so many of them and so frequent – went beyond the limit, just in order that he did not miss his daily service of performing Baba's arati, what he would do was'
126. He would keep at his side a copper vessel, filled with water, in the mosque, at a place where it would be easily accessible even in the dark.
127. Himself he would sit near Baba, pressing his feet and would be present for the arati, without fail, as was his daily practice.
128. If there was griping or pain in the stomach, the water vessel was always at hand. He would find an unfrequented spot, relieve himself and return.
129. And now, when Tatya asked for permission to start paving the floor, Baba gave it to him. And listen, what he said to him.
130. "We are now going to the Lendi. But when we return from there, then, at that moment, start the work of paving."
131. Later, Baba came back and went and sat on his usual seat. Kaka also came at the right time and began to press his feet.
132. Tongas arrived from Kopergaon. Devotees from Bombay reached there too! Laden with pooja articles, the devotees climbed up and made obeisance to Baba.

133. Along with all the others came the Patil from Andheri, bringing with him flowers, consecrated rice, and other pooja articles and sat down waiting for his turn.
134. Suddenly, down in the large, open court below, where the chariot used to be kept, exactly at that spot fell the first stroke of the hoe. The work on the floor had begun.
135. No sooner did he hear that sound than Baba cried out aloud in a strange voice, assuming, at once, the fierceness of Narsimha, with wild, glaring eyes.
136. "Who strikes his hoe there? I shall break his back!" So saying, he immediately got up, immediately and picked up his baton, striking terror into the hearts of all present.
137. The worker dropped his hoe and ran for his life. They all took to their heels. Kaka too, was startled, when suddenly Baba took hold of his hand.
138. "Where are you going?" he said, "Come, sit down". Meanwhile, Taty and Laxmi came. Baba hurled abuses freely at them to his heart's content.
139. Abuses were showered even on those who stood outside the yard. Suddenly Baba pulled up a bag of roasted peanuts which was lying there.
140. The bag must have fallen from the hands of someone, among those in the mosque who, stricken by panic, ran helter-skelter, when Baba was in a fit of rage.
141. The nuts must have measured a full seer. Taking them out by the fistfuls, he would rub them in his palms and clean them by blowing off the skins.
142. He would then make Mahajani eat the cleaned nuts, even as the abusing continued on one side, and rubbing the skins off the nuts, on the other.
143. "Eat them up", he kept on urging as he placed the nuts on Mahajani's hand; a few, he occasionally put in his own mouth, too! In this way the entire bag was emptied.
144. As the peanuts were finished, "Bring water; I am thirsty", he said Kaka filled up the spouted drinking vessel with water and brought it to him. He drank from it and also asked Kaka to drink.
145. And as Kaka drank the water, he said to him, "Go now, your motions have stopped! But where, O where, have those Brahmins gone? Go and bring them here".
146. Later, people came in; the mosque became full, as before. Once again, the work of paving began. But Kaka was cured of his cholera.
147. But oh! what a medicine for loose motions! The real medicine is the Word of the Saint. He who takes it as 'prasad', needs no other medicine.

148. A gentleman from Harada city was afflicted with colic and had been suffering for fourteen years. He had tried all remedies, to no avail.
149. His name was Dattopant. News had travelled to him, by word of mouth, that in Shirdi there is a great saint called Sai, whose darshan alone, removes all afflictions.
150. On hearing such fame, he went to Shirdi and bowed his head to Sai's feet, beseeching his mercy.
151. 'Baba, full fourteen years have passed, this colic has pursued the relentlessly. Enough, O enough! I have now reached the limit of my patience. Nor do I have the strength to take any more suffering!
152. 'Never have I betrayed or harmed anyone; nor have I ever shown disrespect to my mother and father. I do not remember my karma from a previous birth, due to which I have to endure so much suffering!'
153. It is only the loving, compassionate glance of the saints, their blessings and prasad that remove all afflictions. Nothing more is then needed.
154. And such was also Dattopant's experience! As Baba's hand rested on his head, and he received vibhuti and blessings, his mind was relieved and comforted.
155. Maharaj then made him stay for a few days. Gradually the colic, the pain subsided completely.
156. Such indeed, are the mahatmas! How can I describe their greatness, their power, adequately? Well-disposed towards all the creatures, benevolence is their constant nature.
157. Even as I sing these praises, I recollect other stories – one more wonderful than the other. But now, let us pick up the threads of the main narrative and continue Bhimaji's tale.
158. And so, Baba sent for the udi, of which he gave a little to Bhimaji, smearing a little on his forehead. He then placed his hand of benediction on Bhimaji's head.
159. Bhimaji was then commanded to return to his lodgings. Patil took a few steps and then walked up to the cart. He felt quite energetic.
160. He went to the place suggested by Baba (i.e. Bhimabai's house). Though the place was closed and narrow, Baba had suggested it. Therein lay its importance.
161. Being recently leveled with clay, the floor was wet. But he obeyed Baba's command and made arrangements to stay there, itself.
162. Of course, a drier place would have been available in the village, for Bhimaji knew many people. But, the place, mention of which came from Baba's mouth, could not be changed for any other.
163. So he spread out two sacks in that place, over which he spread out his bedding, and putting his mind at rest, he lay down on it.

164. The same night, it so happened that Bhimaji had a dream, in which appeared a teacher of his childhood, who started beating him.
165. Cane in hand, he began beating hard, almost breaking his back, so as to make him learn by heart, some Prakrit verses. To his student, he caused great pain and trouble, thereby.
166. The listeners must be very curious to know what these verses were. Here I cite below what I have heard, in detail, and word for word.
“She, to whom, stepping into any other house (except her own) is like stepping on a snake’s head;
The words from whose mouth are as hard to obtain, as weath from a miser’s hands;
To whom, her husband’s company is the highest happiness, though there be no wealth in the house;
And, who acts calmly, with her husband’s approval;
Only, she is the true ‘sati’ amongst men.”
167. But, for what fault was this the punishment, it was difficult to understand. And yet, the teacher would not let go of the cane. He was seized by a fit of obstinacy.
168. Immediately after, he had another dream; it was still stranger than the first. Some gentleman came and sat on his chest, pressing it down heavily.
169. Picking up a stone-roller, he literally made a grinding stone of his chest. In his extreme agony, life itself seemed to leap to his mouth, as if he was already on his way to heaven.
170. The dream ended and he fell asleep, which brought him some comfort. The sun came up on the horizon and the Patil awoke.
171. He felt refreshed, as never before! The feeling on being unwell had vanished altogether. Who remembered to check for the tell-tale signs of the grinding stone and the roller, or of the cane?
172. People regard dreams as illusory; but sometimes our experience is to the contrary. In that same auspicious moment, the disease was destroyed and Patil’s suffering came to an end.
173. Patil was very pleased in his heart and felt it to be his regeneration. He then slowly set out to have Baba’s darshan.
174. As he looked upon Baba’s moon-like countenance, the ocean of joy in Patil’s heart surged higher and higher. His own face glowed with happiness, the eyes closed in a sweet, pleasant drowsiness.
175. Flood-gates were opened to tears of love, as he placed hi forehead on Baba’s feet. The ultimate outcome of the punishments of canning and pressing the chest till the heart seemed to burst, was clearly a happy one.

176. 'It is impossible that a lowly creature like me should ever be able to repay the great kindness shown to me. Hence I only lower my head on your feet.
177. 'This is the only way in which I can, in some measure, repay the debt. There is no other. Baba Sai, your wonderful ways are simply incomprehensible!'
178. Patil then stayed there for a month, singing Baba's praises and returned home later, with a deep sense of fulfilment, remembering Nana's kindness with gratitude.
179. Filled with devotion, faith and a heart-felt happiness, the Patil, who was ever so grateful to Sai for his kindness, came to Shirdi quite frequently.
180. And what does Sainath want but the two hands and a head, steadfast faith and single-minded devotion! It is enough for him that the devotee feels sincere gratitude.
181. When a person is in trouble, he promises a pooja to Satyanarayana and performs it with its complete ritual, once he is free from trouble.
182. Similarly, from then onwards, the Patil began to observe the vow of Satya Sai on every Thursday, with a purifying bath and other observances laid down for it.
183. People read the story of Satyanarayana on such an occasion. Instead Patil would, very lovingly, read Saicharitra from Das Ganu's 'Arvachin Bhaktaleelamruta'.
184. In the forty-five chapters of that book Das Ganu has narrated the lives of many great devotees. And amongst these, the three chapters on Sainath from the Satya-Sai katha.
185. Best amongst all the observances, are the three chapters which Patil used to read. And as a result of it, he enjoyed boundless happiness and peace of mind.
186. Patil would invite all his relatives, brothers and friends, and would observe the Satya Sai Vrata (vow), regularly, with a joyful heart.
187. The naivedya too, was prepared, observing the same proportions of ingredients as for the Satyanarayana naivedya; and the celebration would also be the same, except that there it was Sai being propitiated; there it is Shri Vishnu. Nothing else was wanting.
188. Patil thus set the trend and became a custom in the village. One after the other, people began observing Satya Sai Vrata.
189. Such is the kindness of saints! When Fortune smiles on the devotee, their mere darshan removes his worldly sufferings; nay, even Death is made to turn back.
190. Now the next story will describe the anxiety of one, for having children and incidentally, the oneness between all saints will appear to us as a miracle.

191. A wealthy resident of Nanded, belonged to the Parsi community, received Baba's blessings and a son was born to him.
192. Oneness between Maulisaheb of Nanded, a saint, and Baba was shown. Full of joy, the Parsi then went back to his place.
193. The story is very touching. Listen to it with a calm mind, O listeners! and you will then realize Sai's all-pervasiveness, as also his great affection.
194. Hemadpant surrenders to Sai, absolutely! And bows to the saints and to his listeners. To this narration in the next chapter, give a respectful ear!

Weal to be all! Here ends the thirteenth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'The Cure of Bhimaji's Tuberculosis',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

14

Ratanji's Meeting with Sai

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Glory to you, O Sainath, greatest among the saints! Hail to you, O most Compassionate One, laden with virtue and excellences, and of a constant, unchanging nature! O Supreme Spirit, O Boundless, Faultless One, glory to you!
2. Out of Compassion for your devotees and mindful of things which are inconceivable to them, you appear to the devotees under different guises, to help them overcome obstacles.
3. Baba was also a divine incarnation, who appeared to uplift, the lowly and meek, and to destroy the vicious, uncontrollable demons or evil desires in the devotees.
4. All those who came for his darshan with a pure mind drank deeply of blissful Self-realization; their hearts overflowed with joy and they swayed to the rapture of love and devotion.
5. On the feet of Sai Samarth, the most Virtuous One, I, a lowly, poor, meek creature prostrate humbly in obeisance.

6. I now continue from the previous story, where I had narrated how a devotee suffering from malaria, was cured, when the black dog ate curds and rice;
7. How a dangerous disease, cholera disappeared by his raising the index finger, by giving 'taran' to drink and roasted peanuts to eat;
8. Similarly, how the colic of one, ear-ache of another and severe tuberculosis of yet another were destroyed merely by Sai's darshan.
9. How by Sai's grace Bhimaji enjoyed peace and happiness and how he surrendered, with gratitude, to Sai, ever afterwards.
10. Equally novel is the present incident and as unique a miracle as the earlier ones. Knowing too well, how eagerly interested the listeners are, I shall now narrate it.
11. If the listeners are not attentive, how will the narrator be inspired? How will the narration excel? How will it be infused with life and spirit?
12. And then, what can the narrator do? For he is totally in the power of his audience. They are his main support, through whose response the narration gains in spirit and beauty.
13. The 'Life' of a saint that this is, it is naturally fascinating, from within and without. For, his way of life – his food habits, movements, behaviour – everything is charming and even his casual utterances are full of sweetness.
14. Indeed, this is not a mere Life-story, but it is the life-supporting Water of Self-rejoicing, which the All-merciful Sai Maharaj has showered lovingly on his devotees as a means of remembering him.
15. Speaking about how one should conduct oneself worthily in this worldly life, he actually showed them the path of renunciation. Such, truly, are these stories of saints which deal with both worldly and spiritual life.
16. Their purpose must be that one should be happy in the worldly life and yet be always alert and wakeful about one's spiritual welfare, so that the purpose of this human birth is fulfilled.
17. It is only on the strength of the greatest merit, accumulated in the past births, that a being gets this human frame, quite unexpectedly. To add to it, when he also attains spiritual progress, it is a rare good fortune.
18. But he who will not make the best of this opportunity, makes of himself a senseless burden to this earth. How is his joy in living any different from that of an animal?
19. Such a man is truly an animal without a tail and horns, who knows nothing else but eating, sleeping, fear and copulation.
20. Oh, how great is the significance of human birth! It is only through this that devotion and worship of God and the attainment of the four. Mukti is possible. Through it alone, will come Self-realization.

21. Like a streak of lightning in the clouds is this worldly life – fleeting and transitory. Even a moment of happiness is rare to the people here, who are devoured by the fear of the serpent of Death.
22. Father and mother, brother and sister, wife, son, daughter or uncle – they all come together, momentarily, as floating logs of wood in the mainstream of a river.
23. One moment they seem to come together, but are thrown apart in the next moment, by the surging waves. And once the parting comes, never again will the setting be the same as before.
24. He who has not achieved his spiritual welfare in this world, has made his mother suffer the birthpangs in vain. And unless he surrenders himself at the feet of the saints, his life is a total waste.
25. The moment a creature is born, he begins his journey towards Death. So he who believes that death will not come today, or wait until tomorrow or the day after, is only deluding himself.
26. Let not the thought of Death be away from your mind. After all, this physical body is but as fodder for Death. Such is the characteristic of the worldly life. Hence be alert!
27. He who enters into worldly transactions with discrimination and wisdom, will make spiritual progress, effortlessly. Therefore, in worldly matters there should be no slackness or indolence; regarding the fourfold objectives of human life there should be no disinterest or unconcern.
28. Those who listen to Sai's story with love, will attain the most excellent thing in life; their devotion to Sai will grow and the great treasure of happiness will be theirs.
29. Those who love Sai deeply, will be reminded of Sai's lotus-feet at every step, by this collection of stories.
30. This story is an expression in words of what is inexpressible; an experience through the senses, of what is beyond the senses. And hence, however deeply you may drink of these nectar-sweet stories, there is no satiety.
31. Inconceivable are the leelas of these saints; indescribable is their greatness! Who has the power to describe them adequately in words?
32. And as these tales fall on the ears, all the while, Sai will also come, always, before the eyes. He will thus remain in the mind, in thoughts and meditation, and in memory day and night.
33. Waking and in dreams; sitting, sleeping or eating, he will appear – to you and will always be with you, wherever you may come or go – in the crowds or in the forest.
34. When he has thus become the object of deep contemplation, your mind will enter into the state of Unmani. And when this happens every day, your mind will merge with the Universal Consciousness.

35. But now, let us begin the story referred to at the end of the last chapter. Listen to it with respect, O Listeners!
36. Faith and devotion are like a feast of 'Sheera-puri' (a sweet dish). The more you eat it, the more you want! And even when you eat it to your full capacity, yet there can never be complete satiety!
37. So now, O Listeners! if you listen attentively to this second story, you will be convinced of the great significance of the saint's darshan.
38. Outwardly, Baba seemed to do nothing. He did not even leave his seat to go anywhere. But sitting in one place, he knew everything and gave proof of it to all the people.
39. 'Brahman' or 'Sat', which is in our bodies, is also present equally in the entire Universe. Always remember this and consecrate your body in God's service.
40. Know that he who has surrendered to Brahman, will see only Oneness in all. And he who believes in duality will be caught in the chain of births and deaths.
41. The intellect that firmly establishes duality is, truly, ignorance itself. The mind is purified by coming into contact with the guru. Because of him comes the attainment of the state of Self-realization.
42. Release from such ignorance is in itself the realization of the Oneness of all things. How can there be a state of complete Oneness if there is even a trace of duality in the mind?
43. From Brahma, etc., right down to the immovable things in this Universe, whatever exhibits a different property from the Brahman, appears as non-Brahman to the indiscriminating mind, although it is really Brahman from every angle.
44. That which is, by its very nature, the most profound knowledge of every sort; has no place for duties of worldly life; has wiped off all traces of Name or Form – that indeed, is the Brahman, without appendages or parts.
45. Because of its natural tendency to consider itself as different from Brahman, and from the blunders arising out of ignorance, temptation, etc., the mind which is distracted by the illusion of duality, becomes calm and peaceful as it attains the knowledge of this Oneness.
46. He who does not feel that 'I am different, people are different'; who sees this whole world as one, filled with the one and the same spirit, he finds nothing that is separate from himself.
47. To regard Name, Form, doing, of actions as obstacles; to give up altogether, any idea of duality, is itself to become Brahman.
48. 'I alone, am; there is not a place where I am not; I pervade all the ten directions. Nothing exists apart from me.'

49. Hold fast to this one idea; thrust aside Maya that deludes. Bearing in mind that 'there is nothing that is separate from me', concentrate your thoughts on the Self.
50. Listeners might naturally ask how this duality arises at all! Brahman is the object of Knowledge, while the Being is one who tries to get this Knowledge. By what means, then, can this feeling of duality be removed?
51. Even the slightest trace of duality in the mind will destroy this complete Oneness and at once give rise to a sense of differentiation which becomes the cause of births and deaths.
52. When the darkness of ignorance is dispelled, the whole Creation seems to dissolve and the vision is filled with Oneness of the Self with everything else. The illusion of duality disappears, at once.
53. When pure water is mixed with pure water, it all becomes one. What it was before and what it has become after appears as inseparable, without a trace of difference.
54. Logs of wood differ in their shapes. But as fire they are indistinguishable. They lose their separateness, their shapes merging into one mass, as fire.
55. Similarly, the knowledge of the oneness of the Atman needs no other proof. The Atman dwells in all living creatures, but is always without a form.
56. False, conflicting notions cause delusions in the mind, all the time, and hence the mind is always agitated by experiencing the sufferings of birth-death, etc.
57. He who has overcome the obstacles of Name, Form etc., and has attained to a state of God-realization, is a Siddha, unharmed by Maya and always Self-absorbed.
58. Shri Sai is such a state personified. Blessed, blessed are those who were fortunate to have his darshan.
59. The moon seems to be in the water, but is really outside. So are also the saints who appear to be surrounded by the devotees, but are inwardly detached.
60. For ever in the midst of devotees, they have attachment nowhere. Their minds are absorbed in the Self; nothing else appears before their vision.
61. Such are the great sadhus and saints, through whose words God himself speaks. For them nothing is unattainable; nothing unknown.
62. There are innumerable gurus and shishyas in this world, who give and take spiritual instruction. But rare indeed, is the guru who gives actual experience along with knowledge.
63. But enough now, of this prelude! Let us proceed with the main story, whereby my listeners, who are full of eager anticipation, may be enriched by what they hear.

64. At Nanded city, in the Nizam's kingdom, there lived a Parsi merchant, who was very religious and well-loved among the people. His name was Ratanji.
65. He had abundant wealth and extensive property – carriages, horses, farms and woodlands. His doors were always open to all, from where no one ever went back spurned.
66. Though outwardly, he was immersed in this way, in the Ocean of joy, day and night, inwardly his mind was hemmed in, all the time, by the alligator of great worry.
67. It is the Divine Law that no one can enjoy pure, unalloyed happiness. To some, it may be one thing; to others, it is another. Each one has some sorrow or longing.
68. One may say, 'I alone am great in all my prosperity and opulence', and, puffed up with empty pride, may begin to walk on the wrong path.
69. But it seems quite clear that, lest an evil eye be cast on the faultless perfect one, God Himself leaves him with a slight blemish, just a child's cheek to protect him from an evil eye.
70. Opulence of wealth, of gold that Ratanji enjoyed, made him generous with food to everyone who came to him. He would help alleviate the sufferings of the meek and the poor. He always appeared to be cheerful.
71. Thus, from the point of view of the world, Shetji was happy. But this joy of wealth is always of little use to him who has no son.
72. One after the other, he had no less than twelve daughters. How then, will he enjoy even a moment's pleasure? How will his mind be ever at peace?
73. Hari-kirtan without loving devotion to God; song without rhythm or musical tones; a Brahmin without sacrificial threat – where, O where is the beauty in all this?
74. Proficient in all arts, but without the discriminating knowledge, of good, exemplary conduct, but without kindness and compassion for the living beings – where indeed, is the grace in such a one?
75. Forehead bearing, Gopichandan marks and the neck adorned by Tulsi necklaces, but if the tongue derides and mocks the saints wherein lies the virtue, the sanctity?
76. Pilgrimages without repentance; ornaments without the necklace; a household without a son, -- from where will they derive their beauty of joy?
77. 'Will Narayan bless me with at least one son? Such was his musing every day. His mind would not be rid of the worry.
78. Due to this Shetji was sad. He did not relish food or drink. Day and night, he felt dejected, his mind being always full of worry.

79. 'O God, remove this one blemish on my happiness and make me free of the stigma. Give me but one son to continue my family line. Save me, O Prabhuraya, from this disgrace!
80. He had great faith in Das Ganu and it was to him that Shetji related his heart's secret desire. Das Ganu said, 'Go to Shirdi and the ardent wish of your heart will be fulfilled.
81. 'Take Baba's darshan, make obeisance at his feet and tell him, in detail, your secret wish. He will bless you.
82. 'Go, you will prosper. For, Baba's ways are inconceivable! Surrender to him whole-heartedly and you will be happy.'
83. The idea appealed to Ratanji and he made a firm resolve to go. Accordingly, after a few days had passed, Ratanji arrived at Shirdi.
84. He went to the mosque for darshan and prostrated himself at Sai's feet. Love welled up in his heart as he looked at Maharaj, a mine of highest virtue.
85. He opened up the basket of flowers and taking out a flower-garland, put it round Baba's neck, very lovingly. Then he offered at his feet, a profusion of choice fruit.
86. With great reverence, Ratanji then sat down near Baba, in all humility. And now, listen to his prayer to Baba.
87. 'When people are in great trouble, they come to Baba's feet and he protects them immediately. This is what I have heard.
88. 'Hence have I come all the way here, to see you with an ardent wish, which I shall respectfully relate to at your feet. Please do not turn me away, O Maharaj!'
89. Baba then said to him, "And so, after all these days, you have come to me today! But then, give me first, whatever dakshina you wish to give me. Only then you will get your satisfaction."
90. Whenever anyone came to take darshan and began worshipping his feet, he would first ask him for dakshina – be he a Hindu, Muslim or a Parsi.
91. And, was it just a modest sum – a rupee or two or an aggregate of five? Not at all! He would ask for a hundred, a thousand, a lakh, and even a crore, if it pleased him!
92. Offered once, he would say, 'Bring more.' If told that the money was over, he would say, "Do go and borrow it". And when it could not be borrowed from anywhere, only then would he stop asking for it.
93. And he would say to the devotee, "Do not worry in the least! I will give you pots of money. Sit quietly with me and give up worrying!
94. "In this world, everybody has someone or the other. But we have nobody here. Only Allah is for us, here.
95. "What I want is, one who will love me dearer than his own life. And to such a one, I repay a hundredfold of what he gives me!"

