

The Narration of Various Stories

I bow down to Sree Ganesh

I bow down to Sree Saraswati

I bow down to the Guru

I bow down to the Family Deity

I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra

I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

1. Let us pick up the threads of the previous chapter. Let us recollect, how much Baba loved the renovation of temples!
2. How he would strive to be benevolent to others! How he looked after and protected his devotees! How he would wear out himself! How he would suffer for the sake of his devotees!
3. He would take *samadhi*¹ doing *khand-yoga* practices. He would do *dhoti-poti* and other practices. Sometimes he would separate his head, legs and arms from the body and bring them together as before.
4. If you call him a Hindu, he looked a Muslim! If a Muslim, he had all the auspicious signs of a Hindu! Such was this extraordinary *avatar*. Which wise person can describe him!
5. Whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, nobody was able to make the least conjecture! His behaviour was always the same towards both the communities.
6. *Ramnavami* was a Hindu festival. He would celebrate this as his own, by having the cradle tied up in the *Sabha-mandap* and have *kathas* and *kirtans* recited.
7. In the square, in his presence, the cradle would be tied and he would have the *kirtan* performed. And, the same night he would permit the Muslims to hold a *Sandal* procession².
8. As many Muslims, as wished to come, would join the *Sandal* procession with pomp and glory. He got both the functions celebrated equally happily.
9. When the *Ramnavami* day dawned, he was fond of arranging wrestling bouts and giving away prizes such as horses, anklets and headgears very enthusiastically.

10. When the *Gokulashtami*³ festival would come, he would have the *Gopal Kala* done; and similarly, when it was *Id-day*⁴, the Muslims were not restricted from *namaz*.
11. Once, when the *Muhurram* festival came, some Muslims came to the *Masjid* and asked for permission to have the *Taziya*⁵ procession in the village.
12. According to his orders, the *Taziya* was built. It was kept for four days and on the fifth day was asked to be removed. He had no feeling of either pleasure or displeasure.
13. If he was a Muslim, he had pierced ears. If he was a Hindu, he believed in circumcision. Thus – neither Hindu, nor Muslim – such was the sanctified *avatar* of Sai.
14. If he was a Hindu, he lived always in a *Masjid*. If he was a Muslim, there was the sacred fire burning day and night in the *Masjid*.
15. In the *Masjid* itself was the grinding stone on which the grinding was done, in the *masjid* the bells would chime and the conch would be blown; and in the *masjid* the offerings to the sacred fire were made. What kind of a Muslim was he?
16. In the *masjid* there were recitations of *bhajans* always, free distribution of food, offerings to God, worship of feet and *puja*. What kind of a Muslim was he?
17. If he be called a Muslim, then the elite of Brahmins would come and do his *puja*; the *agnihotris*⁶ would prostrate to him having surrendered their pride of purity to him.
18. This way, the people were astonished at heart. Whatever they would experience, they would behave accordingly and keep silent at the time of *darshan*.
19. So long as a person is surrendered to God, can he be called a Hindu or a Muslim? He may be of a low birth, or low caste, or without a caste (outside the pale of society). Caste is not the criteria of importance for Him.
20. One who does not have body consciousness, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim, for him all castes and creeds are equal. The discrimination born of caste is not applicable to him.
21. He took meat with the fakirs or on his own ate fish; and would not be disgusted even if a dog put his mouth into his food.
22. A farmer stores grains obtained in the current year by building storehouses so that in case there is a shortage, in the next year, it would prove useful.

23. Similarly a gunny bag full of wheat was stored, and also a grinding stone⁷ to grind the grain in the *Masjid*. There were also scuttles to winnow the grain. Nothing fell short of a householder's life.
24. In the *pandal* there was a decorative, beautiful and special *Tulsi Vrindavan*⁸. Nearby there is a wooden chariot,⁹ beautifully carved.
25. Because of my good deeds of the previous births that I could come in contact with all these good things. I will hold these in my heart and will feel lack of nothing till the end.
26. Thanks to the good fortune of the previous births, I have been able to attain his feet, get peace of mind and contentment in household matters.
27. Afterwards, however much I may prosper, that happiness will never be regained which I experienced and was blessed to receive in the company of the great Sree Sai.
28. Sai is the store of ultimate happiness! How could I describe his uniqueness? Whoever surrendered to him was permanently settled for good.
29. Those *sanyasis* who have performed penance, holding *danda* and who use deer skins for clothing and for sitting; those who have visited Haridwar and been to *Tirthas*; those who have practised hard penance; those who have renounced the world and those who are non-attached came there.
30. He would talk, walk and laugh a lot; he would always recite '*Allah Malik*'; he did not like arguments and discussions and he always carried a *satka*¹⁰.
31. Ascetic, non-attached by nature, of moderate passions, with malice towards none, his speech flowed with *vedantic* philosophy (well-versed in *vedanta*)! Till the end none could fathom, who Baba was.
32. The rich or the poor were treated equally by him. The son of a wealthy person or of a penniless beggar would be measured by the same yardstick.
33. He would know the good and bad deeds of anyone and the inner most desires. He would tell them their confidential secrets by some hint which would astound the devotees.
34. He was the epitome of knowledge and wisdom which he kept under cover. It was a burden for him to be honoured. Such were the characteristics of Sree Sai.
35. Though he had a mortal body, his deeds were singularly uncommon like that of God. He was definitely the deity of Shirdi. All the people believed this faithfully.

36. How many were the miracles of Baba! How much can I, an insignificant person describe! Baba had the renovation of numerous deities and temples undertaken.
37. In Shirdi itself, by the hands of Tatyapa Patil, he improved the temples of Shani, Ganapati, Shankar-Parvati, the village deity and Maruti.
38. The money that he collected from people as *dakshina*¹¹ was spent in charity partly, and some was simply given away.
39. To some he would daily give Rupees thirty; to some Rupees ten, fifteen or fifty. Likewise, he would happily distribute according to his sweet will.
40. This money belonged to people of all religions; and those who accepted it were aware of this. Baba had the wish that it should be spent in a good way.
41. May it be so! Many people prospered only because of his *darshan*; many wicked people turned good; many were cured of diseases (leprosy) and a lot of people achieved their welfare.
42. Without putting collyrium, or ointments or herbal juices many blind regained their sight. Those who were lame started walking just by surrendering at his feet.
43. Such was his infinite greatness that nobody was able to gauge its extent. From all four quarters, countless people started streaming in.
44. He sat at the same place near the *dhuni*. He eased himself there itself. He would remain at the same spot, sometimes with and at other times without a bath. He was always intent in meditation.
45. On his head he would have a special white headgear and tie a clean *dhoti* to his waist, put on a shirt or a *pehran* – such was his dress at the beginning.
46. Initially, he would practice ayurvedic medicine in the village. He would examine patients and give the medicines. He had a healing touch and became a famous *hakim*¹².
47. Once upon a time a devotee's eyes were swollen and were like red balls. Both pupils were blood-red and no *vaid*¹² was available in Shirdi.
48. The simple and pious devotees showed his eyes to Baba. Immediately, Baba got the marking-nut¹³ *beebe*¹⁴ pounded and made into balls.
49. Under the circumstances some may have put *surma* (powdered pearl);

some may have put wet pieces of cloth dipped in cow's milk; others may have kept cool camphor cakes on the eyes or some would have used collyrium.

50. But