96. He may well be a millionaire, but even he was ordered by Maharaj to borrow some dakshina and that, from a poor man's house.
97. Whether a rich man or a beggar, poor, weak and moneyless, Sai never differentiated between them, as one being less important and the other, more.
98. Thus, whoever he might be, he would obey Baba's command respectfully and, shedding off all his conceit, would go to the houses of poor people to beg for money, for Baba's sake.
99. In short, under the pretext of asking for dakshina, Baba was really teaching his devotees a lesson in humility.
100. A doubt may arise in anybody's mind, why does a sadhu want wealth? But when carefully thought over, the doubt will be resolved quite easily.
101. If Sai is one fully satiated in all his desires, where is the need to ask for dakshina? And how can he be called desireless who asks his devotees for money?
102. He to whom a diamond and flint-stone, a copper coin or a gold one, both measure equal in value, why does he spread out his hands for money?
103. He who goes for alms only to sustain himself, and has taken a vow of austerity and renunciation, to such a detached, desireless soul, why this expectation of dakshina?
104. He, upon whom the 'Ashtasiddhis' wait, with folded hands, and to whose command the 'Navaniddhis' are readily laid open – to such a one, why this state of wretchedness for money?
105. Having abandoned the pleasures of worldly life with contempt, and turned away from heavenly bliss, equally, with scornful indifference, why should such detached sadhus, who know where their good lies, require money at all?
106. Those saints, sadhus, righteous souls, who have reached perfection, and whose life is dedicated to the welfare of their devotees, why should they require wealth?
107. Why should the sadhus require dakshina? Their hands should be really free of all desires. They become fakirs, but cannot withstand temptations and are in pursuit of money, all the time!
108. For the first darshan, he accepts dakshina, for the second darshan he again asks for dakshina; and at the time of leave-taking. He once again says, "Bring dakshina". Why this dakshina at every step?
109. In the ritual worship, water is first given for devotional sipping from the palm of the hand, after a meal; water is then offered for washing hands and mouth; then perfume is applied to the hand and betel leaf paan is offered. After all this is over, dakshina is given in the end.

110. But the order followed by Baba was most unusual. As the sandalwood paste was being applied or as he was being adorned with consecrated rice, etc., he would expect dakshina to be offered to him, at once.
111. Even as the prayer of adoration at the beginning of the pooja, commenced, he would first ask for dakshina and the dakshina had to be offered to that Self-existing Brahman at that very moment, which should normally come at the end of the pooja.
112. Yet this doubt can be resolved without making any great effort. If you pay attention for a moment, you will be quite satisfied.
113. The object of accumulating wealth is to be able to spend it in charity. But instead, it gets expended mostly, for petty sensual pleasures.
114. Wealth facilitates Dharma; from Dharma comes the Knowledge of the Supreme Being. Money thus takes us on the spiritual path, which brings peace and happiness of the mind.
115. Initially, for a very long time, Baba did not accept anything, but would collect only the burnt match-sticks and fill his pocket with them.
116. Whether a devotee or otherwise, he asked for nothing from anyone. If someone placed a copper coin before him, of one pice or half a pice, he used to buy tobacco or oil with it.
117. He was very fond of tobacco and used to smoke a bidi or a clay-pipe, filled with it. Limitless was the service rendered by this clay-pipe, for it hardly ever remained unkindled.
118. Later, someone thought how he could go for a saint's darshan empty-handed (i.e. without dakshina)? And so he took some dakshina with him.
119. If a 'didaki' was given to Baba, he would put it in his pocket. But if anyone placed a coin of two pice, he would return it to the giver, all intact. For a long time such was his practice.
120. Later, after some time, Baba's fame spread. Devotees flocked to Shirdi in large numbers and Baba's pooja began to take place with all the rites and rituals.
121. Now, the worshippers knew, on the authority of the Shastras, that no pooja can be concluded without an offering of gold, flowers and dakshina.
122. While sprinkling sacred water at the coronation of a king or while worshipping his feet, the worshippers bring offerings and presents. In the same way, for the guru-pooja, dakshina is to be offered.
123. Those who offer dakshina attain to a high state (i.e. heaven); those who offer gold attain the highest Knowledge (i.e. Moksha); those who give gold become pure of heart. So say the Vedas.

124. By applying sandalwood paste comes sanctity and purity; by offering consecrated rice, one gets longevity; flowers and betel-leaf paan bring wealth and prosperity. Similarly, offering gold and dakshina gives the fruit of opulence.
125. Just as sandal-paste, consecrated rice, flowers and paan are important in the pooja ingredients, so also are dakshina and gold and flowers which give the fruit of increasing health.
126. Dakshina is necessary for the ritualistic worship of a deity. And so it is also, at the concluding ritual of a vow and an offering or a present of gold is required.
127. All the worldly transactions proceed on the basis of hard cash, and to live up to their reputation and honour, people spend liberally on such occasions.
128. If dakshina becomes acceptable for the pooja of a deity by the recitation of a mantra like 'Hiranyagarbh garbhastha', then why should it not be so for a saint's pooja?
129. While going for a saint's darshan, different people go with different ideas, each according to his knowledge. And about this any unanimity is rare.
130. Some go with faith and devotion; some to test the saint's powers, while some others feel that if he can read what is in their minds, only then is he a saint!
131. Some pray for a long life; some, for elephants, gold, wealth, property. Again, some ask for sons, grandchildren, etc., and some, for undiminishing, constant power.
132. But Baba's ways were most astonishing! Those who came only to mock, to ridicule, they stayed to worship his feet, their evil minds being destroyed altogether.
133. Had they not been fortunate enough to have even this much, they would at least repent at heart, and their faith being confirmed by direct experience, would overcome their ego.
134. And yet, these were all common, ordinary people, very much involved in the worldly life. And Baba wished them to become pure of heart by giving dakshina.
135. The Shruti 'Yagnen, danen, tapasa' explains in clear words that those who are anxious for Self-knowledge will find its secret in the giving of dakshina, as one of the means of attaining it.
136. The devotee, whether a seeker of the material or of the spiritual end, has to give dakshina to his guru for the fulfilment of his desire and in his own interest.
137. Even Brahmadev told his three children – God, Demon and Man – the same, when they asked his advice, on the completion of their period of celibacy.

138. He instructed them in the monosyllable 'da' and impressed it on their minds by asking what each understood by it. Truly, the leelas of guru and shishya are marvelous!
139. 'Practice restraint', God interpreted; 'Be merciful', the Demon understood; 'Give in charity', so thought Man. 'Well done! Fine!' said Brahmadev.
140. Gods are none other than men, differing from them only in the disposition. Men endowed with excellent qualities, but unsubdued senses – they are called gods.
141. Even the demons dwell only among men and are those who are vicious, cruel and prone to violence. As for men themselves, they are tormented by uncontrollable avarice. These are the three types among men.
142. Hence, to pull the greed-engulfed man out of the abyss of avarice, Sainath, the Ocean of Kindness, takes his devotees out by the hand, wishing for their welfare.
143. The eleventh 'Anuvac' (i.e. section) of the Taittiriyanopanishad describes many types of gifts. Listen to each one of them.
144. To begin with, whatever is to be given should always be given with faith. For, if given without faith, it bears no fruit. Out of fear for the king's command, for the dictates of the Shastras, or, at least out of shame, something should be given.
145. Even at ceremonial occasions like weddings, etc., some gift is to be given, to fulfil obligations of friendship. Such are the dictates of social custom.
146. So Baba too, asked of his devotees the same, as indicated by the letter 'da' and for their own good. 'Be compassionate, give generously and subdue your senses. And you will experience great happiness.'
147. Gururaya was making use of this short, monosyllabic mantra for his devotees to destroy their three-fold faults of unsubdued senses etc.
148. Lust, anger and greed are not conducive to Self-uptment and they are very difficult to conquest. Hence was this easy way recommended.
149. As in the Shruti, so also in the Smriti, has this means been approved. But I give it below, that the listeners may be able to follow it properly:

The gateway of this Hell, leading to the ruin of the Soul is threefold – lust, anger and greed. Therefore these three, one should abandon.

Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, Ch. 16 v21.

150. Know that lust, wrath and avarice are the three gates to Hell, which lead to Self-destruction. Hence, they should be scrupulously abandoned.

151. Most Merciful Sai Samarth asked for dakshina only for the good of his devotees. He was educating them in renunciation.
152. Of what great value was that dakshina to him? And of what significance was his spirituality, who would not instantly lay down his life for the guru's Word?
153. Indeed, of what use was dakshina to Baba but for the spiritual welfare of his devotees? For his subsistence, for his life, he did not depend on their dakshina!
154. He collected alms for sustenance. Hence there could be no selfish thought behind collecting dakshina. His only object was that by giving dakshina his devotees should become pure of heart.
155. According to Vedic saying, mentioned above, the guru-pooja cannot be complete unless an offering of dakshina is first made.
156. But now, enough of this treatise on dakshina. The significance is amply clear that dakshina was not asked for out of greed or selfishness, but only for the benefit of devotees, themselves.
157. So let us now proceed with the detailed narration of the story. Listen to Sai's wonderful leela on Ratanji's offering his dakshina.
158. Listeners should be gracious enough to listen attentively to this marvelous story and see for themselves Sai's all-pervasive, remarkable nature!
159. While he asked Shetji (Ratanji) for dakshina, Sai narrated to him an incident of the past. But Shetji could not remember it and hence was quite puzzled.
160. "I know that you have already given me three rupees and fourteen annas. Now give me the remaining money which you have brought with you, as dakshina."
161. Since this was Baba's first darshan, Shetji was quite astonished to hear Baba's words and tried hard to recollect.
162. 'Never have I come to Shirdi before; nor have I sent anything with anyone', (he thought). 'Such being the case, what Sai Maharaj is saying, is really a puzzle to me!'
163. Never, never had such a thing happened at all! It made Ratanji feel most embarrassed. He gave dakshina, bowed at Sai's feet, but the riddle still remained unsolved.
164. However, the subject was left at that. Ratanji then narrated the purpose of his visit, prostrated once again, at Baba's feet and sat down with folded hands.
165. At heart, Shetji felt completely satisfied and said, 'Baba, it was, indeed, well that by my good fortune I had your darshan today.
166. 'I am luckless one, and without much knowledge. I know nothing about pooja, Yajna etc. By good fortune, I had today, the darshan of one who knows past, present and future and is wise.

167. 'You know my anxiety only too well. Remove it, O Gracious One! Do not push this faithful devotee away from your feet, O All merciful One!
168. Sainath was moved by pity and said, "Do not worry, needlessly! Your misfortune is on the wane from hence".
169. He then gave udi-prasad in his hand, placed the hand of benediction on his head and blessed Shetji with the words, "Allah will fulfill your heart's desire".
170. Ratanji then took permission and returned to Nanded. There he related to Ganu Das, in detail and in its proper sequence, all that had happened.
171. 'I had a proper darshan and was delighted. I also had his assurance, along with the prasad and his blessings.
172. 'Everything took place in a most satisfying manner. But there was only one thing that I did not follow. Of what Maharaj said to me, I did not understand at all!
173. "Three rupees fourteen annas you have given me, I know". What is this that Baba said? Please explain to me all this, clearly.
174. 'What rupees and what annas? How could I have given anything to him before? This was my first visit to Shirdi. O, I do not understand the significance of this, in the least!
175. 'At least I am not able to resolve this. To me, it appears as a great mystery, a puzzle I cannot solve. Can you, at least, solve it for me?
176. This was indeed, a mystery! Das Ganu began to ponder what its significance could be! But he could not make up his mind.
177. After some deep thinking, he suddenly remembered. And, the figure of a Muslim saint called Maulisaheb, suddenly came before his mind.
178. Born in the Muslim community, his way of life was like that of a saint. He worked as a porter, living a life that Fate had ordained for him.
179. But a detailed account of his life here, will only lead to a digression from the main story. Everyone in Nanded knows the life-story of Maulisaheb.
180. So, when it was decided to go to Shirdi, Maulisaheb had casually, and of his own will, come to Shetji's house.
181. Both had boundless affection for each other. And Maulisaheb was offered flower-garlands, fruits, etc., with proper rituals.
182. On the occasion, Shetji was suddenly inspired to serve a light meal to Mauli. And Ganu Das, at once, reminded of the expense incurred for it.
183. The list of expenditure was called for, every single pice was counted. It was all then added up and the total tallied perfectly.

184. It came to exactly three rupees and fourteen annas – neither more nor less! But that Baba should acknowledge the receipt of it only amazed everyone! It revealed Baba's many-faceted personality.
185. Sai Maharaj is a treasure of knowledge. Sitting inside the mosque, he knew the past, present and future, in whichever part of the world it might occur.
186. Unless there was oneness between all living beings, could Sai Samarth have experienced this or told others?
187. Nanded is miles away from Shirdi, both being divided from each other by considerable distance. Moreover, both the saints were also unknown to each other. How should Sai receive this telegraphic message then?
188. Any thought of separateness, that 'I am Sai Maharaj, while Maulisaheb is somebody quite different', was not present between the two of them.
189. Maulisaheb's Atman was the same as that of all the others. Yet, blessed indeed, is he who will understand this secret of oneness between all.
190. Though outwardly inhabiting two separate bodies, inwardly, both were one at heart. In fact, to use the words 'they both' is in itself not proper at all. For they were never separate.
191. In knowledge, in spirit, in their very aims and objectives, they were one. Both were of the same Essence, of same disposition.
192. No doubt, great distance separated Shirdi from Nanded. But their hearts, their lifeforce, their bodies were as one. And hence this telegraphic message to each other was possible.
193. Oh, how astounding are these sadhus and saints, who are as wireless telegraphic machines! Whatever happens in the Universe and wherever it may happen, they know all about it.
194. Later, after a suitable passage of time, God rewarded Ratanji. His wife became pregnant. The tree of hope sprouted into leaf.
195. On the auspicious moment, his wife delivered. The blessing came true. To the great joy of Ratanji, a son was born to him.
196. As after years of drought, there should be a sudden downpour of rain, such was Shetji's joy and satisfaction at the birth of a son.
197. Thereafter as time went by, the family tree began to spread out and blossom, being happily laden with sons and daughters. Ratanji was not fully satisfied.
198. But even thereafter, he continued to go for Sai-darshan. With Sai's blessings, all his desires were fulfilled and Ratanji was filled with joy.
199. In Spring, the mango tree is heavy with fruit, but not all the fruit will ripen. Of the twelve sons, only four have survived and today, they live happily.

200. And, even-tempered that he was, Ratanji too, accepted willingly and without the slightest regret, what had been ordained by Fate.
201. And now, for the significance of the next story! This whole Creation, animate and inanimate, is pervaded by Sai. Anyone many just sit still, anywhere, and experience it for himself.
202. How Guruvar was pleased with the faith and devotion of a poor, humble man from Thane, whose surname was Cholkar.
203. How this man took a vow before Sai, whom he had never seen before, and how his wishes were fulfilled, and he was given personal, direct experiences!
204. What is a bhajan without love, or reciting a sacred text without understanding its meaning? And where, O where is God without faith? Is it not all an effort in vain?
205. A forehead without the auspicious kumkum mark, knowledge without actual experience, are all futile. These are not words of book-learning. Experience their truth for yourselves and then judge.
206. Why this book about Sai's leelas, you may ask. Its purpose, I do not know. It is Sai who got it written through me and he alone, knows its purpose.
207. Moreover, to write such a book requires a man of spiritual authority. And I am but a servant of Sai, who keeps these records by his command. I am only a slave of his command.
208. My listeners are as the thirsty Chatak birds while Sai Samarth is the bliss-filled rain cloud who showers rain through these stories to quench their thirst.
209. May this body roll over and over in the dust at the feet of that Power, which moves my speech and whose Life I narrate.
210. It is he who prompts my speech; it is he who narrates his own story. May this fickle mind of mine become steady and steadfast at his feet.
211. May this bhajan be not only physical not only verbal, but also mental and bring me everlasting joy, for I am just a meet and humble messenger of Sai.
212. The Narrator and the Cause of the narration is, no doubt, Sai himself. And yet, is the listener separate from him? No, for he is not more remove from Sai.
213. To all appearances, this is just a Life-story; but in reality, it is all Sai's sport. He has himself become the loving Sport-maker and has started this powerful play.
214. Sai Baba's Life is inscrutable! He has made me his instrument and has given amazing experiences to the devotees. Thereby he satisfies his own innumerable devotees.

215. This is mere Life-story; it is a store of happiness. The sweet nectar of Salvation, which can be enjoyed only by the most fortunate one who has faith and devotion.
216. I have toiled hard to write this book for the peace and happiness of the devotees and we, the devotees may always remember the greatness and the marvel of the Guru's Grace.
217. When related to with loving devotion, this story will enhance the pleasure of the listeners in listening to it. When read over and over again, and the moral lesson of the stories is translated in to practice, it will increase devotion and love.
218. When listened to, day and night, it will snap the bondage of Maya and temptations; the consciousness of the tripudis will disappear and the listeners will enjoy happiness.
219. Holding fast to Sai's feet, Hemad surrenders to him whole-heartedly and remains prostrated at his feet, for ever, without leaving them even for a moment.

Weal to be all! Here ends the fourteenth chapter of
"Shri Sam Samarth Satcharit", called
'Ratanji's Meeting with Sai',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

15

The Story of Cholkar's vow of Sugar-candy

MY OBESIANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Only those whose innumerable meritorious deeds have come to fruition can have Sai's darshan; are not affected by the threefold afflictions and can successfully attain by the means, the spiritual end.
2. Be kind, O listeners! Meditate for a moment on your guru and then listen respectfully to the story by giving me your full attention.
3. Please do not say with disdain, 'Oh, don't we know you full well! Why all this futile effort, then? Forgive me, for you are comparable only to the ocean.

4. The ocean which, though full to the brim, will not send the river back and contains within itself a thousand streams of water that the cloud pours.
5. And such are you, too, my good listeners! I wish to bathe in your waters. Do not turn me away with scorn, for it is not good to abandon the meek and the poor.
6. Be it the pure waters of the Ganges or the turbid flow of the village streamlet, they both find a place equally, in the vast expanse of the ocean, without causing any turbulence at their confluence.
7. Hence, O my listeners, your eager interest in listening to the stories of saints, will be automatically satisfied, if you take kindly to my effort.
8. When this nectar-sweet story is heard respectfully, and with faith and forbearance, the listeners will experience a loving devotion and will find fulfillment.
9. Devotees will attain effortlessly, the most excellent thing (i.e. God), the listeners will experience devotion as well as Deliverance; the simple, faithful souls will enjoy peace and happiness and all will find their Ultimate Refuge.
10. As they listen to the stories that came from the guru's mouth, the fear of worldly life will be removed and the listeners' hearts will be gladdened when they experience Oneness with their true Self.
11. In this chapter there will be a narration of how the loving devotees pray to Sai and how Sai favours them with his darshan. Listen to it carefully!
12. A cat might have come out, having just suckled her little ones. But even if she goes back at that instant, the kittens will start running all over her to suckle at her teats, lovingly, once again.
13. The mother growls wearily, and, for a moment the kittens appear subdued. But it is enough for them to see her relax, and there they begin again, going round and round in circles, to suck at her teats.
14. But as they suck, devouring the milk in large gulps, so lovingly, the milk begins to trickle from the mother's teats and, forgetting her earlier growl and weariness, the mother too, stretches herself out, affectionately, on the ground.
15. All the weariness is gone; instead, love surges up in her breast as she embraces her young ones, holding them tightly with her four feet and licks them instinctively, again and again. It is indeed, unique, this celebration of a mother's love!
16. The deeper the sharp nails of the kittens are dug and bruise her teats, the faster flows the love through the many streams of milk that gush out.
17. Just as the deep love and devotion of the little ones produces more and more milk in the mother's teats, so also will your single-minded love and attachment to Sai's feet stir Sai's heart to deep compassion.

18. Once the people of Thane had organized, near Kaupineshwar Mandir, a program of Hari-bhaktiparayan, Das Ganu' kirtan, which was a pleasure to hear.
19. When persuaded by prominent citizens, Das Ganu used to agree graciously to perform kirtan, without expecting a pice and without undue obstinacy.
20. Not a pice was expected to be paid for the kirtan. Bare-bodied except for the plain dhoti round the waist, and without a 'pagdi' (headgear) on his head, he used to perform. Yet the large crowds that gathered were difficult to control.
21. Incidentally, the story behind such unusual dress is sure to amuse when heard carefully. Listen to it at ease and see Baba's amazing ways, for yourself.
22. Once, Das Ganu was to perform kirtan at Shirdi and came out donning an 'angarkha' (a long, outer frock-like garment for men), an 'uparna' (a small piece of cloth) on his shoulders and a turban on his head.
23. Quite pleased with himself, he went to make obeisance to Baba, as was the custom, when Baba was heard remarking, "Bravo! You are indeed, decked out like a bridegroom!
24. "But, so adorned, where to you proceed?", asked Baba. Das Ganu then replied that he was going to perform kirtan.
25. Baba further said, "Why all this 'angarkha'? Why this 'uparna', this turban? What for, all this effort? These things are not for us!
26. "Take them off before me, right now! Why carry their burden on your body?" Obeying Baba's command immediately, he took them off and placed them at Baba's feet.
27. From then onwards to this day, while performing kirtan, Das Ganu is always seen with a bare, healthy-looking body, 'chiplis' in hand and a garland round his neck.
28. Although this style is unconventional, it has a solid, pure foundation. It is the style of the famed Naradmuni, who is the most learned among the learned.
29. This tradition originated from Narad and it is from here that the long line of Haridas (kirtankars) has started. They are not burdened with the outward trappings of dress; their sights are set on the inner purity of heart.
30. Too familiar is the figure of Narad, with only the lower of half of the body covered, the hands of playing on the Veena and chiplis, while on the lips, a loud proclamation of Harinaam, constantly.
31. By the grace of Sai Samarth, Das Ganu himself composed kathas of saints and narrated them in his kirtans, which he performed free of charge. Through these he became renowned.
32. Das Ganu thus generated great enthusiasm for Sai-devotion among the people, fostering love and devotion for Sai, the Ocean of Self-rejoicing.

33. No less a contribution has been made by Chandorkar, the most eminent among the Sai devotees, for it is he who is really responsible for spreading Sai-worship.
34. It was solely due to Chandorkar that Das Ganu first came here (to Bombay) and started performing bhajans and kirtans of Sai in various places.
35. Maharaj was already well-known in Pune, Sholapur and Nagar districts, but amongst the people of Konkan, it was these two who spread Sai-devotion.
36. Thus amongst the people of the Bombay presidency, Sai worship started by the efforts of these two persons. The All-merciful Sai Maharaj appeared in Bombay through these two people.
37. In the Shri Kaupineshwar Mandir, on that day in the midst of the loud proclamations of Sai's Grace in the kirtan and of the Harinaam, Cholkar experienced a sudden, strong urge.
38. Many had come for the Hari-kirtan, each one appreciating it for a different reason. Some liked Bua's proficiency in the Shastras, some admired his expressive gestures and gesticulations.
39. Admiration of some was reserved for Bua's singing. 'Excellent! Oh, how wonderful is Bua's singing. How totally absorbed he becomes, taking Vitthal-naam! And how he dances enraptured narrating the katha!'
40. Some were more interested in the prelude to the main katha, while others loved to hear the main story. Some liked to watch the imitations and mimicry that the Haridas restored to in the course of his narration, while some others were fond of listening to parables and fables (that came in the latter half).
41. Whether the Bua is an erudite Sanskrit scholar or ignorant of it; whether he can unfold levels of meaning from line to line or is an adept only at explaining the philosophical statements that come in the latter half of the kirtan – it makes little difference. For, the ways of the listeners remain the same.
42. Of these types, there are many listeners. But it is hard to find that class of listeners in whom faith and devotion to God or saints grows steadily as they listen.
43. And what indeed, is the fruit of that listening, where katha after katha is being listened to, indiscriminately, while there accumulates layer upon layer of ignorance? In vain is such listening without discrimination!
44. Can it be called soap when it does not remove the dirt? Can it be called discriminate listening which does not remove ignorance?
45. Simple, trusting soul that Cholkar was, love for Sai surged up in his heart as he said to himself, 'O Compassionate Baba, please look after this meek, helpless creature.'

46. Cholkar was a probationer, poor and moneyless, who was unable to shoulder the burden of providing for the family and put the entire responsibility on Baba for obtaining the means of livelihood through the government job.
47. People keenly desiring something, take a vow that if their wishes are fulfilled they would serve to the Brahmins whatever food they desired, and to their heart's content.
48. The rich promise to feed a thousand people or to offer a hundred cows, if their heart's wishes are fulfilled.
49. But moneyless that Cholkar was, when he took a vow, remembering Sai's feet, in all humility he said,
50. 'Baba, mine is a poor household, my entire dependence being on getting a job. But to become permanent in my job, this examination must be passed.
51. 'With great diligence and hard work have I prepared for the examination, all my reliance being on passing it. Or else, I will lose my job as a probationer, too!
52. 'If by your Grace I pass this examination, I will humbly present myself at your feet and distribute sugar-candy in your name. This is my most firm resolve!
53. Such was the vow he took. Later, to his great joy, his wish was fulfilled. But the fulfillment of his promise was delayed. So, to atone for it, he gave up eating sugar.
54. He knew that he would require money on the journey. Moreover, how could he go to Baba empty-handed? So he kept on postponing the visit from morrow to morrow, in painful waiting.
55. It may be easier to cross Naneghat, the dangerous cliff of the Sahyadri range; but it is far more difficult for a householder to cross the threshold of his house.
56. So long as the promise made at Shirdi remained fulfilled, any dish with sugar in it remained excluded for Cholkar, who continued to drink even his tea without sugar.
57. After some days had passed in this manner, the time came for Cholkar to go to Shirdi. So he went there, fulfilled the vow that he had taken and was very happy.
58. As he took Sai's darshan, Cholkar prostrated before him and bowing at Baba's feet, was filled with satisfaction and joy.
59. With a heart so purified, he then distributed sugar, offered coconut to Baba and said, 'Today, all my heart's desires have borne fruit.'
60. Sai-darshan made him happy, his conversation with Sai gladdened his heart. Since he was Jog's guest, he naturally had to go with Jog to his house.
61. When Jog got up to go, his guest got up too! Baba then said to Jog, "Serve him cups full of tea, well-sweetened with sugar!"

62. Cholkar was astonished to hear these significant words referring to his secret. His eyes filled with tears of joy as he placed his head on Sai's feet.
63. Jog was filled with a fond admiration for Baba; and as for Cholkar – he felt it twice as much! He alone knew the reason for it, as in his innermost heart he recognized the sign.
64. Baba had never touched tea in his life. Then why, all of a sudden, should he think of it at that particular moment? It was, of course, to reaffirm Cholkar's faith and to impress on his heart the mark of devotion.
65. Suddenly, Baba gave an even clearer signal that he knew everything, by saying, "Cholkar, your promised sugar-candy has reached me! And so, your vow (of giving up sugar) is fulfilled, too!
66. "Your agitated mind when you took the vow, your atonement for the inordinate delay in fulfilling it – all, all have I known, though you wanted to keep it a secret.
67. "Wherever you all may be, when you spread your hand before me in supplication, with faith and devotion, there I stand behind you, day and night, as steadfast as your faith and devotion is.
68. "I may be here in my physical body, and you may be far away, beyond the seven seas. Yet, whatever you do there, I know it here, instantly.
69. "You may go anywhere in the world, and there I go with you. My abode is in your heart; I dwell within you.
70. "I, who thus abide in you heart, it is me that you should always worship. Even in the hearts of all the living creatures, it is I alone, who dwell.
71. "Hence, whoever you may come across, in the house or outside of it, or on the way, they are all my manifestations; I pervade them all.
72. "An insect, an ant, creatures living in water or moving in the sky, or animals on the land – a dog or a pig, I pervade them all, most truly and always.
73. "Hence, do not consider yourself as separate from me. Great is the good fortune of him, who will know me as not being different from himself".
74. Trivial as these words may appear to be, they are great in significance. How great must be Baba's fondness for this Cholkar that he gave him the treasure of devotion!
75. What there was in his mind, was thus revealed to him by Baba through direct, actual experience. O, how skilful are the ways of the saints!
76. Baba's words were priceless, and as they entered deep down into the devotee's heart they became the sap of life to the orchard of devotion and love; to devotion they are as a mast is to the ship.
77. The cloud compassionately rains water to quench the thirst of the Chataka, but in the process the whole earth is cooled by the raindrops. Such is also the case here.

78. Cholkar, poor soul! Was he not a total stranger, unknown, unheard of? And, for that matter, even Das Ganu's kirtan was only an instrumental cause that created an urge in Cholkar's heart to take a vow, which ultimately resulted in his receiving Baba's Grace!
79. And because of this followed the miracle, revealing the mind of the saints! Baba, who was always keen on instructing the devotees, created such occasions for it.
80. Here, Cholkar was but an instrument. As usual, it was Baba's inconceivable leela to instruct his devotees, which never ceases to amaze us!
81. Let us now narrate another incident that reveals Baba's dexterity, after which we shall end this chapter. It is about how someone asked a question and how Baba answered it.
82. Once, as Baba was sitting in his usual seat in the mosque, a devotee who sat in front of him, heard a lizard chirp.
83. As the chirping of a lizard or its falling on any part of one's body is considered to be a bad omen of the events to come, the devotee, quite casually and out of curiosity, asked Baba a question.
84. 'Baba, why does that lizard on the back wall keep chirping? What could be in her mind? I hope it is not anything unpropitious or unlucky.'
85. Baba said to him, "The lizard is overcome with joy that her sister is coming here to meet her from Aurangabad".
86. What, after all, is a creature like the lizard! And then, to talk of her mother, father or brother and sister? How is she involved in these worldly, human relationships?
87. So the devotee thought to himself that Baba must have said something by way of a witty reply and he sat quietly for a moment.
88. Suddenly, a man on horseback came from Aurangabad to take Baba's darshan. Baba was then having a bath.
89. As the man had to travel further and the horse could not have gone on without his daily feed of grain, he set out towards the market to buy some grain.
90. The devotee, who had questioned Baba earlier about the lizard, was staring in astonishment at the just-arrived trader from Aurangabad, when the latter suddenly pulled out the horse's mouth-bag from under his arm and shook it vigorously to clear the rubbish.
91. As he dashed it on the ground, turning it inside out, there dropped out from it, a lizard that slid swiftly across, in great trepidation, in front of his own eyes?
92. Baba then said to his questioner, "Now, keep a careful eye on her! This indeed, is the sister of that lizard. Just watch this marvel!"
93. As she set out from there, the lizard made straight towards her elder sister, who was already chirping incessantly. Aiming in the direction of that sound, she set out, strutting and stalking.

94. After so many days the two sisters were meeting. They hugged and embraced and kissed each other on the mouth. It was a unique celebration of love!
95. Circling around each other, gyrating round and round with joy, they whirled in all directions, as it pleased them – vertical, horizontal, oblique!
96. Where Aurangabad, where Shirdi! How strange, the whole incident! How should this rider suddenly appear as from nowhere? And that a lizard should also be with him? O, how strange!
97. Maybe, the lizard was in Aurangabad and had entered into the horse's mouth-bag. But how did the question-answer take place at the most opportune moment? Its perfect timing was a real marvel!
98. Oh! that the lizard should start chirping, prompting the devotee to ask that question! And how Baba should have explained its significance, which received confirmation immediately through the actual experience!
99. It was an incident, unparalleled! Humour is loved universally and the saints make use of this incomparable device to enhance the welfare of the devotees.
100. Just consider! Had this inquisitive devotee not been there, or had no one put the question to Baba, how would Sai's greatness have been revealed? And who would ever have understood the meaning?
101. Many a lizard have we all heard, so often, making these sounds. But who has bothered to find out the meaning of the sounds or even about why they chirp?
102. In short, mysterious and inscrutable are the strings that control the great sport of this Universe. Who can imagine them? They leave everyone puzzled!
103. People, say quite to the contrary, that if these lizards are heard chirping, it is inauspicious. The evil can however be averted if you repeat the name 'Krishna, Krishna'.
104. Be it as it may! But it is, for sure, an excellent device of Baba's to confirm the faith of his devotees, in himself. It was not just a miracle!
105. He who reads this chapter with reverence, or makes repeated readings of it regularly, will be freed from all obstacles by Gururaya.
106. He who lowers his head on Sai's feet with single-minded devotion, will truly find in him, his one and only Refuge and Protector, the Doer of all action and the Destroyer of all evil.
107. Make no mistake, have no doubt about this! For such indeed, is this Sainath! And I narrate the secret significance of my own experience, only for the benefit of the devotees.
108. In this entire world, only I am; there is nothing else other than me. And not only in this, but in all the three worlds, I and I alone, exist.

109. Where such non-duality is inspired, there not a trace of fear remains. For such a one, everything is filled with the Universal Consciousness, which is the unconceited, egoless state.
110. Hemadpant surrenders to Sai, absolutely, and does not part from his feet even for a moment. For that is the only way to cross the ocean of the worldly life, safely! Now listen to the interesting narration that follows.
111. In the next chapter, Sai, the greatest among the Gurus, will create an incident of great significance as to how people ask for Brahma-Jnana, as if it is as easy and quick as the snapping of a thumb and a finger.
112. A greedy man will ask Sai for Brahma-Jnana and Maharaj will give it to him, out of the man's own pocket.
113. When the listeners hear this story, they will perceive Baba's marvelous ways to show how, unless one is totally free from avarice, the attainment of the Brahman is, beyond a doubt, impossible.
114. But no one ever thinks as to who has that spiritual authority. How it is attainable and to whom, will be explained by Maharaj.
115. I am but a slave of his slaves and hope, in earnest application, that you will hear with enthusiasm this glorious Sport of Sai's Love.
116. Your heart will be filled with joy and you will have the satisfaction of understanding. Hence, O listeners, give your attention and you will know the greatness of the Saints.

Weal to be all! Here ends the fifteenth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'The story of Cholkar's Vow of sugar-candy',
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

16

A Narration About Brahma-Jnana (1)

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA. MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

<http://suratiundhiyu.wordpress.com/>

1. The King of kings, Lord Paramount, enthroned on the throne of Peace; Master of the Empire of the Blissful Self and our one and only Refuge, Shri Gururaj – to him let us make obeisance.
2. On his either side are being waved gently, the two ‘chowries’ (feather-brushes) of steadfast devotion and ‘Sahaj-Sthiti’ (Sahaj-Samadhi); and fanning him with great reverence are ‘Swanubhuti’ (direct intuitive perception of the divine) and instant experience.
3. Self-absorption is the royal parasol over his head; peaceful, benign feelings are the staff in the hands of his royal staff-bearers. The ‘Shadripus; and Maya, temptations, etc., will not endure here, even for a moment.
4. Oh, for the splendour of his royal court! Four (Vedas), six (Darshanas), eighteen (Puranas) are the royal minstrels that sing his praises. The radiance of Pure Knowledge forms the brilliant awning overhead and Inner Bliss, dense and thick, suffuses the atmosphere.
5. Detachment, devotion, Pure Knowledge; listening, reflection, contemplation, incessant concentration on the Self and actual Perception of God, -- these are his eight ministers of State, engaged in his service.
6. He whose throat is adorned by the divine gems – Peace and Self-restraint – whose melodious speech transports the nectar from the Ocean of Vedanta;
7. At the sight of whose hand, raised high, to strike with the lustrous, sharp-edged sword of Knowledge, the tree of worldly life, which trembles with fear;
8. Glory be to such a one as you, O Pure Immortal Yogiraya, who are beyond the gunas and have assumed this human form only for the benefit of others and for the upliftment of the meek and the poor.
9. In the last chapter, the story was narrated of how, for confirming the devotee in his faith, Baba brought about the fulfilment of his vow and gave him the mark that he knew his secret.
10. The Sadguru is for ever satiated in all his desires. How can a devotee then, satisfy his desires? In fact, it is the guru who satisfies the devotee’s wish of serving the guru, thereby making him free of all desires.
11. A flower, a leaf, when offered with true devotion, will be lovingly accepted by him. The same, when offered with pride and conceit, he will spurn, turning his head away, at once.
12. He who is the Ocean of Truth, Knowledge and Joy, of what importance are to him these details of ritualistic worship? But, when offered with faith and devotion, he accepts them gladly.
13. Under the cover of now knowing anything, he, in reality, removes ignorance and gives us knowledge. Without transgressing the limits set

- by the Shastras, he imparts instruction of his devotees in a pleasant manner.
14. When he served faithfully, the worshipper experiences oneness with the Brahman. Abandon all other means and serve the guru in utmost humility.
 15. Slightest negligence in that service or even a suspicion of over-smartness in it, will only harm the Seeker. What is needed here is steadfast faith in the guru.
 16. Moreover, what does a devotee do by his own efforts? Nay, it is the Sadguru who facilitates whatever he does. For the devotee does not know his own difficulties and it is the guru who helps him overcome them, though he does not know it.
 17. There is no other benefactor in all the three worlds, than the guru, himself. Let us then surrender whole-heartedly to him, who is the greatest, everlasting Refuge of the Supplicants.
 18. If the guru were to be compared to the Chintamani, that divine gem will grant you only what you wish for; whereas, to the astonishment of the devotee, the guru will grant him the most inconceivable of things!
 19. If compared to the Kalpataru, that Wishing-Tree of Indra's heaven satisfies only what the devotee desires, but Gururaya gives to him the most unimaginable state of 'Nirvikalapa' or Superconsciousness.
 20. 'Kamdhenu', the wish-fulfilling Cow, instantly gives whatever is wished for, but far greater than her is the Guru, the Divine Cow. Who else but he can be adorned with the title, 'The giver of the Inconceivable'?
 21. And now I have only one request to make to the listeners – to listen attentively to the story which I said at the end of the last chapter that I would narrate – the story about the man who came to Baba desiring to know the Brahman.
 22. Listen now, to the summon bonum of life; as to how Baba satisfied the man who came to him with a fond wish to get Brahma-Jnana and how Baba instructed him and also his own devotees.
 23. Saints are always free from desires, being completely satiated, already. But the devotees are full of desires, which always remain unfulfilled.
 24. Some ask for a son, some for an everlasting kingdom. Some wish to have faith and devotion; but only rarely will one ask for liberation from the worldly life.
 25. One such devotee of simple faith, but who was always engrossed in accumulating wealth, once had a strong urge to take Baba's darshan, as he had heard of Baba's great renown.
 26. At home he had everything in abundance – wealth, children, a host of servants. Yet he wished to have Baba's darshan as Baba was the very image of Munificence.

27. 'Baba', he thought, 'is a great Brahma-Jnani, the brightest gem among the sadhus and saints. Let me place my head on his feet, for his ways are just inscrutable!
28. I want for nothing, so let me ask for Brahma-Jnana. If I can get even this, very easily, I shall be blessed, indeed!
29. His friend then said to him, 'It is not easy to know the Brahman. And to a greedy person like you, it is most difficult that it should reveal itself.
30. 'You who know no other source of happiness except wealth, wife and children, and the like – Brahman, to you, is an aberration. How will it bring you any peace or happiness?
31. 'When the bodily organs become feeble, the world does not care for you. It is then that the idle mind whiles away its time, spinning away the yarn of the Brahman.
32. 'Of such a kind is your curiosity about the Brahman. Miserly that you are, and reluctant to part with even a pice, you will not find anyone who will satisfy your wish.'
33. However, with such a desire in his heart, the Seeker of Brahman set out to go to Shirdi, having engaged a tonga for the return journey, too! And thus he arrived at Sai's feet.
34. He took Sai's darshan and made an obeisance at his feet. And now listen, O listeners, to the sweet words that Sai addressed to him.
35. For, this Kalpataru of Sai's tales, when watered by the water of attentive listening, will take a firm root and as the listener's reverence grows, so will it bring forth an abundance of fruit.
36. It will become succulent in each and every part, will blossom into fragrant flowers, will bow down with the weight of delicious fruit and the desire of the Enjoyers will be satisfied.
37. So he said, 'Baba, please show me the Brahman! With this sole desire in my heart have I come. People say that Shirdi Baba shows Brahman without any delay.
38. 'Hence I have come all this long way and after my journey I am very tired. But if I can now attain that Brahman I will have accomplished the object of all my efforts.'
39. Baba said, "Do not worry, I will show you the Brahman promptly, at once! There is no question of credit dealings here. But oh, it is people like you who ask for Brahman, who are rare!
40. "People do ask for an abundance of wealth and prosperity, or for the cure of disease, removal of difficulties, or for fame, honour, power and authority. It is happiness that they always ask for.
41. "People come running to Shirdi, only to ask for material pleasures and worship me, a mere fakir, for it. But no one asks for the Brahman!
42. "Of these (pleasure-loving) people, I have an abundance. It is people like you, who are in dearth. And I crave for such seekers after the Brahman, meeting whom is a 'Parvalak' for me.

43. "By the fear of this Brahman the Sun and the Moon move in their set orbits, rising and setting regularly and the sunlight and the moonlight appear at the appointed time;
44. "So also the seasons, summer and spring and winter – come and go in the proper order; and Indra and other gods, the guardians of the people appointed to the eight directions, look after their subjects – all this takes place due to this Brahman.
45. "Hence before the physical body is cast off, a wise man attains the highest objective of life i.e. Brahman. Or else, the continuous cycle of birth and death pursues him relentlessly.
46. "If the body falls, without having known this Brahman, the bondage of worldly life will follow and rebirth will become inevitable.
47. "I shall show you not only the Brahman but the entire coil or the essence that is Brahman, which is enveloping you from tip to toe and which I shall unwind and separate."
48. Oh! how nectar-sweet was that speech, a mine of the highest, the most incomparable Bliss, which had the power to uplift, even those who wavered in their doubts!
49. By the power of Baba's words, those engaged day and night in the pursuit of transient fleeting pleasures will also be guided firmly to the path prescribed by the Shastras.
50. If Chintamani (Ganesh) is pleased all the material pleasures are attained; if Mahendra is pleased the wealth of Heaven is gained.
51. But more remarkable than these is the Guru. For there is no benefactor like the guru who will reveal the hard-to-attain Brahman to his devotee, when he is pleased.
52. By listening to that sweet tale all the cares and sorrows of worldly life will be forgotten. Baba also knew too well, how to instruct the seekers of Brahman.
53. So he then made him sit down, engaging his attention elsewhere for a moment, and making him feel as if he had forgotten all about his question.
54. And then, what Baba did was, he called one boy to him, saying, "Go quickly to nandu, and give him the message, --
55. 'Baba urgently needs to borrow five rupees, so give quickly the money for the occasion, to be returned shortly.'"
56. The boy went to Nandu's house, but there was a lock on his door. So he at once came back and told Baba so.
57. Baba said, "Go back, again. Go to the grocer, Bala. Maybe he is at home and give him the same message. Bring back the money, quickly. Go!"
58. But even this trip was wasted. For even Bala was not at home! The boy narrated to Baba all that had happened.

59. Baba sent him in great haste, on the same errand, to one or two other places. The boy grew quite weary of these unprofitable trips, but was not able to bring even a pice.
60. Baba knew full well that neither Nandu nor Bala, nor any of the others would be home. For Maharaj had intuitive knowledge about everything.
61. Himself, a living conversing Brahman, will Baba be ever short for a mere five rupees? But it was all a sport for the benefit of that Seeker of Brahman.
62. When a sweet dish or seera is prepared in honour of a guest who comes home, the feast is enjoyed by all the others, too!
63. Similarly, this Brahma-bhokta was but a pretext put forward by Maharaj to instruct his devotees, for the benefit of all.
64. In that Seeker's pocket there was a bundle of notes worth more than two hundred and fifty rupees. And Sainath knew it.
65. And did not that Seeker of Brahman know it? Did he not have eyes to see it? But the perplexity of his own doubts and hesitation restrained him, though the bundles of notes lay in his pocket.
66. Here he comes to ask for Revelation, but has not the heart to loan a mere five rupees to Sai, and that too, just for a short while!
67. Sai Maharaj, well he knew, was true to his word and the amount to be lent, just for a little while was small, too! But the moment he was inclined to lend the money, doubts at once assailed his mind.
68. After all, what was a mere five rupees to him! But even that, he could not bring himself to part with! Indeed, he was Avarice personified, who could not accommodate Sai for such a small amount!
69. Had it been any simple, trusting soul, who had genuine affection for Sai, he would not have been able to bear the spectacle of borrowing and lending, taking place before his very eyes!
70. He, who was thirsting after the Brahma-Jnana so much, could not he have understood the question? I do not think so, at all! But he was totally engulfed by his greed for wealth.
71. And then, he could at least have kept quiet after all this! But no! Baba Sai, show me the Brahman quickly!
72. Baba then said, "And have I not made every effort, so far, to show you the Brahman from the place where you are? Have you understood absolutely nothing?"
73. For the sake of the Brahman one has to surrender the five vital airs, the five organs of knowledge, the five organs of Action, ego, intellect and mind.
74. The path of Brahma-Jnana is very difficult; it is not easily attainable by one and all. It reveals itself suddenly to the fortunate one when his fortune is in ascendancy.

75. He who is detached and is unaffected by the glory even of the Brahmapada itself, such a one alone has the authority to gain Brahmavidya. For he is totally detached from all else.
76. Whoever it is who gives the Brahma-jnana and in however complete a form, will he ever succeed if the seeker does not have even a trace of renunciation?
77. Those with the highest spiritual authority attain Brahma-jnana easily and without any difficulty. But those whose authority is mediocre always have to proceed slowly, according to the religious tradition (laid down by the Shastras).
78. For one it is as swift as the flight of the bird; for the other, it is a slow step-by-step climb on the ladder of religious tradition. But for him without any spiritual authority at all, to attempt to know the Brahman is altogether a fruitless task.
79. That there is no higher, no excellent means of attaining the Brahman without a discriminating knowledge of the real and the unreal, is no doubt, a very true aphorism of the Vedanta. But is such a discriminating knowledge in the power of everyone?
80. With deep study and arduous efforts, and when the physical frame is worn down to a skeleton, only then does it dawn slowly in the light of the Guru's Grace.
81. When Brahmadeva becomes egoistic and thinks that 'I am the Supreme God; I am the Controller', and he forgets his true Self, it is then that the Universe is created.
82. But when the knowledge comes that 'I am myself, the Brahman', then the Knower becomes one with his real Self and in that moment the illusion about the reality of this Universe is dispelled. So proclaims the Shruti.
83. Once the Self-awakening comes, bringing with it the feeling of oneness with the all-pervading Brahman, this Universe becomes the sacrificial offering to the Fire-god, i.e. Brahman. The Creation is thus reduced to ashes.
84. Such is also the condition of the living creatures. When their misconceptions are removed, their delusions about the rope, the sun-beams and the oyster-shell are at once dispelled.
85. Ignorance of its being an oyster-shell creates the illusion of silver. But a true knowledge of the nature of silver, at once, brings the realization that it is only an oyster-shell. In that moment, the illusion of silver disappears altogether and the oyster-shell is perceived clearly and definitely, for what it is.
86. It is symptomatic of reciprocal ignorance. Burnish the lamp of knowledge by scouring and scrubbing the impurities of ignorance, so that all the illusions are destroyed.

87. Had there been no bondage of birth and death, why would there be this determined pursuit of Moksha? What would our concern be, then, with the Vedanta? And wherefor this discourse on Brahma-jnana, at all?
88. But he who firmly believes and is determined that 'I am in bondage and want to be liberated', only he has the authority to be a seeker here – neither the totally ignorant nor the complete Jnani.
89. When there is no bondage, how can there be liberation? This is the real truth. Bondage and liberation arise from the association with the Trigunas. Such is the experience of all.
90. But in the absence of any duality, who binds and who liberates? Here nobody is in bondage and nobody is liberated, once the feeling of duality disappears through non-duality.
91. Are the phenomena of day and night a creation of the sun? It is all a matter of delusion of the eye, for the Sun is aloof from it.
92. When the joys of heaven and the sorrows of hell are experienced with the ego that 'I am the doer', 'I am the enjoyer', the intentness and attachment to desires increases.
93. The Self is constant, ancient and indestructible. It is without the changes of birth, death, etc. The letter 'Omkar' is its symbol. It is continual, without a beginning and an end.
94. He who regards this body itself as the Self and feels that he is separate, the Creation is separate; such a one will never get Self-knowledge that comes from Self-experience, however hard he may toil for it.
95. Conquer speech and all other senses; make a firm resolve of the mind; then extinguish the involuntary activity of that mind and hold fast to the intellect.
96. Intellect which gives knowledge and is in the form of Light; it is here that the mind should be concentrated. For, the group of all the sense organs, including the mind, are controlled by the intellect.
97. The initial source of an earthen pot is the clay. So is intellect to the sense organs. In the same sense it is their constant state. Such is the pervasiveness of the intellect.
98. By virtue of its all-pervasive nature, the intellect fills all the senses, like the mind, etc. Hence, merge this intellect into the all-pervading Divine Consciousness and that Divine Principle into the Self.
99. When a sum-total is made in this way, the true nature of the Self is revealed, with a certainty. And then, the silver of the oyster-shell, the mirage in the sand, the serpent in the rope become only optical illusions.
100. It is this Self, complete, not with any distinguishing quality, without birth and death, that we must realize, to attain our lasting good. So say the sages.
101. All effects have a cause; but the soul is self-existent and without a cause. It is ancient, but from the beginning It is new and beyond past,

- present and future. But Its very nature, It is beyond the reach of the intellect.
102. Inviolable as the sky, beyond birth and death, Self-sustained and pure, Its support is 'Om Pranava'.
 103. The Infinite Brahman is to be known; the Brahman which becomes finite, is to be attained. Its symbol 'Om' is to be meditated upon and to be worshipped, always.
 104. 'Omkar' in the form of Pranava or Brahman is the essence of all the Vedas, and the ascertainment of its meaning is the real contemplation of the Mahavakyas of the Vedas.
 105. That which the Vedas themselves have established and which the Seekers achieve with the greatest effort and by observing celibacy, that is called the highest state of 'Om'.
 106. However, extremely difficult as it is to ascent to that state, it becomes easy to attain for him who studies hard, once he receives his guru's grace.
 107. Beginning with the most gross among the physical organs, when an untiring Seeker, in his arduous study, reaches that most subtle discriminating intellect, he attains to that state.
 108. Such is this letter 'Om', to be pronounced through the speech, which is the sum-total of all forms of penance, the mere utterance of which brings out its essential meaning and a constant repetition of which will result in a Vision or manifestation of God.
 109. Blessed is that steadfast devotee of the Sadguru, who will know that all-pervading Spirit, which is unaffected by the changes of growth and decay.
 110. How can they, who are for ever afflicted by the threefold afflictions of Adhyatma, Adhibhoot and Adhidaiva, ever enjoy such good fortune? Such glory is only for the saints!
 111. Out of ignorance arises the birth-death cycle and the only means to be liberated from it is the realization of oneness between the Brahman and the Self. This can be achieved through the saints.
 112. When the mind is free from all thoughts of sense objects, and by repeating the Vedic aphorism, 'I am Brahman', the intellect trends to think the same;
 113. Convinced by the truth of the words of the Guru and the Shastras, when the tendency to do karma, mentally and physically, ceases altogether, it is then that the Self is fully realized.
 114. Only then is Knowledge attained fully and clearly. Salvation comes from the material means of sensual pleasure. The meshes of ignorance, etc., in the heart are disentangled and the Seeker enters the Unmanifest to become one with It.
 115. More subtle than the subtlest atom in the ray of light, so small and subtle is the Atman. Such is the definite idea of the Atman.

116. Atman is larger even than the Brahmanda, which is the largest among the large. But all this is only a relative standard. Atman is really beyond all measurement.
117. In the subtlety, it is the subtlest among the subtle; in largeness, it is the largest among the large. Hence the name or form are merely discriminative appellations, while the Atman is perfect and without appellations.
118. The Atman has no birth, no death; nor has it any causal origin. It is unborn, constant, indestructible and ancient. It is difficult to know it clearly, effortlessly.
119. 'Omkar', the symbol of Brahman, is its fundamental nature, which, it has been difficult even for the Vedas or Shastras to understand. Will it be then easy to know it, for one and all?
120. In trying to understand it, the Vedas were exhausted, the ascetics repaired to the woods; the Upanishads gave up in despair, as none could ascertain it.
121. To realize the true nature of the Atman, it is necessary to have an Acharya, who has realized the non-duality between God and the Atman. When even those skilled in reasoning gain no entry here, what to say of the others?
122. There is no place for logicians here, for they will be caught up in the whirlpool created by their own chaotic mind. Except the Veda-shastras and the guru, no one else has the steadiness of mind needed for Self-realization.
123. The innumerable stars of one's own intellectual speculations and theories cannot help one avoid the eighty-four lakh cycles of birth and death. It is enough to have that one moon, -- the guru and the Shastras -- and even the last traces of darkness (of ignorance) are then cleared away.
124. He who holds fast to his Sadguru will achieve with little effort what others fail to achieve with hard, painful effort. For he will receive the light of Knowledge or Brahma-jnana.
125. Where ignorance is removed without effort and blissful Self-Knowledge comes to stay, and the state of Self-absorption emerges, it is indeed the state for which Moksha is just another name.
126. This, and this alone, is the most desirable, the highest goal of human existence. It is for this that the Brahmayogis, who strive to be one with the Brahman, and the Seekers, who are constantly Self-absorbed, made great efforts.
127. He who turns away from the Self is caught up in the tumult of sensual desires. But once he is firmly concentrated in his true Self, his sensual desires become weak.

128. For one who has turned away from his Self, the sensual pleasures are near at hand. But the moment he turns inwards to his true Self, the sensual desires turn away from him.
129. He, who desires nothing but Moksha and has no other desires in his mind, has no temptations either in this world or in the next, -- he alone is deserving of Moksha or Salvation.
130. Know this clearly, that he, who lacks even in one of these qualities, is not a true Seeker. He only pretends to be a Seeker as a man, blind in one eye, pretends to see,
131. Unless the ego completely falls off, unless greed is totally eradicated, and the mind is detached and free of desires, Brahma-jnana will not be firmly imprinted.
132. Identification of the Self with the body is itself a delusion. Attachment to anything is a bondage. Give up these promptings of sensual desires and their memory, and you will attain the Brahman.
133. Brahman, in its attributesless state, is difficult to realize. Hence wise men know the importance of Brahman in its manifest, finite form and consider its worship to be their dharma.
134. Vedantins know this truth that the Atman dwells in all creatures secretly, mysteriously. But where is there undisputed proff of it that can be intuitively experienced by everyone?
135. First, the heart must be purified; over and above that, the intellect has to be subtle, sharp as the point of the Kush-grass. Only then will this Atman, in its thrice-purified state and in its kindness, reveal Itself, all on Its own.
136. The Atman is constant, unaffected by changes (such as birth, death, growth, etc.,). The Self-realized never grieves and he alone is truly courageous and wise and is, for ever, liberated from worldly life.
137. The skill, the fluency of a 'pravachan', of the power of grasping the significance of books is of no avail. Even an intimate knowledge of Vedas and Shrutis will not explain anything.
138. The Atman is constant and free from changes of form or nature, the body is transitory and subject to continual changes. Knowing this, he who works for his own good is aware, all the time, of what is proper or improper in his actions.
139. The Self-realized is always fearless and known that he alone is and that nothing else exists apart from himself. When duality is thus wiped out, totally, destruction of all sorrow results, most certainly.
140. Although it is difficult to know the Atman, which cannot be known by listening to 'pravachans'; though mere intellect is of no use in trying to understand It, yet It can be easily realized when proper means are pursued.

141. He who is always without desires, except for the one desire for Self-knowledge, such a one, when he constantly beseeches the Atman, he alone will gain this highest gain.
142. The Atman will bestow its grace on him, who bears in mind the non-duality between the Self and God all the time, saying to himself, 'I am He', as he listens to katha, kirtan, etc., and meditates upon it.
143. He who has never refrained from sinful behavior and has attachment, who is always unquiet and unmeditative, cannot attain this even by Knowledge.
144. He who acts according to what the Shruti and Smriti commend, and eschews what is forbidden; whose mind is always concentrated in meditation, such a one has the Atman in his power.
145. He who is free from sinful behaviour, and surrenders himself humbly at the feet of the Guru, whose desire for the fruit of action has ceased, only such a one can attain the Atman.
146. Without becoming free from sensual desires, without desiring anything else, but the Atman, and without a cessation of all the natural propensities and affections of the mind, it is very difficult to know the Atman.
147. Seeing the austerity and penance of the Seeker, the Atman Itself will be roused to pity and only then will It manifest Its true nature. But this is not easy at all, unless one has a guru.
148. Hence, to know the Self of Atman, a Seeker should listen to sacred texts, contemplate on them, bearing in mind, constantly, the principle of non-duality. Only then will Self-knowledge come easily.
149. This worldly life is filled with ignorance and its widely spread manifestations also originates from ignorance. Know well, that without Knowledge, Moksha or Salvation has not place, at all.
150. To experience the truth of the Shastras, reasoning power and ingenuity of mind are necessary. But Knowledge comes only after the illusion of worldly life is destroyed, without which it is impossible.
151. He alone is a great soul, who moves in the world realizing that every living being, a saint or a sinner, is God Himself. For he alone sees the non-duality between God and His creatures.
152. The experience of oneness between God and the Self is the end of all Knowledge. Once Self-knowledge comes, all ignorance will disappear.
153. When the Self is realized fully, nothing more remains to be known. Due to his actual, personal experience, everything is known to the Seeker, as a thing in the palm of his hand.
154. He enjoys the fruit of this Brahma-jnana in his complete liberation from the worldly life; in an immediate experience of Bliss and an abundance of Moksha.

155. It is only to enable the intellect to comprehend its all-pervasiveness that the Atman is described as 'subtler even than the subtle and larger even than the large'.
156. In itself the Atman is neither subtle nor large; the distinction of comparative size is here imaginary. This Atman fully pervades the whole creation, from Brahmadev to the tiniest shrub.
157. Indescribable as this Atman is, and though It is in Itself infinite, It is limited by putting It into speech, so that the intellect may be able to grasp it.
158. The true essence of the Atman will never be grasped on the strength of a powerful intellect. Its attainment comes from the grace of Sadhus, saints and the Sadguru, which is the fruit of devoted service to them.
159. Is there any dearth of ready, detailed descriptions of the Brahman in the sacred books and pothis? But so long as the Sadguru does not bestow his grace, however hard one may try, one can never attain the Brahman, to the end of this world.
160. In the absence of the daily religious rituals and observances, when the mind is not purified by their influence, the Brahman can never be known and experienced.
161. It is a truth thrice-proclaimed that only the Brahman is constant; all else is transient. All that meets the eye is without constancy.
162. Rare is the speaker who can describe that Brahman. Rare is also the listener who is pure of heart. But rarer still it is, to get the Sadguru who is loving and Self-experienced.
163. Is Brahman a thing to be got for the asking? Great yogis inhabiting secluded mountains and caverns, caught up in self-imposed austerities and disciplines and engrossed in deep meditation.
164. Even they have not be able to perceive the Brahman without the guru's grace; then how can It be attained by a person like you, who are a personification of Greed itself?
165. He, who has never-ending attachment to wealth, can never, even to the end of the world, attain Brahma-jnana. Know this to be a certainty.
166. While listening to the spiritual discourse, when the mind yet meditates on sensual pleasures and reflects incessantly on matters of worldly life, then the Self-realization that comes, is also of the same kind.
167. Impure negative emotions (like anger, envy, etc), ascription of the false (vikshep) and veiling of the true (avarana) are the three sources of error for the mind. Actions performed without an expectation of fruit remove the impure, negative tendencies; worship and devotion cleanse the mind of false delusions.
168. Proper actions and worship, performed in this way, bring maturity to the doer's mind. When negative tendencies and delusions are thus eradicated, all that remains is the veiling of the Truth.

169. And this veil, which is the root of all evil, is destroyed once Knowledge appears, as darkness is destroyed by the rising of the sun.
170. It is this Brahman – which, those proficient in the Vedanta have described as being characterized by Truth, Knowledge, Infinity – which illuminates the Jnani, who becomes Self-absorbed.
171. The traveller, walking alone through a jungle, in the darkness of the night which is only partially illumined by the dim moonlight, is startled, mistaking the stump of a tree for a robber and hides himself, in great fear.
172. ‘I walk alone’, he muses, ‘and am carrying money, too! He, like a way-side robber, is lying in wait for me. What is there to think, now? There is no gurantee even of his life!’
173. But suddenly, as a lamp approaches in the distance, and the reality of the supposed robber is revealed, his fear disappears and he realizes that the robber was only an illusion.
174. So, I have narrated to the listeners all the obstacles in the way of realizing the Brahman. In the next chapter, the nature of the highest Bliss will be revealed to one who seeks such Bliss.
175. Hemad rolls at Sai’s feet and talks wildly, whatever comes to his lips. May the simple, faithful ones listen to whatever pleases Sai to make me utter.

Weal to be all! Here ends the sixteenth chapter of
“Shri Sai Samarth Satchari”, called
‘A narration about Brahma-jnana (1)’
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

17

A Narration about Brahma-Jnana (Concluded)

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. It has been promised in the last chapter that in this chapter will follow a narration of the characteristics of the ‘Shreya’ and the ‘Preya’. So now listen carefully to it.

2. Just as light and darkness appear, in their properties, to be mutually connected closely and yet are altogether different from each other, so are Shreya and Preya.
3. He, whose mind runs after Preya, is doomed to a fall by his own selfishness. Shreya is discriminating; Preya is indiscriminating.
4. The object of Shreya is pure knowledge; of the Preya, it is pure ignorance. The wise are never tempted by Preya; the ignorant do not like Shreya.
5. So long as there is hankering after gold and lust, the senses are attached to sensual pleasures and discriminating knowledge and renunciation have not been attained, till then there is a fondness for Preya.
6. The mixing of Shreya and Preya is like mixing milk with water. And from this mixture, as the swans of Manas lake will only drink the pure milk, separating it from water.
7. So also will those of firm resolution, high intelligence; of discriminating knowledge and good fortune, be attached to Shreya and always averse to Preya.
8. But just consider those dull-witted people! In the interest of the material well-being, they seek sensual pleasures, animals, sons, wealth, fame and honour etc., and thus attain only the Preya.
9. Whether it is Shreya or Preya, even when both are comprehended for what they are, man, with an independent mind, has to choose for himself, between the two.
10. But, when faced with both, it is difficult to choose. And as the sense objects tend to triumph over the dull wit, it is Preya that embraces him firmly.
11. The highest achievement of human life, however, lies in pushing Preya aside and welcoming Shreya – like the swan that separates the milk from the water.
12. Although Preya and Shreya are both within the power of man, a dull-witted, indiscriminating man is powerless to discriminate between the two.
13. First of all, it must be definitely understood in what one's Shreya lies. Only then can one devise means to completely overcome the obstacles in the way of its achievement.
14. It is here that man is confronted with the necessity of a powerful, determined human effort. Therefore, making a firm resolve of the mind, one must carry on the struggle for the achievement of Shreya.
15. Inconceivable are the turnings of the wheel of worldly life! It rotates, ceaselessly, day and night, bringing upon man the intense suffering of the threefold afflictions, which cannot be averted.
16. He is harassed while undergoing such excessive suffering and begins to look around for easy, comfortable means of overcoming them.

17. Unbearable as this rotation of the wheel of worldly life becomes, he begins to look for answers to questions such as 'How can this rotating wheel be arrested? Is there any means to bring this about?
18. If, by one's great good fortune, such thoughts arise in the mind, it is the beginning of human endeavour to achieve the highest good in this life (i.e. Shreya) and then, for his own personal benefit, such a man will pursue the proper means for his own goal.
19. This ignorance or Maya, which has no beginning, is as deceptive and futile as the illusion of silver in the oyster-shell or of water in the mirage. This great impediment of false, erroneous ascription must be removed.
20. It rains hail-stones of gold, but only in the dream. And one may collect them aplenty and with great effort, so that they will be useful when needed. But as one wakes up, everything is gone.
21. To desire sensual pleasures, already enjoyed or otherwise; to hope, to long for them or to wish for them – these are always the impediments. Therefore, eradicate them, first.
22. That which cannot be seen even in the bright light of the sun, where the intellect cannot penetrate and therefore turns back; where Vedas and Shrutis cannot even gain a foothold; it is that which the guru points out with his own hand.
23. Lust and anger are both affections of the mind which impede the attainment of knowledge and interrupt listening, reflection and Samadhi, in a trice.
24. Is it possible that camphor and the flame will ever push each other aside, when they come into contact? No sooner than the twain meet, the camphor becomes one with the flame.
25. He who constantly rolls in sinful deeds, which are prohibited by the Shruti and Smriti and knows not the right deeds from the wrong, what good will he achieve, though he may be a Jnani?
26. Similarly, he who is never at peace; whose heart is restless and whose mind is agitated by the fickleness of the sense organs, such a one can never be perfect in knowledge.
27. He who has a contented heart, who is a true righteous guru-putra and whose Self-absorption is firm and steady, he alone is endowed with knowledge.
28. Whether pursuing worldly life or the path of Salvation, if one has to reach one's eternal abode, one must become the master of this physical body. What can he achieve who is merely clever of speech?
29. Here there is no place for mere eloquence. Study is its essence. Let your body be the chariot in which you sit calm and steady.
30. Of this chariot (your body), let your intellect be the charioteer. And as for yourself, you sit in this chariot as the Master, with a mind calm and composed.

31. Then guide the charioteer so as to overcome the various traditional ways of enjoying sensual pleasures, which are difficult to conquer. And let the reins of your mind control the wild, willful horses of the ten sense organs.
32. Though the horses will tend to run amuck, the reins will keep them in place. Entrust the reins in the hands of the charioteer and sit back, relaxed.
33. Only if the charioteer is skilled and efficient will the horses move vigorously and properly. But if the charioteer (intellect) himself is under the control of the reins (the mind), then the horses become feeble and powerless.
34. Only he will attain Salvation whose discriminating intellect, with a complete control over the mind and a total concentration of the Self, is at the helm. All the others get exhausted on the way.
35. He whose mind is always uncontrolled will never experience contentment and will not reach that state nor will he escape the cycle of worldly life.
36. And this highest, most excellent state appears, all on its own, resolving any doubts or questions in the mind as to where it really is to be found.
37. Here logic, reiteration to clarity, hearsay, statements or assertions and discussions will not help. Difficulties are removed only by God's grace. Debates and disputation are all in vain.
38. All the ingenuity of logical reasoning is of no avail, here. The most knowledgeable of the logicians are non-plussed and such confounded. Simple, unquestioning faith alone, succeeds. Such is the marvel!
39. Different is the path that leads to the highest knowledge; different also is that intellect; and so is the learned one in the Shastras, who imparts this excellent knowledge. Remember this!
40. This priceless human body is being frittered away. Evanescent as the noon-shadow is this hankering after wealth. It is difficult to overcome God's illusory Maya. Know this and fall at the feet of the saints.
41. Saints are the Ark in the Ocean of worldly life. Be a traveller on it. For, who but they have the power to ferry you across safely?
42. He who can combine in himself the two qualities of discrimination and renunciation, will not find it difficult to cross the ocean of worldly life, dull and stupid as a stone though he may be.
43. The glory of the Lord is vested in the six excellences, of which the first and the foremost is the quality of Renunciation. No one except those of rare good fortune can hope for a share of it.
44. Without performing the karma ordained by the Shastras, the purification of the heart will not come about, and know this, that if the heart is not purified, Knowledge will not be attained.
45. Hence remember that the root cause of all attainment of Knowledge is Karma itself. By performing the rituals of daily worship (such as pooja,

- upasana, etc.) and the religious rites on special occasions (such as the annual rites and rituals for the dead).
46. In the heart so purified are born discrimination and renunciation and the various means like Shama, Dama, etc., for attaining Brahma-jnana are then attained. Thus while still in this body one experiences the state of extinction of body-consciousness.
 47. He who gives up the desire for the fruit of his actions, and the volition or resolve; who surrenders to the guru by concentration his mind on him, will enjoy the full protection of the Sadguru.
 48. He whose attachment to the outward worldly activities has ceased, such a single-mindedly devout devotee will attain wisdom (through Self-knowledge). No other device will work, there.
 49. But even after attaining such Self-knowledge, if he behaves unrighteously, he will either be on the earth below nor in the heaven above, but will remain suspended midway, like 'Trishanku'.
 50. It is the ignorance of man that draws him towards worldly life. Attainment of Self-knowledge gives emancipation from mundane life, -- he is in the world, but not of it.
 51. The Self-realized one is always without ego; for him there is no merit of sin, propitiousness or unpropitiousness. To such a one, then, of what importance is the gain or loss of worldly life?
 52. Where the egoistic conceit of the physical body has melted away, renunciation comes to stay instantly. Know this for certain, that this is that state of Oneness with the Absolute.
 53. Friends and foes belong to Pravritti or the active, worldly life. But Nivritti or the contemplative life is peculiar. When one sees the 'I' pervading everywhere and everything, what, then, of friendship or enmity?
 54. Before this highest Bliss, the severest of the bodily suffering is but nothing. And when such perfect happiness is found, who will shed a tear for the worldly, transient pleasures?
 55. And such an excellent mountain of courage will not be moved by a fraction, even when mountainous worldly sorrows and sufferings come hurtling down to him.
 56. God gives renunciation only to him with whom. He is pleased; empowers him with the discriminating judgment and takes him safely across the ocean of worldly life.
 57. He whose purpose of Self-realization is as clear as the reflection of a face in a mirror, will find a place either on this earth or in the 'Brahmaloka' above – there can be no third place for him.
 58. When gods are propitiated by performing sacrifices, one attains the 'Pitru-loka' and enjoys the fruits of his karma, but does not get Self-knowledge.

59. Self-knowledge that one gets in the Gandharvaloka, Mahaloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka is very unclear and vague. Hence those who long for Self-realization desire a long life on this earth.
60. For here the heart is purified; the intellect becomes as clean and pure as a mirror and reflects the pure, sacred from the true Self.
61. The knowledge of the Self can also be gained in the second region of Brahmhaloka. But it calls for arduous effort, which is very painful.
62. Like a snake, Maya coils herself round and presses and squeezes the intestines within as she holds the body in a tight embrace from without. Who has the power to escape her?
63. "There you sit, watching with total unconcern, when in your own pocket you have fifty times the money I had asked for! Just take it out, now! There, in your own pocket lies the Brahma!"
64. As Baba said this, the gentleman put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a wad of notes from it, counting out twenty-five notes of Rs. 10/-
65. He felt ashamed of himself, in the heart of his hearts, awed by this intuitive knowledge of Maharaj. Eager for his blessings, he at once placed his head on Baba's feet.
66. Then Baba said to him at that time. "Wind up your bundle of Brahma-jnana! Until your greed is utterly destroyed you will never find Brahman!
67. "He, whose mind is totally engrossed with sons, animals, accumulation of wealth, etc., how will he get Brahma-jnana unless the impediment of wealth is removed?
68. "The temptation of wealth is very difficult to overcome; it is like a dark, deep river-bed of sorrow and suffering, which is full of whirlpools (of avarice) and infested with crocodiles of ignorance and envy, so difficult to battle with. Only he who is free from desire, will survive.
69. "Brahma is, for ever, at war with greed, which latter, leaves no time for concentration or meditation. Then how can there be time for detachment or liberation? An avaricious man is always negligent of prescribed rites and duties.
70. "Greed knows no peace, nor contentment, nor yet, freedom from care. Once greed is entrenched in the mind it sets at naught all the means of spiritual progress.
71. "He, who is always engaged in sinful activity, which is regarded as improper and therefore condemned by the Shrutis, such a one has no peace of mind.
72. "This is called a 'confused or bewildered mind'. Always engaged in sinful activity, rolling, for ever in the mire of sensual desires, he is unmindful of his own good.
73. "He may well gain the wealth of Supreme Knowledge; but if he has no detachment for the fruit of his action, all his efforts for Self-realization are in vain; he does not have real Self-knowledge.

74. "When anyone asks for anything, the saints first see his spiritual authority and give to each only that which he deserves.
75. "He who is consumed by self-conceit, day and night, and dwells only on sense objects, the guru's instruction is wasted on him and he loses out on both the worldly life and the spiritual life.
76. "He who tries to enter the spiritual path, without his heart being first purified, only parades his knowledge. It is, in truth, a fruitless effort.
77. "Hence, speak only that which will appeal; eat only so much as can be digested. Or else, it will result in indigestion. Everyone knows this.
78. "My treasure is full; I will give to whoever comes and whatever he wants, but first I see the capacity of the taker and give only as much as he can cope with.
79. "If you listen to this with attention you will achieve your spiritual weal. Sitting in this sacred mosque, I never speak an untruth."
80. With a heart full of faith, if you dive into the river of nectar that flows from the utterances of a saint, you will be purified both inwardly and outwardly, as all the impurities are thereby washed away.
81. Such is the greatness of Sainath; there is no limit to describing it. How can I compare to anything, the Incomparable One? He can be won over only by pure love.
82. Mother of all that he is, he is the repose of the afflicted and of those wearied out by sorrow and pain; he is the Kalpataru of those who take refuge in him, providing cool shade and protection to the meek and the helpless.
83. One may renounce the world and, in the interest of one's own spiritual progress, retire to the solitary hills and dales in silent meditation.
84. Many are such saints, who only achieve their own selfish ends or their own spiritual end. But, of what use are they to others?
85. But Sai Baba was not a 'mahant' of that type. Without relations and friends, without kith and kin, a home or wife, sons and family, he yet remained in the world.
86. Collecting from door to door the food placed on his palm at five households; living under a tree all the twenty-four hours, with his scant worldly possessions spread around, he was teaching the people how to conduct themselves in life.
87. Rare indeed, are such magnanimous saints in this world, who have attained Self-realization and yet wear themselves out for the spiritual welfare of others.
88. Blessed is that country, blessed the family; blessed are those pure-hearted parents and blessed the sacred womb that gave birth to this great Divinity.
89. Without any effort, this Philosopher's stone came in their hands, by many mistook it for an ordinary stone and threw it away. For a long time, no one in Shirdi recognized the true worth of this great Divinity.

90. He was like a priceless gem, lying in a dung-heap, which is discovered by children, who kick and throw it about, trampling over it, as if it is a stone.
91. So in this way that fond seeker of Brahman felt gratified on receiving Baba's blessings. We all go the same way – when the path is difficult, we just abandon it!
92. So long as there is enjoyment of sense experiences such as the sound of words, sensation of touch, inhaling of fragrance, seeing the external aspect of things, it is not possible to restrain the senses.
93. And unless the senses are restrained, the natural detachment from sensual pleasures, the realization of the true Self or Knowledge about its nature is also impossible.
94. One must first become free from all desires and them, surrender single-mindedly to the Sadguru. Only he who has such steadfast faith and devotion is deserving of Self-knowledge.
95. When the five sense organs, like the ear, etc., give up their attachment to their respective sense objects; when the mind, on its own, ceases its activity of making resolves, entertaining doubts, etc.;
96. And, in such a totally detached mind, when the intellect also ceases its activity of making resolves, then that is truly the highest most excellent state or Moksha and that itself is the attainment of that Unvariable Brahman.
97. He also, and none other, will get Self-knowledge and will be truly a blessed one, whose intellect has ceased to resolve about anything and who has become Self-aware.
98. Having once turned away from the sense objects, the sense organs will turn to the Atman and only then will blissful joy be experienced – everything else becoming devoid of happiness.
99. The self is most subtle and difficult to perceive. Being covered by the passions and affections of the senses, it is most difficult to comprehend. Knowledge of that Self is the means to the Supreme Bliss.
100. He who is detached from everything in this world and the next, right to the desire for the most exalted position of Brahmadev, he alone is installed on the Brahmapada; he alone should be considered as liberated.
101. Slowly, the mind must be turned back from the sense objects and fixed on the real Self, so as to gain Self-knowledge.
102. Only the wise can enjoy detachment from the fruit of karma, in this world and the next, and freedom from the pairs of opposites, like joy and sorrow. This is the true path of Self-knowledge.
103. Who can really be happy in the scalding waters of the ocean of worldly life, which gets heated over the flames of the 'Vadadvanal' of the three worldly afflictions, viz. Adhidaivik, Adhyatmic and Adhibhautik?

104. To be completely free from all these, be blessed by Sai's grace. Read, listen to and reflect on his Life, with reverence.
105. If this 'Shri Sainath Charitra' is heard by the listeners in the company of wife, sons, friends and relatives, they will achieve all the good that they desire in this world and the next. Strange indeed, is Baba's leela!
106. Only those listeners, faithful and devoted, who are fortunate, will listen to these stories. And as one listens with a tender heart, tranquility itself will become tranquil!
107. In the flowing waters of the spring of these stories, the salt of karma, good and bad, gets dissolved and by listening to them, comes before the eyes, the comely figure of Sai.
108. Listening to Sai's story destroys all sins; by listening to his story the listener is ready to fight and vanquish Death itself, and the listeners effortlessly have the experience of the highest happiness.
109. Listening to this tale purifies the heart; such listening releases the listener from the birth-death cycle and enables him to attain the highest state of Brahmajada, merely by offering all his karma to Brahman, without a desire for its fruit.
110. In this way, this desire to serve Sai will render the devotee desire-less, for ever. And Shri Sai Ram will give repose to his devotees, always.
111. O Listeners! read at least a part of this book daily, or listen to it; study it sincerely, reflect, and contemplate on it, ceaselessly!
112. Baba seemed to be repeating to his devotees the same famous Taittiriya Shruti-siddhanta, which says that 'Perfect happiness itself is Brahman. This I know for certain.' (Taittiriya Upanishad, III, 6)
113. "Do not worry in the least; always be full of joy; never, never worry to the end of your life". This is what Baba said, all the time.
114. And so, the aim of this chapter is to ascertain the nature of Brahman so that it will be as a boat to cross the ocean of worldly life for those who surrender to Shri Sai.
115. Baba used to follow the words of Shastras which say, 'Render good advice to others, again and again; always be kind and benevolent towards others,' and Baba acted too, accordingly.
116. 'Is it consistent? Or, is it inconsistent?' all these are personal differences of opinion. But this book aims at what will please and benefit the common people.
117. Such indeed, is the purpose here. Baba knew the cause and effect of things. And know this, that whatever was in Baba's mind would come to pass.
118. Stories coming out of the guru's mouth should be listened to, and his inscrutable leelas experienced. And as many of them as can be remembered, should be collected together and narrated to others.

119. When the marvelous tale of Sai's life is heard with reverence, the sorrow and sufferings of the narrator and the listeners are destroyed, bringing their days of mis-fortune to an end.
120. Can there be one so unfortunate as not to be dazed by Baba's wonderful leelas or be becalmed by his mere darshan and surrender humbly at his lotus-feet?
121. Pure and sacred are the tales of this Sai – to be listened to with a generous heart. When such a happy opportunity (to listen to them) comes, who will let go of it for nothing?
122. Wife, sons, friends are as whirlpools in the ocean of worldly life, which is infested with crocodiles of passion such as lust, anger, etc. Its waters are, for ever, rising due to the big Timingal fish (various diseases) and are whipped to a fury by the tumultuous hopes and desires.
123. Once in a while, one is seized by a fit of vexation and sadness and is caught up in the pairs of opposites that give rise to doubt. But still, one cannot bring oneself to snap all ties with them.
124. You must remind yourself that yourself the pure Brahman, held captive by your association with the physical body – like the parrot that holds fast to the perch in the cage, with his feet suspends himself, head downwards.
125. You are deluded by temptations and Maya, due to which you have forgotten your real, lasting good. You must become alert by your own effort and turn to your real Self.
126. Delusions add to the bewilderment. Know that illusions such as bodily conceit, the feeling of 'me' and 'mine' are all deceptive as a mirage, and therefore become detached and ego-less.
127. Consider carefully as to why you should get entangled in the meshes of 'I' and 'you'; free your feet from the bondage, O parrot! You can then soar high up in the sky!
128. Liberation implies bondage. Only where there is bondage, can there be freedom. Steer clear of both these states and abide in your true, pure Self.
129. But all such knowledge is relative. Joy and sorrow really come from ignorance. Rid yourself of this and acquire true intuitional experience. And Brahma-jnana will be near at hand.
130. So long as you have the feeling of 'yours' and 'mine', you are not really mindful of your real good. Give it up, fling away the avaricious attachment to the body and turn to your true Self.
131. If Kuber, in all his wealth, begins to go collecting alms, is it not a misfortune, an adversity born of ignorance?
132. Always listen to the sacred Shastras; obey with faith, the guru's word and be ever watchful to achieve the ultimate goal.
133. By observing this code of conduct, people will find the path of Self-upliftment. Thereby innumerable creatures will be liberated easily.

134. He who has an earnest longing, by day and by night, as to when the moment of release from the bondage of worldly life will come, will quickly snap that bondage.
135. Availing of whatever solitude that is possible, knowing firmly that this worldly life is futile, be engaged all the while, in study and contemplation of the Self.
136. Unless the devotee humbly prostrates, in total surrender, with a heart full of faith and devotion, the guru will not give him the store of knowledge.
137. Serve the guru whole-heartedly, surrendering to him you all; get him to explain matters of bondage and liberation; ask him questions about Knowledge and Ignorance, so that you receive the best fruit from the guru.
138. No one except the guru can explain who is Atman and who is Paramatman. And the guru too, will not impart even a particle of knowledge unless his disciple surrenders to him totally.
139. When anyone else, other than the guru, gives knowledge, it will not bring release from the worldly life; it will not bring Salvation and will never get firmly imprinted on the mind.
140. Hence there is no knowledge without the guru and all the wise and learned people know this. Only the guru has the power to give the experience of the oneness between the Atman and the Brahman.
141. Show no unconcern, no disregards there; give up all conceit and ego; prostrate yourself on the ground, always, and humbly lower your head on the guru's feet.
142. With a firm and resolute mind, say the words, 'I am the humblest of all your servants and am fulfilled by reposing faith in you and you alone.'
143. And then just see his marvel! Guru, the Ocean of Compassionate Love will be stirred to pity and he will hold you aloft, catching you up upon his bed of ripples.
144. On the head will he place his hand of Protection, destroying all calamities and sorrows and burning down piles of sins, he will smear Udi on your forehead.
145. Thus exposition of the nature of Brahman to that Seeker was but a pretext under which Baba explained, in detail, to his devotees, the mark of oneness between Jeeva and Shiva.
146. Now, when Maharaj had such incomparable knowledge and profound wisdom, why did he give so much importance to jesting and joking? Why so much fondness for humour?
147. Such a doubt arising in the mind is quite natural. But when carefully considered, it will be clear that there is only one satisfactory reason for it.
148. When we are talking to little children and are amused by their childish prattle, can there be any serious, adult talk?

149. And it is because we love them any the less? So also are humorous jokes and jesting a special skill used to impart instruction.
150. Can a child understand what disease it is suffering from? So when it refuses adamantly to drink the potion of bitter drug or medicinal herbs, the mother has perforce to make it drink –
151. Sometimes by coaxing and cajoling; sometimes by glaring angrily; sometimes by resorting to the cane and sometimes even by a loving embrace!
152. But as the children grow older, even when you feel like petting and caressing them, you have to consider the sharpness or dullness of their intellect. The same is true of Knowledge.
153. The sharper the intellect, the quicker is the grasp; and it does not take even a moment to take in instruction. But with a dull intellect it is a different matter altogether and calls for great effort.
154. Samarth Sai is a store of Knowledge. According to the intellectual capacity of each devotee, he first ascertains the purity and worth of the vessel before pouring in the wealth of Knowledge.
155. He has a complete intuitive knowledge and knows about everyone, beforehand. Whatever is the appropriate means for each devotee, so he prescribes the discipline.
156. According to the spiritual authority of each, Baba considers their worthiness or unworthiness first, before taking on their responsibility.
157. Similarly, old as we may appear in years, but before Sai, the Siddha, truly, we are smaller even than a child, and so are always eager for jokes and laughter.
158. Baba was a store of humour. He satisfies the devotees by granting each one, in abundant measure, what he is fond of.
159. Intelligent and dull-witted, all will experience blissful joy on reading this chapter; all will want to hear more as they listen to this and by contemplating on it they will have the satisfaction of experiencing Bliss.
160. Repeated readings of it will bring knowledge of the spiritual path. Constant contemplation of it will bring great happiness and everlasting, unhampered joy. Such is Baba's inscrutable leela!
161. He who has been fortunate enough to have this experience, in however small a measure, is sure to be attached to Sai with all his heart and speech and action. Inconceivable indeed, is Sai's leela!
162. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet. Imparting knowledge through humour and laughter is one of the ways of uplifting the devotees. The seeker of Brahma-jnana was just an excuse.
163. The next chapter is sweeter still! The listeners will be satisfied. The secret wish of my heart will be bared and satisfied.
164. Listen carefully to the detailed narration of how I will go to Madhavrao (Deshpande) and give him Baba's message, after which I will receive Baba's grace.

Weal to be all! Here ends the seventeenth chapter of
“Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit”, called
‘A narration about Brahma-jnana (concluded)’,
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

18

I Receive Baba’s Grace (1)

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA. MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. Hail to You, my Everlasting, most Excellent Sadguru! Glory be to You, O Sadguru, who are Parabrahma Incarnate, and who rule over Maya, the illusion of this world.
2. Victory to you, who are without a beginning and an end; who are beyond the pairs of opposites and are devoid of passion! You and you alone, can bring the realization of the true Self.
3. If a doll made of salt, dives into the water of the ocean to bathe, would she come out? This can never happen! So it is with you.
4. You point out with your finger so effortlessly, to your devotees. That about which the Vedas and the Shrutis engage in debate, day and night, and that is the Incomprehensible Parabrahma.
5. Should it ever, by any chance, come to pass that one be caught up in your close embrace, then there is no place for petty considerations such as ‘mine’ and ‘somebody else’s’.
6. In the last chapter, the mysterious tangle of the Brahman was disentangled and clarified, and it was narrated how the greed of the seeker after Brahma-jnana was the impediment in his way, through a tale, most purifying.
7. Now listen, attentively, O listeners, to the story of how I received Baba’s Grace. It will reveal Baba’s way of guiding his devotees.
8. This too, is a sweet tale. Which I shall now narrate, just as it came to pass. And the listeners should listen to it at their ease and for their own benefit.
9. When the listeners are eager, the narrator is eager, too, and is enthused as the hearts of both exude love, filling them with joy.

10. Without disturbing or unsettling the mind in the slightest degree, Baba, through his instruction, guides each devotee to the true path, according to his level of understanding.
11. Many are of the view that one should not tell others what the guru has told one. Or else the guru's words become fruitless.
12. But this is only imaginary and much ado about nothing, and hence, meaningless. In fact, not only such direct, personally given spiritual instruction, but also that given in a dream, should be conveyed to all, as it is good, beneficial knowledge.
13. If this be considered as being without proof or authority, then such proof is to be found in the wise Kaushik rishi, who narrated to all what was revealed to him as an initiation, in his dream, in the form of the 'Shri Ram-raksha stotra'.
14. The guru is like a charged monsoon cloud that happily rains eternal Bliss on one and all. And is such Bliss something to be stowed away and hoarded? No, indeed! It is to be enjoyed to the heart's content and shared with others.
15. Gently lifting his chin, the mother lovingly makes the child drink the medicinal potion, all for his own good health. Just such was Baba's skill in imparting instruction.
16. His was not a mysterious or secret path. And now listen attentively as to how and in what way he fulfilled the wishes of his devotees, quite unexpectedly.
17. Blessed, blessed is the company of the Sadguru. Who can describe its importance adequately? As his utterances are recollected, one after the other, the enthusiasm too, grows in describing them.
18. When God is worshipped with devoted love; when the guru is served and worshipped with steadfast faith, then one can attain from the guru the knowledge that he can impart. All other means of attaining such knowledge are futile.
19. Ascription of the false (vikshep), and veiling of the true (avarana) make the path of worldly life dim and confused. And it is the guru's word that is the ray of light to guide on the path without any impediments.
20. Guru is God Incarnate; he is Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwar; in fact, the God Almighty, the Supreme Brahman is not other than Gururaya.
21. Guru is the Mother; guru, the Father. When gods are angry, the guru protects and preserves. But when the guru is angry, there is no one to protect. Always bear this in mind!
22. Gurus do not guide in worldly life, -- a guide in pilgrimages and vows, in renunciation, dharma and adharma and detachment. He is the expounder of the Vedas and Shrutis.

23. Awakening the eye of intellect, the saints reveal the celebration of the true Self. Extremely compassionate and tender that they are, they also satisfy men's desires and longings born out of devotion.
24. Then the desire for sensual pleasures subsides and one begins to talk, even in sleep, about Knowledge; and the twin fruit of discriminating knowledge and renunciation comes to hand by the grace of the saints.
25. The saints are like a Kalpadrum to their devotees. If one remains in their saintly company, serves them with loving devotion, they will prevent all laborious effort.
26. Therefore, always be attached to the saints; listen to their tales and worship their feet so that all the sins are washed away.
27. When Lord Ray was the governor of Bombay Presidency, and an enquiry had been instituted into the administration of Mr. Crawford (the Municipal Commissioner), a well-known gentleman of the time became devoted to Baba.
28. Having suffered a great loss in business, he felt a weariness and disgust for the world and, realizing the futility of this worldly life, which is riddled with the threefold afflictions, he set out with a 'lota'.
29. Greatly agitated in mind, he felt like going on a long journey to enjoy solitude. This was the plan that he firmly resolved upon.
30. When great calamities befall a man, then, in his utter misery, he remembers God and begins to call out to Him frantically, all the time, pursuing Him with great perseverance.
31. But so long as sinful deeds continue unabated, God's name does not rise to the lips. However, once it does, then seeing his love and devotion, God brings about his meeting with a saint.
32. The same was the case with that devotee. Seeing how exhausted he was by the worldly life, his friends gave him a piece of sound advice. Listen to it.
33. 'Why not go to Shirdi for Samarth Sainath's darshan? Do go there and pray to that most compassionate saint!
34. 'Even a moment spent in the saint's company steadies and calms an agitated mind, fixes it at once at the feet of Hari. And after that, it is difficult to turn it back from thence.
35. 'From countries far and wide, people flock there; roll in the dust at Sai's feet; obey the word of Maharaj and have all their wishes fulfilled by serving him.
36. 'Such is his fame! Everyone, young and old, knows him. If he takes compassion on you, you will be free from pain and suffering.
37. 'Nowadays, Shirdi has become a sacred place, with a continuous flow of pilgrims, day and night. You too, can experience for yourself, how beneficial the darshan of a saint is.'

38. As a sudden downpour from the cloud to a man impoverished by drought or, a feast of sweetness laid before a starving, ravenously hungry man –
39. So were these words of his friends to the ears of that devotee. He now wanted to experience it for himself and so he set out to go to Shirdi.
40. He arrived at the village, took darshan and prostrated himself at Sai's feet. His eyes were becalmed and he was filled with satisfaction.
41. As he looked upon the Perfect Brahman, -- the Eternal, Self-illuminated, Unblemished Form of Sai, his mind was overcome with joy.
42. And he felt that it was indeed due to the merit of his past births that he was able to meet Shri Sai, whose darshan had brought him peace and freedom from anxiety.
43. The surname of the devotee was Sathe. A man of great determination, he started a regular reading of 'Guru Charitra', with great perseverance.
44. On the same night that he completed his reading in one week, Baba appeared to him in a dream and, pothi in hand, began explaining its meaning to Sathe.
45. Sitting calmly on his own seat, he made Sathe sit in front of him and, taking up the 'Guru Charitra' pothi in hand, was all ready to begin the exposition.
46. Baba was reading the book, expounding its meaning like a Puranic and Sathe, like a listener, listened calmly and respectfully to the guru-katha.
47. 'What is this reversal of roles?' thought Sathe. Greatly surprised he has overcome with love.
48. 'That you, O Compassionate One, should awaken those who, resting their head on the dark pillow of ignorance, incline towards sensual desires and snore away!
49. 'And it was in just such a state, O Merciful One, that you awakened me with a pat, to feed me the nectar of 'Guru Charitra'".
50. And even as he was having this vision, Sathe woke up. He narrated in great detail all that happened, to Kakasaheb Dikshit;
51. And said, 'I cannot understand the significance of this. Only Baba has the power to know it. I do not know what is really in his mind. Kaka, do please ask him about it.
52. 'Should I begin another reading or is it enough, what I have already done? Please ask Baba what he wishes me to do. Only then will my mind be at rest.'
53. Seizing an opportunity, Kaka then narrated to Baba Sathe's dream. 'Baba, what did you want to tell Sathe through this dream?

54. 'Should another week-long reading be started or should it be stopped from not onwards? Please explain the significance of the Vision, yourself! And show him the way clearly.
55. "This is my only request to you. Sathe is a great devotee, simple and honest. Have mercy on him and satisfy his wish.'
56. Baba then commanded, "Let there be one more reading. By reading this sacred story of the guru, devotees will become pure.
57. "By reading this pothi, you will achieve your own good, God will be pleased and you will become free from the bondage of worldly life."
58. While Baba was saying this, I was pressing his feet. I was quite astonished to hear these words and a thought sprang up in my mind.
59. 'Strange indeed, are Baba's ways! Sathe's small effort bore fruit in seven days, whereas I have spent years together!
60. 'Sathe has done only one reading of 'Guru Charitra' for seven days. But is there no consideration for one who has been reading it for the last forty years?
61. 'One enjoys the fruit of his effort in seven days. Another spends seven fruitless years. I have been waiting intently like a Chatak bird as to when this Cloud of Compassion will rain mercy on me.
62. 'When will that day come when this greatest among the saints will satisfy my fond wish? Will he ever give me spiritual instruction?'
63. Just see the marvel of Sadguru Sai, the ever Merciful One to his devotees! No sooner did the thought arise in my mind than he knew it.
64. It is out of such ignorance (as mine) that crores and crores of desires – both good and bad – arise instantly in the mind and Baba knows them all.
65. Everyone knows surely, that our mind (being its own enemy) conjures up evils which even our worst enemy will not harbour. And although no one else may know these, Maharaj knows them at once!
66. But that most gracious Mother overlooks all that is detestable, and encourages and motivates at the opportune moment, the good and the generous impulses.
67. And so, reading my thoughts at once, Baba said to me, "Get up, go to that Shamyra (Madhavrao Deshpande) and bring fifteen rupees from him.
68. "Sit with him for a while, talk to each other about things. Then come back soon bringing with you the dakshina that he gives."
69. Sainath felt compassion for me and under the pretext of the dakshina said, "Go at once and ask Shama for the money on my behalf."

70. Once such a command came, who had the temerity to sit in front of him? It would only mount to disobedience! So taking his leave, I got up.
71. Then I set out, at once. Shamrao also came out. He had just had a bath and stood there as he wore his dhoti.
72. He had just finished his bath and having donned clean, washed clothes, he was arranging the folds of his dhoti, with the murmur of naam on his lips.
73. He said, 'Hello! How come you are here at this hour? You seem to have come from the mosque! But why does this restlessness appear on your face? And how is it that you have come alone today!
74. 'Come, come! Sit down. I have just bathed and have come out pleating my dhoti. I will just finish my daily pooja and return the same instant.
75. 'Even as you prepare for a paan for yourself I will finish the pooja in no time. Then we can talk in peace and satisfaction.'
76. So saying, Madhavrao went in. then I casually picked up the sacred Nath Bhagvat pothi which was on the window-sill.
77. I opened the book at random and the page at which I began reading, unexpectedly, turned out to be the same portion which I had left incomplete in the morning.
78. I was quite amazed! The reading that I had neglected in the morning, Baba made me complete, thereby disciplining me properly.
79. Discipline, here, means regular reading of the book selected. And when it is not completed at ease, never to move from the place leaving that regular worship incomplete.
80. Now there is another minor story about this Nath Bhagvat, which I recollect in this context, which cannot be left out. Let the listeners listen to it attentively.
81. It is this Nath Bhagvat, which is full of the nectar of Guru-devotion and worthy of Sai's favor, which Kakasaheb Dikshit used to read regularly.
82. The seed which Shri Vishnu sowed for the uplift of the world, in the soil, i.e. Brahmadev, came to fruition in the standing corn in the cornfield, i.e. Narad;
83. From which cornfield, Vyasmuni harvested and stored up the ears of corn, endowed with the ten excellent attributes, which ears of corn were then treaded and thrashed by Shukdev in the open bran, i.e. King Parikshit;
84. Which Shridharswami then sifted and winnowed in the scuttle-basket, which was then measured and evaluated by Janardanswami and from which Eknath Maharaj prepared a feast of numerous delicious sweets –

85. It is this very same Bhagvat Puran, the eleventh chapter of which is a veritable mine of blissful, loving devotion. And of this work, which is like Vrindavan, the sporting ground of Lord Krishna, and consisting of thirty-two parts or chapters – of this work Dikshit used to do a daily reading.
86. During the day, he used to read this aloud accompanied by an exposition. At night, he used to read Bhavarth Ramayan. This latter work also became a Dikshit a standard work of true Knowledge, only by the guru's command.
87. Nath Bhagvat is thus the very essence of the nectar of loving devotion. It is almost like a second avatar of Jnaneshwari and Nath Maharaj's great obligation on Maharashtra, in a concrete form.
88. After an early morning bath, Sai's regular pooja and the worship of other gods and goddesses, after the lights were waved, the naivedya offered to the god,
89. Dikshit would share with his listeners, the prasad of milk with light refreshments, and would begin reading the pothi, very respectfully.
90. Who can describe the sweetness of that book which led Tukaram, that great devotee of God, to undertake a thousand readings of it, in the solitude of the Bhandara hills?
91. Oh! What a divinely inspired book! And, what a steadfast, faithful devotee, Dikshit! It was hence that Sai Samarth had commanded him to read it for the spiritual benefit of the people.
92. There is no need to retire to the forest. God Himself appears to this Uddhav-geet (11th chapter of the Bhagvat). And those who read it with faith, attain God readily.
93. The Mahabharat describes the dialogue between Krishna and Arjun; but this dialogue between Krishna and Uddhav is even more beautiful. And it is this message that has been described in this Bhagvat by Eknath Maharaj in his language of divine love.
94. Thus the most merciful Sai Samarth would make his devotees read regularly, in Shirdi, this divine work, along with Jnaneshwar's or Jnanadev's Bhavarth-Deepika.
95. Baba had told Sakharam Hari Jog to read it, which he used to do in the Sathe-wada, to the great benefit of the devotees.
96. Every day, Baba made so many of the devotees listen to it, with a sincere wish for their spiritual progress.
97. Unfathomable was Baba's skill in instructing his devotees. This he did in various ways. Whether they were near or far away, Baba was always with them, dwelling in their hearts.
98. Though he himself sat in the same mosque, he would delegate work to each and imparting his own strength to them, would get that work done through them.

99. To Bapusaheb Jog, he would ask to read the pothi in the wada, which Jog read every day regularly and an audience gathered there to hear it!
100. And Jog too, would go to Baba daily in the afternoon, after the meal, and after making his obeisance and receiving udi from him, would ask his leave to read the pothi.
101. Sometimes he would read Jnaneshvari; sometimes he would start a reading of Nath Bhagvat with commentary, with great pleasure.
102. After granting permission to Jog to read the pothi, Baba would immediately send many devotees who came for his darshan, to listen to it.
103. Sometimes Baba used to narrate brief stories and even as the listener tried to store them in his ears, he would say, "Get up; go to the wada for the pothi."
104. As the trusting devotee went to listen to the pothi, the story in the pothi would turn out to be such as would only confirm what he had heard from Baba, earlier, and its significance would be understood better and more fully.
105. To his great amazement, Jnaneshvari or the verses of Eknath only reiterated the story that Baba had narrated.
106. Even when there was no specific instruction to read a particular portion from a particular pothi, Jog would immediately read what had a direct relevance to the tale Baba had narrated earlier.
107. These were mainly the two books which Jog read every day, both containing the essence of Bhagvat dharma, viz. Bhagvad Gita and Bhagvat.
108. Jnaneshvari is a commentary of the Bhagvad Gita and is also called 'Bhavarth Deepika', whereas the eleventh chapter of the Bhagvat is the very basis of Eknath's exposition of spiritual matters.
109. And so, in keeping with this tradition of the Bhagvat dharma, I too, used to read it every day. But on that day there was a break in my daily routine.
110. I had read half of one story and as everybody was setting out for the mosque, leaving aside the reading of the pothi, I also rushed there with them.
111. I wished to listen to Baba's stories, but Baba had something else in mind. That I should abandon the reading of Bhagvat halfway, and resort to other things, did not please Baba.
112. And it was for this reason, I feel, that he made me read the remainder of my daily reading of Bhagvat. Such are Baba's marvelous ways! Recollecting them, the heart is overcome with love!

113. The story about Nath Bhagvat ends here, and so does the anecdote connected with it. Madhavrao had finished his pooja and he now came out, and I said, --
114. 'Baba has sent you a message and so I have come to give it – "Bring from Shama Rs.15/- as dakshina".
115. 'I was pressing his feet. Suddenly he remembered you, "Go to Shama", he said, "and come back with the dakshina.
116. "Sit with him; talk to him for a while. After you have talked to each other, then you come back".
117. When Madhavrao heard this, he was very much surprised. 'Instead of the rupees, give him my respectful salutations as my dakshina', he said.
118. 'All right, I have taken with me your fifteen salutations. And that is over! But now, come soon and talk to me', I said to him.
119. 'Tell me now, what stories you will, and gratify the longing of my ears. Let us dive deep into the holy, purifying Ganga of Baba's glorious tales and wash away all our sins.'
120. Madhavrao then said, 'Wait! Just rest awhile! You know too well, how unique are the leelas of this God!
121. 'Take this and help yourself to the betel leaf – lime, betel-nut, kath, all the ingredients are in this box. I will just put on my cap and come. I won't be a moment!
122. 'Inscrutable are Sai Baba's leelas! Oh, how many can I tell you! And have we not seen enough already, since we came to Shirdi?
123. 'I am but an uneducated rustic. You are all city-dwellers. To you, what can I say of his incomprehensible leelas?
124. So saying, he went inside, offered flowers to the gods, put on his cap and returned at once. He then sat talking to me.
125. 'Oh! His leelas are simply inconceivable! Who will ever understand his skilful ways? There is no end to his sport. It is he who plays the game and yet, is never in it!
126. 'You are all ardent seekers of Knowledge, one more learned than the other. What do we, the ignorant villagers, understand of Baba's inconceivable life?
127. 'Instead of telling his story himself, why does he send you to us? He alone know his own ways, which are not human, but divine.
128. 'In this context, I am also reminded of a nice story. Let us then talk of something so as to make the best use of our time.
129. 'I will now tell you of an incident that took place here, before my very eyes. It shows that whatever be your resolve, Baba will see to its proper fulfilment.
130. 'Sometimes Baba also tries a man to the utmost; puts his devotion and love to a severe test. Only then will he give him spiritual instruction.'

131. The moment the words ‘spiritual instruction’ fell on my ears, I was at once reminded of the incident of Sathe’s Guru Charitra; it was like a flash of lightning in my mind.
132. Could it be that this idea of sending me to Shama was just meant to steady my mind which was so agitated when I was in the mosque? Strange are Baba’s ways!
133. However, I suppressed this thought that came to my mind. For, the eagerness to hear the story had doubled and I wanted to satisfy it quickly!
134. Then, as stories about Baba’s leelas gradually began, bringing out his compassion for the devotees, they gladdened the heart.
135. He then related one more story. There was a lady, he said, with the surname Deshmukh, who suddenly felt that she should spend time in the company of the holy saints.
136. Having heard of Sai Baba’s fame, the lady came to Shirdi, with a keen desire to have Baba’s darshan, along with some people from Sangamner.
137. This lady was the mother of Khashaba Deshmukh and her name was Radhabai. With unswerving faith in Sai, she took his darshan.
138. She had a most satisfying darshan; so that the exhausting of the journey was all gone and a loving devotion for Baba grew in her heart. But then she remembered the purpose of her visit.
139. In her mind there was a keen desire to make Sai Samarth her guru, so that she could receive from him proper spiritual instruction which would make for her spiritual progress.
140. The lady was advanced in age, but great was her faith and reliance on Baba. In order to obtain spiritual instruction from Baba, she made a firm resolve in her mind.
141. That, ‘Until Baba gives me independently some ‘kaan-mantra’ and thus makes me worthy of his grace, I shall not go anywhere else from Shirdi.
142. ‘And the mantra should only come from Sai’s mouth; for, taken from elsewhere it will not be sacred. May Shri Sai, the holiest and greatest among the saints, make me worthy of his Grace.’
143. Making such a firm determination in her mind, the lady gave up all food and drink, and sat holding pertinaciously to her resolution.
144. Already of an advanced age, with not a morsel of food in her stomach, she refused to take even a sip of water. Such was her faith and firm reliance on Baba’s mantra.
145. For three days, the old lady continues her fast, day and night, vowing to remain without food or water till the day that Baba would give her the mantra.
146. Of what use was coming to or going from Shirdi, without taking the mantra? So she continued to adhere strictly to her vow, at the very

- place where she had been staying, determined to carry her vow to its ultimate conclusion, come what may!
147. For three days, she undertook the penance giving up food and drink, at the end of which she was sad and exhausted and became dejected in spirit.
148. Madhavrao was worried. What was happening was not good. How could the disaster be averted? For the old lady was not daunted by the prospect of death.
149. So he went to the mosque and seated himself before Baba. As usual, Baba enquired about the general well-being, with genuine concern.
150. "So, Shama, what is the news? Is everything all right? That oilman, Narayan, has gone astray and is troubling me greatly."
151. Seeing the old lady's resolve, Shama was already feeling very sad. So he at once asked Baba, 'Really, what should be done now?
152. 'And what is this mystery of yours, O God? No one can understand your sport! It is you who bring men, one by one, to this village and ask us for their news!
153. 'That Radhabai Deshmukh, very old lady that she is, she has remained for three days without food and water and is fasting in order to win your grace.
154. 'The old lady is extremely obstinate; but her faith in you is unshakeable. And you – you do not even look at her! Why do you make her so unhappy?
155. 'As it is, she is all shriveled up like a dry stick; she is obstinate, cross-grained and difficult. And it is obvious that without food, her life itself will be snuffed out.
156. 'And then it will be said, the old lady went to take his darshan with a keen desire to take spiritual instruction from him. But Sai Baba had no compassion and left her to die.
157. 'Baba, let not people talk in this manner. Why do you not favor her by giving her advice beneficial to her? Do ward off such an accusation!
158. 'She is left with no strength to struggle; and in great agony the old lady will die, bringing you into discredit.
159. 'The observance of her vow is fraught with great difficulties and we are greatly worried. If by ill luck, the old lady dies, it will be most improper.
160. 'The lady adamantly threatens to give up her life, if you do not favour her with your grace. Really, I see no hope for her! Do tell her something, yourself!'
161. Here we reach the limit of this chapter. The listeners' desire to know what happened next, will be satisfied in the next chapter, which is full of loving devotion.

162. The advice and instruction that Baba then gave so lovingly to that old lady, will remove all ignorance when carefully listened to.
163. Hemad surrenders at Sai's feet and prostrates before his audience, entreating them to be attentive in listening, so as to be able to cross the ocean of worldly life, effortlessly.

Weal to be all! Here ends the eighteenth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'I Receive Baba's Grace (I)',
as inspired by the saints and virtuous,
and composed by his devotee, Hemadpant.

19

I Receive Baba's Grace (Concluded)

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, TO SHRI SITA-RAMCHANDRA, MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. More subtle than the subtlest, larger even than the largest is this Sai; from Brahmadev right down to a small shrub – in the entire Creation is this Sai.
2. And a desire arose in the mind to see with the naked eye, such a Parabrahman by endowing It with a form, a shape, a colour.
3. Hence the Sun-worshippers kindle with great devotion the wicks in the lamps to wave arati before him. Or, the devotees of the god Ganesh make his image out of jaggery, offering jaggery also as naivedya.
4. And some people offer to the ocean an oblation, holding its water in the palm of their hands. This appears, on the face of it, to be quite improper.
5. But highly powerful as the Sun and the ocean are, they are generous enough to see only the faith of the devotees. Where is the question of what is proper and what is improper, when their only purpose is to glorify the devotion of the devotees?
6. Though as a common rule, like-minded people with similar interests befriend each other, yet the conjunction of the body and the spirit is one great, inevitable exception to the rule.
7. Widely different though they are in nature, from each other, the friendship between the two is most extraordinary. So much so that once cannot rest without the other; they cannot remain apart from each other, even for a moment.'

8. And yet, this body is destructible while the soul is without change and indestructible. But boundless is their love for each other. Hence these repeated revolutions of this wheel of worldly life.
9. Atman is a great power; but more subtle and unmanifest than It is the Ether. It is the Prakriti or the Unmanifest. The same is also called Maya.
10. Subtler however, than all these is the Purush, where all sense-organs repose. This is the ultimate destination of all and this is the Pure Brahman.
11. Such is this Atman that appears to be bonded to the worldly life by Maya and one's karma, although in Itself, It is unchangeable, unblemished and pure as a crystal.
12. Red, black or yellow, a crystal will just reflect the colour in front of it. But in itself it is different from any of these colours, being pure and unchanging.
13. The mirage over the distant plain appears as water; the oyster-shell appears as scintillating silver and the sight of the coiled rope creates the illusion of a coiled serpent, needlessly.
14. Just as the ascription of a snake to a rope is, in fact, a baseless semblance, similarly, to be liberated Atman the ego that "I am without form and without change.
15. The Atman has attributes different from the body, sense organs, mind and the vital airs. It is Self-illuminated Pure Consciousness, without form and without change.
16. So long as there is conceit about the body, the intellect, the mind and the vital airs, there will also be actions or doings, and the experience of pleasure and pain. For a consciousness of these is inevitable.
17. The seed of the Banyan tree is ever so tiny, but stores up in its womb the power and strength of a huge Banyan tree. And the trees store up innumerable such seeds with the potential to produce crores of trees.
18. Thus each seed carries within itself a tree – a phenomenon which will continue to the end of this world! And the same is in fact happening in this world, too! Look at it attentively.
19. Consistence, fearlessness, emancipation, independence and the attainment of God – this is the fulfilment of life and life's ultimate goal.
20. There is no liberation without knowledge and without renunciation knowledge cannot be gained. But so long as this worldly life does not appear transient to the mind, the thought of renunciation does not rise.
21. For when one begins to consider the worldly life as transient, the illusory Creation around us confronts one and the traveller is utterly bewildered, not knowing which way to proceed.
22. Such is the illusion that is this Universe. It is Maya or the deceptive sport of the Almighty or the Infinite Consciousness. It is as a scene in a dream arising from the worldly life. And for such a delusion, why all the needless effort?

23. On waking up from a dream, the dream fades away. Hence he who abides in his true Self will not think of the material goals of worldly life.
24. Unless the knowledge based on experience, of the oneness of the Atman with everything, is gained and unless the true nature of the Atman is understood, there is no way to wake up to the realization that the bondage of sorrow, temptation, etc. must be snapped.
25. Although Baba advocated, day and night, the greatness of Knowledge above everything else, yet he generally advised the devotees to follow the path of devotion.
26. He would stress the importance of the path of Knowledge by comparing it to a 'Ramphal'; the path of devotion, he said, was like savoring a 'Sitaphal', which is easily accessible and yet sweet and delicious.
27. Devotion is the 'Sitaphal', bright and clear; Knowledge is a perfectly ripened, 'Ramphal', each more juicy and delectable than the other and deliciously fragrant.
28. When plucked before time and ripened artificially, the pulp at the core of the Ramphal gives a flavor, too strong for enjoyment. Only he who has the patience for the fruit to ripen on the tree itself, will savour its real sweetness.
29. When the Ramphal ripens fully upon the tree, right up to its stalk, its sweetness is exceeding. Fallen to the ground, its aroma is too strong, but when allowed to ripen on the tree, it is very sweet.
30. He alone, who lets it ripen perfectly upon the tree, can savour its sweetness. But the Sitaphal needs no such effort. Though not endowed with equal excellences, it is most valuable.
31. Ramphal has the danger of falling to the ground, nor is a Jnani free from the danger of a fall unless he has a perfect command over the siddhis. Even a slight negligence in the matter on his part will not do.
32. Hence Sai, the Compassionate One, explained to his devotees (the importance) of devotion and reciting the naam.
33. Higher than Knowledge is meditation, said Bhagvan Shri Krishna to Arjun. Sai also prescribed it to the devotees as a means of snapping the ties of worldly life.
34. But now, I shall narrate to my listeners the story in this connection which has remained incomplete in the previous chapter. So listen, to it.
35. Old in years, grown feeble in physical strength, an old lady obstinately stuck to her resolve by beginning a fast unto death in order to get a mantra from Sai.
36. Seeing her condition, Madhavrao was scared and went to Baba to meditate. This is the link with the story narrated so far.
37. The lamp, i.e. Sri Sai Satcharit, has been kindled to indicate Sai's thoughts so that its light may guide the faithful devotees to find their way.

38. According to Baba's command, Madhavrao had begun telling me an interesting story, which I shall now narrate further.
39. He said, 'Seeing the determination of the old lady,' Baba conferred favour on her and brought about a change in her thinking. And the story took a novel turn!
40. Later, Baba called out to her affectionately and said, 'Mother why do you sit so adamantly observing a fast? Why do you think of giving up your life thus?'
41. He always addressed a grown-up lady, whoever she may be, as 'Mother' and an elderly gentleman as 'Kaka', 'Bapu' or 'Bhai'. Such was his charming form of address.
42. Affectionate as the heart was, his words too were melodious. For Sai was the Protector of the meek and compassionate towards the afflicted and the suffering.
43. And so, he called out to her, made her sit in front of him and passed on lovingly to her the secret key to his greatness.
44. And now, drink deeply of the water of the blissful Self-rejoicing, which Baba the Cloud of Knowledge rained to quench the thirst of the Chakor birds, i.e. his devotees, to mitigate the sorrow and suffering of their worldly existence.
45. He said, 'Mother, tell me truly! Why do you inflict so much suffering on yourself? I am but a fakir, who goes round collecting morsels of food. Be kind to me!
46. Really, I am your son and you, my mother. Now listen to me. I will tell you a wonderful story which will give you great happiness.
47. You see, my guru was a great saint, an Ocean of Compassion. And I went on serving him till I was exhausted, but he would not whisper the mantra in my ear.
48. I too, had a strong desire never to give up his refuge and to receive from his own mouth a mantra even if it meant a prolonged effort.
49. Initially, he tricked me, asking me for only two pice. Those I have him at once and prayed and entreated for the letter of the mantra.
50. My guru was fully satiated in all his desires. What did he want my two pice for? And how can I call him free from desires, who asks the disciple for money?
51. But let not such a doubt assail your mind. He did not desire money in the worldly sense. This was not his idea. What had he to do with gold or money?
52. Faith and Forbearance – these were the top ice – and nothing else! And when I immediately gave them to him, Guru, my Mother was pleased with me.
53. Courage, O Mother, is really the same as this forbearance and patience. Never cast it away. Whenever faced with a difficult situation, it will take you across safely.

54. This forbearance is the essence of manliness in a man that overcomes sin, suffering and adversity; averts disaster ingenuously and drives away all fear.
55. Forbearance or patience alone, succeeds; it scuttles calamities away in all directions. The thorns of thoughtless indiscretion prick no one here.
56. Forbearance is a mine of Virtue; the queen of the noble, virtuous thought. Unswerving faith is its own sister, both being to each other, dearer than life itself.
57. Without forbearance, the plight of a man is pitiful. Be he a learned Pandit, or a virtuous man, without it his life is futile.
58. Himself, the guru may be very powerful, but from the disciple he expects only a penetrating insight, unwavering faith in the guru and the strength of a courageous forbearance.
59. Just as a stone and a gem, both get cleansed when rubbed against the levigating slab, but a stone yet remains just a stone while a gem becomes a scintillating gem.
60. Both go through the same process of polishing up, but can a stone ever acquire the scintillating quality of a gem? Can it ever be transformed into a brilliant piece of diamond? The stone will, at best, become glossy and smooth, due to its natural properties.
61. And so, for twelve years I remained at the guru's feet. He reared me as a child till I grew up. There was no dearth of food or clothes and his heart abounded with love for me.
62. He was the very image of devotion and love and had a genuine affection for the disciple. Rare indeed, is a guru like mine. I just cannot describe the happiness I enjoyed in his company.
63. Oh, how can I describe that love! As I looked at his face, my eyes would be absorbed in meditation, giving us both an experience of bliss. To look at anything else, I just did no know.
64. Day and night, I lovingly gazed into his face. I knew no hunger, no thirst. Without the guru the mind would grow restless.
65. Except him, I could meditate on nothing else; except him, I had no other objective. He alone, was my constant goal. Truly, the skill of the guru is simply marvelous!
66. And my guru also expected only this; he desired nothing more than this. He never treated me with indifference or unconcern, but always protected me in my troubles.
67. Sometimes I was allowed to remain at his feet; sometimes, beyond the shores of the sea. But never did I lose the joy of his company. He was looking after me very kindly.
68. As the mother-tortoise feeds her little ones on her lovingly glance, so was the way of my guru, who looked after the child with loving glances.

69. Mother, accept it as the truth what I tell you, sitting in the mosque. If the guru never whispered the mantra even in my ears, how can I whisper it in your ears?
70. Love in the mother's gaze is enough to bring happiness and contentment to the little tortoises. Mother, why do you make yourself so miserable? I really know no other instruction.
71. The mother tortoise is on this bank of the river and her little ones are in the desert, on the other. They are nurtured and reared only on glances. So I say, why persist in the futile efforts for a mantra?
72. You now go and eat some food; do not put your life in danger. Only just have steadfast faith in me and spiritual progress will come to hand.
73. You look up to me with single-minded devotion. And I will look after you, similarly. My guru never taught me anything else."
74. It is not necessary to know the elaborate means of Knowledge, nor is proficiency in the six shastras needed. There should be a steadfast faith that guru alone is the Protector and the Destroyer.
75. Hence is the great significance of the guru. He is the very image of Brahma, Hari (Vishnu) and Har (Shiva). Blessed is he in all the three worlds, who realizes this important position of the guru.
76. In this way when the old lady was instructed, and advised, the story was deeply impressed upon her mind. Placing her head on Maharaj's feet, she then ended her vow.
77. Listening to this story from the beginning and realizing its total relevance to my situation, my heart was filled with wonder and joy at the appropriateness of the tale.
78. Seeing Baba's leela, my throat was choked with joy; I was overcome by a profusion of love. The excellent lesson was deeply imprinted on my mind.
79. On seeing me thus choked by emotion Madhavrao said to me, "Why are you so overcome with emotion, Annasaheb? How is it, you have suddenly become silent?
80. "Innumerable are such stories of Baba. How many can I tell you, really!" As Madhavrao was saying this, the sound of the bell was heard.
81. Daily, before the afternoon meal, devotees would go and sit in the mosque and perform an elaborate ritualistic pooja, by washing Baba's hands and feet with water, by applying sandalwood paste, showering on him the consecrated rice, etc.
82. Thereafter, Bapusaheb Jog performed the 'Pancharati' with loving devotion, while devotees sang aratis.
83. It was indicative of that arati that the big bell had begun clanging loudly. Heart's desire being fully satisfied, we too, picked our way to the mosque.

84. This arati was performed at noon by the men and women together, with the ladies occupying the mosque above, and the gentlemen the open sabha-mandap, below.
85. And then, with great joy, they would sing the aratis at the top of their voices, to the accompaniment of the drum-beat and other festive musical instruments.
86. When we reached the door of the sabha-mandap, the arati was loudly in progress; the steps were totally surrounded by all the men who had crowded together, leaving no room for anyone to go up.
87. I had intended to remain below until the arati was over and once it was over, then to go to Baba along with the other people.
88. But even as I said so to myself, Madhavrao who had climbed the step, held my hand and pulled me up too, taking me straight near Baba.
89. Baba sat on his own usual seat, smoking a chillim, leisurely. In front of him stood Jog, waving the 'Pancharati', and tinkling the bell held in his left hand.
90. And in the joyous spirit of that arati, Madhavrao seated himself in front of Baba, to his right and made me sit also, facing Baba.
91. Then Baba, the Gem among the Saints, the Peace Incarnate, said in a sweet voice, 'Bring here what dakshina Shamrao has given for me.'
92. 'Baba, Shamrao himself is here and has given salutations instead of dakshina. These, he says, are in themselves fifteen rupees, which should be offered to Baba.'
93. 'All right. But did you talk to each other? Did you converse? Tell me, now in detail, what you talked about.
94. 'Let the tale of the salutations be! But did you talk to him? About what? And how? Tell me everything.'
95. 'Eager as I was to tell the story, the arati was being sung very loudly. But I could hardly contain the great joy within and it flowed out from my lips, unrestrained.
96. Baba who sat leaning against the cushion, now leaned forward to listen. I also put my face forward as I began to narrate.
97. 'Baba, all that we talked about there, delighted my heart. But among them, that one story about an old lady was really marvelous.
98. 'As Shamrao told me that story, I could see your inconceivable ways! It was as if you most certainly conferred your grace on me, under the pretext of that story.'
99. Baba then said most eagerly, 'Tell me, tell me that whole story. Let us see what is so wonderful about it and how through it I conferred grace on you!'
100. The story had just been heard and was fresh in my mind. Moreover, it had made a deep impression on me. I now narrated it to Baba without faltering. Baba seemed pleased as he listened to it.

101. Thus I narrated all that happened. Baba also listened very attentively. At once, he said to me, 'Keep this carefully in mind.'
102. Again he asked enthusiastically, 'How sweet is the story you have just heard! But is it impressed on your mind? Have you really found it meaningful?
103. 'Baba, after listening to this story, I felt at peace with myself. The doubts, the distress in my mind had disappeared and I have found a definite path.'
104. 'Are not our ways unique!' said Baba. 'Remember this one thing. It will be very useful to you.
105. 'Knowledge of the Atman based on one's experience, is gained by meditating on it single-mindedly and such meditating itself is the act of propitiating it. It alone brings self-satisfaction.
106. 'Becoming first, free from all desires, the Almighty dwelling in all creatures should then be brought to the mind. The meditation will then be satisfactory and the objective of life will be achieved.
107. 'Know that that which is Knowledge incarnate, or Supreme Pure Consciousness or Blissful Joy – that is my true nature. So meditate on it regularly.
108. 'If this is not possible, then meditate on my manifest Form. Bring to the mind, by day and by night, my figure from head to foot, with all its tributes.
109. 'Meditating on me in this way, your mind will gradually concentrate so closely that the distinction between meditation, meditator and the object of meditation (the Triputi) will cease to exist for you.
110. 'In this way, when the Triputi disappears, the meditator will experience the Pure Supreme Consciousness. This is the be-all and end-all of all meditation, for you will become one with Brahman.
111. 'The mother-tortoise is on this bank of the river; her young ones are on the other, without milk and warmth of affection. It is merely the loving glances of the mother that nourish and fatten the offspring.
112. 'The young ones are always intent on the mother; they need to nothing else. They require no milk, no grass, no food. To gaze at the mother is in itself their sole nourishment.
113. 'The tender glance of the mother is as a shower of nectar, which brings to the offspring the nourishment of Self-rejoicing. Same is the experience of oneness between the guru and his disciple.
114. No sooner had these words come from Sai's mouth than the loud signing of arati also ceased, with everyone proclaiming loudly, 'Glory to Shri Satchidananda Sadguru.'
115. The waving of the lights and other ritualistic details of the arati were over, too! And as Jog offered lump-sugar, Baba put out the palm of his hand to receive it.

116. On that hand, Jog very lovingly put a handful of sugar with an obeisance, as was his daily practice.
117. The whole of that lump-sugar Baba then emptied on my hand and said, 'If you bear this well in mind, your condition will be as this sugar-candy.
118. 'As this sugar-candy is sweet, similarly the wishes of your heart will be fulfilled and you will be blessed with good fortune. All your innermost longings will be satisfied.'
119. I then made obeisance to Baba, praying for his grace, and said, 'This, your benediction alone, is enough for me! Please bear with me!'
120. Baba said, 'Listen to the story, contemplate on it and meditate upon it repeatedly. When thus remembered, and contemplated upon, greatest joy will manifest itself.
121. 'In this way, that which you heard with your ears, if you store in your heart, you will have opened up for yourself a mine of your own weal and all your sins will be washed away.
122. 'When there is a fierce wind blowing, the waves of the sea rise in lofty waves that dash against the shore instantly breaking up into innumerable bubbles that appear as froth.
123. 'Waves, bubbles, froth and eddies – all these are different forms of the same water. They are optical illusions and disappear when the winds subside.
124. 'Can it be said that these various forms had existed and are destroyed? Knowing them to be the work of Maya, their existing or being destroyed should also be treated as such.
125. 'Such are also all the dealings of the Universe. The wise and discriminating have no admiration for them. They have no attachment to the transient, but attain the permanent.
126. 'The importance of meditation is greater than that of Knowledge. But for that, the right knowledge about the object of meditation is needed. Thus, without a complete understanding of the Brahman, proper meditation is not possible.
127. 'Proper knowledge of the Atman based on experience is, therefore, the basis of meditation. It is also the karma or act of propitiating the true Self. But how can you bring to the mind of meditate upon that which is without any special qualities?
128. 'He eludes us. Therefore the innermost Self is God Himself and He who is God is also the Guru. There is not the slightest difference between these three.
129. 'When repeated contemplation becomes perfect and the difference between meditation and the meditator disappears, then the mind becomes calm and steady, like the lamp on a windless night. This is Samadhi.'

130. 'Free from all desires, and knowing that He dwells in all living beings, that, 'nothing exists in the world but I', when a state of fearlessness comes, it is then that the real Self appears in the meditation.
131. 'Then the ties of karma, born out of ignorance begin to snap, one by one; the restraints of laws about what should and what should not be done are shed and the joy of complete liberation is experienced.
132. 'First, all the six shastras should be searched for answers to the questions, 'Does the Atman exist or not?', 'Is He one and the same, or does he differ from one living being to another?' 'Is he the Doer or non-doer of action?'
133. 'To experience the oneness of the Self in all beings is the utmost limit of all Knowledge. Emancipation and Bliss are really born from such knowledge.
134. 'To describe an elephant to a blind man, even if you bring a skilled orator like Brihaspati, his oratory will not bring to his mind the form of the elephant. What is beyond description cannot be conjured by speech.
135. 'Can the tongue of a speaker and the ears of the listeners bring back the missing sight? Eyes alone are needed to see the form of the elephant.
136. 'Without the eyes how can the blind man have the experience of seeing an elephant? Similarly, only when the guru gives the Divine Eye, will the treasure of Knowledge come to hand.
137. 'Sai Baba is himself a storehouse of perfect, complete Knowledge, based on experience. And to know his nature truly and completely is in itself the act to propitiate and meditate upon him. This is his true darshan.
138. 'To obtain a total release from the bondage of ignorance, desire and karma, there is absolutely no other device. Have this firmly fixed in your mind.
139. 'Sai is not merely yours or ours, he really dwells in all the beings. As the sun belongs to the whole world, so also does he.'
140. Now listen to his words spoken from time to time; through general, they are priceless. If you always keep them in mind, they will be fruitful and beneficial to you.
141. 'Without a bond or tie of the previous birth, nobody goes anywhere. Therefore, whether a man or a beast or a bird, do not shoo it away contemptuously.
142. 'Treat with due respect whoever may come to you. Give water to the thirsty, food to the hungry, clothes to the unclothed and shelter to the destitute. It will please God.
143. 'When someone wants money and you hesitate to give it, do not give, but do not bark at him like a dog.

144. 'Others may rebuke you in a hundred and one ways, but you yourself should never use bitter hurting words in reply. You will experience unbounded happiness, if you bear with them patiently.
145. 'The world may go topsy-turvy but we should not falter. Sticking to our ground firmly, we should calmly watch the sport of this world.
146. 'Break and demolish completely the wall between the self and this. Then we shall have a wide pathway to go to and fro, without fear.
147. 'The attitude of 'you' and 'me' is this wall between the guru and his disciple. If it is not pulled down, the state of oneness between them is difficult to breach.
148. 'There is no other protector except 'Allah and Master; Allah the Master'. Unique are his doings, priceless and inconceivable!
149. 'Only that will come to pass which He wants to happen; He will Himself show His way. The time will come, without a moment's delay, when our cherished wishes will be fulfilled.
150. 'By the bond of past births we have been fortunate enough to meet. Let us embrace each other with a heart-felt love and experience its joy and contentment.
151. 'Who is immortal here? He who has made spiritual advancement has found fulfilment. Otherwise the creatures live so long as then continue to breathe.'
152. As these gracious words fell on my ears, my eager heart was comforted. Thirsty that I was, I found water and was filled with happiness.
153. One may have unparalleled intelligence and even unswerving faith. But to enjoy the protection of a guru like Sai, a tremendous good fortune alone is needed.
154. When the essence of this is considered, what Bhagvan Shri Krishna said in the Bhagvad Gita is absolutely true, when he said, 'In whatsoever way men approach Me, even so do I render to them'. The whole burden is on one's karma.
155. As your karma, as is the knowledge you acquire, as is your sadhana, so is your gain. This is the covert purpose of this chapter. This is the nectar-sweet lesson here.
156. 'To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, of those even harmonious, I shall supply all their needs and protect their possessions from loss.' This, the vital significance of the Bhagvad Gita applies here, too!
157. On listening to these sweet words of advice, the statement from the Smritis comes to mind, 'By sacrifice shalt thou honour the gods and the gods will then love thee.'
158. You start doing the press-ups. For here I stand, right behind you, ready with a 'wati' of milk.

159. But if you were to say that I do the hard exercise and you empty glass upon glass of milk till satiated – well, such a thing I know not! One should always be quick and alert in doing his own work.
160. Know that he who considers this pledge of Baba as the truth and acts accordingly, will have found a mine of happiness on earth and in heaven.
161. Now, once again, I request the listeners that they concentrate their minds for a moment and listen to a tale, of my own experience, which shows how Baba strengthens one's good resolves.
162. Listen to how Maharaj encourages good deeds made into a regular practice by the devotees and confers his grace, even without being asked for it.
163. The devotee should, however, surrender to him single-mindedly and then see the marvel of devotion. He can thus experience Baba's wonderful ways, which are forever, new.
164. As one wakes up from sleep, early in the morning, if a benign thought arises in the mind, the same should be followed up resolutely.
165. These thoughts, when nourished, will make for great happiness, the intellect will also bloom, giving pleasure to the mind.
166. This is the utterance of a saints and I thought, let me experience its truth for myself. To my surprise, the actual experience brought great peace to my mind.
167. A holy place like Shirdi and an auspicious day like Thursday! I suddenly felt that I should start a ceaseless chanting of Ram-naam.
168. On Wednesday night, as I lay on my bed, I kept my mind engaged in contemplation of Shri Ram, keeping it going in my heart, till I fell asleep.
169. As I woke up in the morning, Ram-naam came to my mind and with the arising of such a good thought, I felt my tongue had truly served its purpose.
170. With determination, I steadied my mind and after the morning ablutions, set out for the morning darshan of Sai, taking with me whatever flowers I could get.
171. Leaving Dikshit's wada behind, as I came out from Butti-wada, I heard Aurangabadkar singing a melodious, beautiful pada.
172. If I were to express it in the form of an ovi, the appropriateness and sweetness of the original pada will be lost and the listeners will be disappointed.
173. Hence I shall quote the original in its entirety, letter for letter, which will delight the listeners to know the message of the original, in its purity

I am blessed O my Brother! with the collyrium of Guru's Grace;
Now I trust none other than Rama (Refrain)
Rama is within, and Rama with without,
Even in the dream, I see only Sita-Rama (1)

Sleeping or waking, there is but Rama;
Wherever I look, I see only the Ever-satiated One (2)
Eknath (the disciple) of Janardan
(Swami) enjoys the purest, most holy experience,
Of seeing Rama, all the time, wherever he looks! (3)

174. The mind had already resolved to make it a rule to concentrate on Ram-naam. And no sooner had I put my resolve into practice than it received confirmation from this pada.
175. As a result, a realization came to the mind that, maybe, the compassionate Sai Samarth is sprinkling the water of this pada on the sapling of my resolution.
176. Tamburi in hand, Aurangabadkar stood in the open courtyard, in front of Sai and sang at a high pitch when I heard these sweet notes.
177. Aurangabadkar was Baba's devotee and, like me, attached to Baba. When he knew so many other padas by heart, why was he inspired to sing only this pada at this time?
178. No one knew of the secret resolve in my mind, why should he sing this particular pada then? As Baba pulls the strings so will the inspiration come to the mind.
179. We are all just puppets and Mother Sai, the string-puller. Without uttering a word, the unmistakably gave in my hands the best form of woship.
180. It was as though my innermost thoughts were reflected in Baba's mind! In this way, he gave me direct, definite experience.
181. Oh, how great is the significance of the Name that the saints and the religious teachers describe! What more can a lowly person like me say in its praise? It is only through the Name that Self-realization comes.
182. The two letters 'Rama', chanted even in the reverse order, uplifted that Koli and wayside robber, so that Valya became the sage Valmiki and acquired the siddhi whereby his utterances came true.
183. Chanting the name in reverse order as 'Mara', 'Mara', his tongue was blessed by Rama and even before Rama was born, he wrote Rama's life story.
184. Ram-naam purifies the sinners; Ram-naam brings great good fortune; Ram-naam is bhajan undivided; Ram-naam is the means to attain Brahman.
185. By chanting Ram-naam repeatedly comes liberation from the birth-death cycle. By just repeating Ram-naam, there is immeasurable gain.
186. Where Ram-naam is proclaimed loudly, there revolves Shri Vishnu's disc, Sudarshan, to destroy innumerable obstacles. Such is this naam, the Protector of the Meek and the Poor.
187. To instruct his devotees, Sai needed no particular place or time. All instruction came from him, while walking or sitting, with natural ease and clarity.

188. Listen attentively, O listeners, to an interesting story in this connection. It will bring out Sai's kindness and all-pervasiveness.
189. Once, a great devotee, while talking about somebody, was drawn into entertaining uncharitable thoughts and busied himself with censuring and criticizing.
190. The good qualities of that person were left out; criticism began to flow out of the mouth, full-force. The main topic of conversation was ruined, as reviling and criticism boiled over.
191. If there is some valid reason, if somebody's conduct is reproachable, he should rather be pitied and given corrective advice directly, to his face.
192. 'Never criticize or censure anyone' is something everyone knows. But when this tendency is not curbed, it cannot be contained in the heart.
193. It then rises to the throat and from the throat to the tip of the tongue; when from thence, slowly to the lips from where it flows out happily.
194. In all the three worlds, there is no greater benefactor than the critic. He confers the highest benefit on him whom he criticizes.
195. Some remove the impurities or dirt by using 'ritha'; some by soap and other such means; some, by clean, pure water. But the critics remove it by their tongues.
196. They put up with their own mental degradation for benefiting others. Truly indescribable is their great obligation. The critics are undoubtedly, deserving of the highest praise.
197. They warn at every step; under the guise of criticism, they let us know our faults and thus avert numerous disasters of the future. Oh, how can I praise their generosity enough?
198. I prostrate myself in obeisance before the gathering of critics whose greatness has been described in so many ways by the sadhus and saints.
199. The listeners were disgusted so see all this. The critic then set out towards the stream for morning ablutions. People were already going to the mosque for Baba's darshan.
200. Baba had complete intuitive knowledge of everything and would give timely advice to his devotees. Now listen to the incident that he brought about, later on.
201. Baba enquired about that devotee (the critic) when he was going to the Lendibag with his devotees. They told him that he had gone to the stream for morning ablutions.
202. After completing the routine observances, Baba returned; the devotee (the critic) also turned his steps homewards from the stream.
203. With folded hands, I now entreat the listeners to listen to what happened at the time the two parties met each other.
204. In that same place, near a compound-fence, a village sow was feasting to her heart's content, on the excrement, smacking her lips. Baba pointed out that sow with his hand.

205. 'See how that tongue relishes crushing and mashing the excrement of the public, to gratify her inordinate desire of venting out her anger on her kith and kin.
206. 'He who fritters away this precious human birth which has come to him as a result of great past merit and is thus bent on self-destruction to such a one, what happiness or peace can this Shirdi give?
207. Baba went on speaking in this manner and the devotee (the critic) was stung to the quick. He remembered all that had happened in the morning. The words smote his heart!
208. Thus Baba instructed his devotees in different ways according to the occasion. When the significance of his precious words is carefully stored in the heart, can spiritual advancement be far behind?
209. The adage which says, 'If God's Grace is upon me, I shall get everything, sitting where I am and without lifting, a finger, is true, no doubt; but only for food and clothing.
210. He who applies it to spiritual matters, will find himself cheated out of spiritual gain altogether. 'As he sows, so he reaps.' These are Baba's priceless words.
211. The more one listens to Baba's words, the more they make one sway in blissful joy and if the soil is soft with faith and devotion, the roots will go deep.
212. 'I am present everywhere – in water, on land, or even in a dry twig; among men and in wilderness; in foreign lands and in my own. I pervade even the radiant sky. I am not confined to any one country.
213. 'To dispel the misconception of those who regard my presence as confined to 3 ½ cubits of this human frame, I have incarnated on this earth.
214. 'Those who worship me, day and night, single-mindedly and without any expectations, they overcome the duality and become one with me.
215. 'Sweetness may depart from the jaggery, the sea from its waves and the eye from its sparkle; but never will my simple, faithful devotee be without me.
216. 'He who most certainly wants to escape the cycle of birth and death, should make conscious efforts to be righteous by following the shastras and should always keep his mind calm and peaceful.
217. 'He should avoid speaking words which will sting and hurt and not strike anyone on the vital spot. But should always engage himself in pure, virtuous deeds, keeping his mind, all the time, firmly on the duty.
218. 'Offer your mind and intellect to me, remembering me all the time. Such a one will not care what befalls his body or when. Surely, he is without fear.
219. 'He who looks up to me single-mindedly, narrates and listens to my Self-purifying tales and is devoted to none other but me, his mind will become one with God.'

220. He kept on telling everyone, 'Take my name; surrender to me.' But to know who he was, he exhorted the devotees to listen to and contemplate on his stories.
221. To one, he advised naam-smaran (chanting the name) of Bhagvan; to another, listening to the stories of Bhagvan; to yet another, offering pooja to people with spiritual authority.
222. Someone was asked to read Adhyatma Ramayan; another a reading of Jnaneshwari, with all its attendant rites. Yet another was asked to read Hari Varada while someone else was instructed to read Guru Charitra.
223. One was made to sit at his own feet while another was sent to the Khandoba temple. Someone else was forcibly but with great loving concern made to read Vishnu Sahasranamavali (thousand names of Shri Vishnu).
224. Someone was instructed to read Ram-Vijaya; someone else was explained the importance of meditation and naam. Yet another was told to experience with faith the natural sweetness of Chandoyoga Upanishad and Geeta-Rahasya.
225. To some, this; to others, that – there was no limit to his various ways of initiation. Some were instructed personally and directly; others received it in a Vision. The novelty of his ways was unique!
226. Devotees of every caste and creed came running to him for his darshan. He would even appear in the dream of one addicted to liquor.
227. Sitting on his chest, he would press him down with his hands and feet, until he promised, with his hands on his ears, that he would never touch liquor again, and released him only after he took the oath to give it up, totally.
228. Just as astrologers draw pictures of Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Shiva) on the wall for marriage in the house, similarly Baba would write the mantra 'Gurur Brahma', etc., for a devotee, by going in his dream.
229. If someone practiced Yogasanas or other practices of Hathayoga, on the sly, Baba would know it intuitively and would let him know it without a mistake, through piercing words.
230. Getting hold of a stranger, he would send the message, 'Can you not stay content with what you have? Have patience!'
231. To someone, he would personally tell in a peremptory manner, 'We are a stern and unrelenting class. We will try warning once or twice, failing which, we will resort to harsh measures.
232. 'He who pays no heed to our words, him we will cut in two and throw away, even if it be our own child!'
233. Sai Baba was endowed with all the excellences and was a generous-hearted Mahatma. How can I, a petty, lowly creature describe his mysterious deeds? To some, he gave Knowledge and renunciation, to others, good thoughts and devotion.

234. Some, he disciplined into unblemished and commendable conduct in worldly life. I will just narrate to the audience, a pungent anecdote as an example.
235. Once, at high noon, one wonders what came into Baba's mind, but he came near Radhakrishnabai's house, quite unexpectedly.
236. There were some people with him, to whom he said, 'Bring, bring a ladder just now!' One of them immediately went to bring the ladder which he placed there.
237. Baba then placed it against the house and himself climbed on it to the rood. No one knew what plan he had in mind.
238. The ladder was, at that time, placed against the house of Vaman Gondkar. Shri Sai quickly climbed the ladder going on to the roof.
239. From there he went on to the roof of Radhakrishnabai's house which was next to Gondkar's. that roof also, he crossed over quickly. No one could understand this mystery.
240. But at that time, Radhakrishnabai was suffering from a severe attack of augue and was feeling very restless.
241. Baba could walk only if two people, on either side of him supported him. When he was himself so feeble, from where did his strength come?
242. At once, he came down the slope of the roof on the other side, to its edge and got the same ladder shifted there, which he then used to climb down.
243. As his feet touched the ground, he remembered to pay Rs. 2/- to the owner of that ladder, very promptly, without a moment's delay.
244. All the labour that he could boast of was that he put up the ladder at two places! And for that, why did Baba pay him so generously?
245. People were naturally curious and said, 'Ask Baba why he gave so much money to that owner of the ladder!'
246. Then one of them took courage and asked. Baba replied, 'Never take even the least labor from anybody, free.
247. 'Take work from others, but understand their effort. And make it a rule never to take anybody's toil free.
248. Who knows the real intention as to why Baba did this? It is something that he alone knows. The mind of the saints is mysterious and incomprehensible.
249. Our only reliance is on the words we hear from his mouth and if we resolve to act according to them, life in the world becomes smooth and free from trouble.
250. And so, the next chapter is even sweeter than this. An innocent child of a maid-servant will solve the puzzle from the Shrutis.
251. Ganu Das was a divinely inspired Haridas, who resolved upon rendering into Marathi the Sanskrit Upanishad called Ishavasya' for the benefit of the common man.

252. By Sai's grace, he wrote the book, but some profound significance of some lines eluded him, which left a doubt in his mind. How did Baba resolve it?
253. Sitting in Shirdi, Baba said, 'When you return to Vile Parle, Kaka's (Dikshit) maid will resolve your doubt.'
254. And so, in this chapter, Saraswati, the goddess of Speech will, like a black bee, fly humming and circling around the lotus of Ishavasya Upanishad, to enjoy the fragrance of which, the ingenious listeners should employ all their art and skill.
255. So, this will be narrated in the next chapter. The whole and sole Doer of action is Sai, the Compassionate One. Listen to it, O listeners, at the proper time. It will be beneficial.
256. Pant Hemad surrenders to Sai and bows humbly at the feet of the Almighty and also to the living creatures. May the listeners favor this sweet narration about Sai, with their attention.

Weal to be all! Here ends the nineteenth chapter of
"Shri Sai Samarth Satcharit", called
'I Receive Baba's Grace' (2)
as inspired by the saints and the virtuous,
and composed by his devotee Hemadpant.

20

The Essence of Isha – Upanishad Revealed

MY OBEISANCE TO SHRI GANESH, TO SHRI SARASWATI, AND SHRI GURUMAHARAJ! TO THE FAMILY DEITY, AND TO SHRI SITA-RAMACHANDRA MY MOST HUMBLE OBEISANCE! I BOW IN REVERENCE TO THE MOST VENERABLE GURU SHRI SAINATH!

1. My obeisance to you, O Sadguru! you are the Manas lake, producing pearls of gracious words and at whose feet the swans, i.e. your steadfast devotees, find an asylum.
2. Generous-hearted that you are, you feed these protected ones on the pearls of your Grace and establish them in their true Self, thereby liberating them from the birth-death cycle.
3. How wonderful is this Sai! He is the very abode of the Siddha, who have attained moksha. His mere darshan mitigates the suffering and weariness of worldly life, the delusions about which are destroyed in

the being continually in his company, for those who are always with him.

4. Basically, Sai is without a form; but in the cause of the devotees, he has taken on a form, and accepting the challenge of that great actress Maya, he too, like a seasoned actor, has played his part to perfection.
5. Such is this Sai, whom we shall now bring to the mind. Let us go to Shirdi for a moment and observe carefully, what happens there after the midday arati.
6. After the arati at noon, Maharaj would come to the edge of the parapet in the mosque and very kindly he would distribute udi to the devotees.
7. And the loving devotees would also embrace his feet, at once, and standing there, would gaze into his face while they were being showered with the udi.
8. Baba would also pour udi into their palms, by the handful, putting a little on their foreheads with his thumb. Such was the irrepressible love in his heart, for the devotees.
9. 'Go Bhau, go and have your meal! Anna, go and enjoy a delectable meal! Go, go everyone of you to your own homes.' So he would say to them all.
10. Although it is no longer possible to experience it, such happy time of the past, associated with particular places and particular times in Shirdi, can yet be conjured when it is brought to the mind with concentration.
11. Let us then, concentrate the mind thus, and gaze at Baba's form, from the toes right up to his face and prostrating before him with loving devotion, let us continue with our narrative.
12. At the end of the last chapter, the listeners had been told that Baba had unfolded the significance of a Shruti at the hands of a maid-servant.
13. Ganu Das had started writing 'Ishvasya Bhavarthbodhini', but as some doubts arose in his mind while writing it, he brought them at the feet of his Sadguru in Shirdi.
14. The words that Baba uttered on this occasion – 'when you go back, the maid-servant in Kaka's house will resolve your doubts' –
15. These words form the context of the present narrative. From here we continue the story. Let the listeners listen carefully to that what they hear will be faultlessly clear.
16. To explain in verse form, word for word, the significance of the Upanishad 'Ishvasya', for those who do not know Sanskrit –
17. This was the keen desire in Ganu Das' mind when he started rendering it as 'Ishvasya Bhavarthbodhini' into the easily understandable Marathi.
18. This Upanishad is full of profound, abstruse significance. He did translate it word for word, but Ganu Das was not satisfied or happy in his mind until its profound significance was grasped.
19. The essence of the four Vedas is the real treasure of the Upanishads, and without God's grace, it is most difficult to attain.

20. If one were to say that I am proficient in learning and with my own efforts I will try to understand the Upanishads and give an adequate exposition of the same, --
21. Then such a thing is just not possible – even to the end of the world. Without the guru’s grace, obstacles come in the way and the mysterious essence still remains unfathomed. Every step on the way is riddled with difficulties.
22. But he who surrenders whole-heartedly to the guru, will face no difficulties in the least. And the profound significance opens up before him, on its own.
23. Such is the Science of Self-knowledge, a weapon though it is to destroy the birth-death cycle. Only those who are free from egoism and emancipated from the bondage of worldly life have the authority to give an exposition of it.
24. And when we rely on such people, then in a moment the true meaning dawns on us; the mental impediments are removed and the obscure meaning becomes revealed.
25. While translating ‘Ishavasya’ in Prakrit, Das Ganu was in the same position. But when Sainath bestowed grace on him, the difficulties in his work disappeared.
26. His Knowledge of Sanskrit was inadequate; but bowing reverently at the feet of Acharya Vidyananya and Shri Sai Baba, he began writing his verses.
27. Das Ganu’s speech was like a stream of milk and Baba’s Grace was that sugar added to it. May the listeners savour, for a moment, that continuous flow of sweetness.
28. But this was just by way of an introduction to the ‘Bhavarthbodhini’. To know its vital significance, the listeners should see the original. The purpose of my story here is however, quite different. Listen to it, now!
29. Just see how Maharaj resolved the difficulty of abstruse passages from the book which his devotee was reading, without himself uttering a word!
30. And this is the real purpose of this story, which is all that I wished to narrate to the listeners in brief and in its essence. So listen attentively!
31. Ganu Das wrote his commentary in verse form which was acclaimed by the learned pandits. His heart’s desire was fulfilled. But one doubt still remained.
32. He put it before the pandits. A great debate followed, but still, no one could resolve it satisfactorily.
33. Meanwhile, Das Ganu happened to go to Shirdi for some work and quite effortlessly, his doubts got resolved.
34. He went to take Sai’s darshan; he prostrated in obeisance, placing his head on Baba’s feet, which made him feel pleased and happy.

35. A gracious look from the saints; sweet words from the saints' mouth, their smiling countenance – these alone bring good fortune to the devotees.
36. The mere darshan of the saints washes away all the sins. Then who can describe the great merit accumulated by those who are always in their company?
37. 'And so Ganu, from whence this sudden appearance?' said Baba, 'Are things well with you? Are you content and happy at heart?'
38. And Ganu Das replied, 'When I enjoy the protection of your Grace, why should I be sad at heart? No, indeed! I am happy.'
39. 'But you yourself know everything, too, and ask these questions only as a matter of convention! In my mind, I am aware also, as to why you are asking about my welfare.'
40. 'You yourself make me start something and when the work begins to take shape, suddenly you put such an obstacle in the way that, try as one may, nobody can remove it!'
41. And thus the dialogue continued while Ganu Das was pressing Baba's feet, when he gently asked Baba the question about 'Ishvasya Bhavarthbodhini'.
42. 'Baba, as I sit down to write 'Ishvasya Bhavarthbodhini', my pen falters as doubts and misgivings assail my mind. Baba, please explain them to me!'
43. He then narrated to Baba, in detail, what had happened, putting before him also, the doubt that defied solution.
44. And then Ganu Das entreated Sainath, 'Baba, all my efforts in writing this book are being wasted. You know full well this story of my 'Ishvasya!'
45. 'Unless this doubt is cleared, the deeper significance of the book cannot be grasped.' Maharaj then blessed him, saying 'Be Happy!'
46. 'And pray, what is so difficult in all this? As you return to the place from where you came, that maid-servant of Kaka's will most surely resolve your doubt!'
47. Kaka, here, refers to Bhausahab Dikshit, who was one of Baba's loving devotees, engaged, all the time, in serving his guru, with his body, speech and mind.
48. This Haribhau lived in the suburb called Ville Parle, which is situated at a short distance from the famous Bombay city.
49. His real name, as given to him by his parents, was Hari though people called him Bhausahab, Baba had given him altogether a different name.
50. Kaka Mahajani, he called 'Bade Kaka' and Nanasaheb Nimonkar was 'Old man Kaka'. And Bhausahab, he named 'the lame Kaka' and sometimes also as 'Bambya Kaka.'

51. Father and mother give one name to the child; in the horoscope, it is another. Sometimes a person is also addressed by a nick-name. Varied are the customs that prevail.
52. When Maharaj gave such various names to people, from time to time, these same names became prevalent and the devotees too, accepted them lovingly and felt honoured, as if they were titles of special merit.
53. Sometimes 'Bhikshu' (one who solicits alms), sometimes 'Kaka', such was the stamp that Baba had put on Dikshit and it was this name 'Kaka' that Dikshit came to be commonly known among the people of Shirdi.
54. Ganu Das was quite surprised, and everyone else was puzzled. What! Kaka's maid-servant, of all people! And how was she going to solve the puzzle?
55. After all, a maid is a maid! What education can she have? What can be so great about her learning or wisdom? It was all most extraordinary!
56. Oh, where the profound learning required for the exposition of the Shrutis, and where, the intellectual capacity of a maid-servant! 'Maharaj must be joking,' said all the people.
57. Everyone thought that Maharaj must be really joking. But to Ganu Das, even this jesting remark was full of significance.
58. To the people, who heard these words of Sai, they appeared, outwardly, to be uttered light-heartedly. Not so to Das Ganu, who felt they were the truth.
59. And although people thought that Said had said it jokingly, yet as usual, they became eager to watch his leela, arising out of these words.
60. Whether the words were spoken in jest or not, they were never pronounced in vain. For every word that Baba spoke was a mine of deep significance.
61. What Baba uttered were not merely words, but were the 'Brahma-likhit', not a word of which was in vain and would come true at the proper time.
62. This was Das Ganu's firm faith, whatever else it might mean to others. And as your faith – wherever you might repose it – so is the fruit that you will get.
63. As is the faith, so is the fruit; as is the faith, so is its power; the more loving is the heart, the purer is the knowledge, too.
64. Most eminent among the Jnanis that he was, Sai's words will never be futile and it was his Promise that he would fulfil the wishes of his devotees.
65. Guru's words are never in vain. Listen to this story with all your heart and the sorrows of worldly life will vanish and you will be on the spiritual path.
66. Ganu Das, returned to Parle and to the house of Kakasaheb Dikshit, with an eagerness to see how Kaka's maid would serve the purpose.

67. Next day at dawn, while Ganu Das was still in bed, enjoying, the sweet early morning snooze, a wonderful thing happened.
68. A small Kunabi girl (a peasant girl of the Kunabi caste) was heard singing in a melodious voice, the sweet notes of which smote Das Ganu's heart.
69. On hearing that song with its deep melodious strains and with the beauty of its composition, his heart was captivated as he listened to it with utmost attention.
70. He got up with a start as his attention was caught by the meaning of the song. He kept on listening with concentration, and it brought him great happiness.
71. 'Whose child is she,' he asked, 'who is singing so solemnly, so tunefully? But she has indeed solved the great puzzle of Ishavasya!
72. And so, this is the maid-servant! Let me see her, through whose rustic, unrefined tongue I have realized the significance of the Shruti.'
73. As he came out to see, it was really a Kunabi girl who was scrubbing the vessels in Kaka's 'mori'.
74. On enquiry, he found out that there was a servant called 'Namyā' at Dikshit's house and this girl was his sister.
75. So this was that maid-servant at Kaka's house! But his doubts were indeed removed by her song. What can the saints not do! Even a he-buffalo was made to recite the Vedas (by Jnaneshwar).
76. Such was the girl's singing. Das Ganu was fully satisfied. And everyone realized the great significance of what Baba had said, even jestingly!
77. Some say that Das Ganu was performing pooja in the worship room in Kaka's house when he heard the song.
78. Be it as it may! The sum and substance of it is only one – to see how Maharaj taught his devotees under various pretexts.
79. 'Stay where you are and just ask me! Why do you needlessly roam the woods and the wilds searching for answers! I will satisfy your desire (for knowledge). Have this much faith in me.
80. 'My presence fills everyone; there is no place where I am not. And, for the devotion of my devotees, I appear to them anyhow, anywhere.'
81. So that eight-year old girl, with a torn rag for the tuck of a sari, was singing all the same, of the grandeur of an orange coloured sari, in her melodious song.
82. Oh, how splendid was that gold-threaded sari. How exquisite its border! And with a marvelous 'padar' to it, too! She was totally engrossed in the description, as she sang.
83. She had not enough to eat, nor sufficient to cover herself. Yet she was filled with joy at the splendour of the orange sari that was somebody else's.
84. Seeing her gay, blithe spirit amidst her abject poverty Das Ganu was moved by pity and said to Moreshwar (Pradhan):

85. 'Just look at her barely covered body! Do please, give her a sari! God will be pleased and you will have earned some merit.'
86. Compassionate as Moreshwar himself was, Das Ganu's request only urged him on further. He bought a beautiful sari and happily presented it to the child.
87. To her, who was only used to eating dry coarse grains, it was like a feast of sweetmeats. Such was her joy on seeing that sari.
88. The next day she wore that sari and merrily went around and around, wildly gamboling and dancing, in a 'Fugadi' to express her joy. She was in love with the sari and looked grander than all the other girls by wearing it.
89. But the very next day, she put away the sari in her bundle of special clothes and wrapped the same old torn rag round herself, but without appearing to be dispirited in any way.
90. Though she did not wear the sari and had stored it away, yet to Das Ganu, it appeared as though her earlier poverty had disappeared with his new vision.
91. Although she had left the new sari at home and had come wearing a torn one, yet there was no sadness in her heart for the want of a new sari was no longer there.
92. Wearing torn rags out of helplessness and doing the same when one can afford better – this is called wearing your poverty with dignity. Happiness or sorrow are only a matter of feeling.
93. This was Das Ganu's puzzle which when solved in this way, led to the answer to his doubts in 'Ishavasya' and its significance became clear.
94. When this entire Creation is overspread with the presence of God, then who can think of a place without Him?
95. 'That is perfect. This is perfect. Perfect comes from perfect. Take perfect from perfect, the remainder is perfect.
96. In the poverty of that child was a divine element; the torn sari also had that element; the giver, the act of giving and the gift – everything is pervaded by that one God.
97. Rid yourself totally of the feeling 'I, mine' and always act without ego. Enjoy what he gives you in a spirit of renunciation or dedication. Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession.
98. Such were Baba's powerful utterances the truth of which was experienced by many. Without leaving Shirdi all his life, he yet appeared to his devotees anywhere and everywhere – amidst crowds or in secluded woods and jungles.
99. He appeared at will, to some at Machchindergad; to others at any of the cities, Kolhapur, Solapur or Rameshwar.
100. To some, he appeared in his usual, familiar person; to others, he gave darshan in the day or at night; waking or in a dream, thus satisfying their desire.

101. Innumerable are such experiences! Oh, how many can one describe? Though Baba resided in Shirdi, he traveled anywhere, without anybody's knowledge.
102. Now, just consider this! Who was this girl and related to whom? She was but a poor servant girl. And the song about the orange sari came so naturally from her lips!
103. That a doubt should be put before Baba and that this maid should resolve it! And that she too, should be present at Kaka's place! Is this whole arrangement not a work of Maya?
104. First of all how did Baba know that this maid would be there? And how is it that a future date she would be singing a song to explain the significance of the Shruti?
105. But that it happened so, is certain. Ganu Das was surprised. But his doubt was resolved and the meaning of 'Ishavasya' became clear to him.
106. In their minds, the listeners might wonder, why all these plans and arrangements? Why did Baba not resolve the doubt himself, there and then?
107. Could he not have done it there himself? But then the great significance of that incident would not have been understood. How God dwelt even in that poor little maid-servant, was what Baba demonstrated.
108. To describe the nature of the Self accurately is the ultimate goal of all the Upanishads. This is the essence of the discipline for Moksha and this is the exposition, too, of the real significance of the Bhagvad Gita.
109. Living beings may differ from each other, but their Atman is one. This Self is the non-doer of action and a non-enjoyer; it cannot be impure, is beyond sin or merit and is free from the observance of duty or karma.
110. As long as there is a feeling of separateness that 'I am a high-caste Brahmin; others belong to castes lower than mine', so long it is necessary to perform karma.
111. That 'I am formless, omnipresent, the One and Only, as none other than me exists, and that I pervade all' – this is the true knowledge of the Self.
112. This Jeevatma, who is one with Brahman, has moved away from It. That he should again become one with It, as before, is the definite goal.
113. This is the dictum of all – Shruti, Smriti, and Vedanta. This is the ultimate objective, that that which has moved away should become One with the Brahman.
114. So long as the mind does not reach the state, where it recognizes that God dwells in the hearts of all beings alike, so long as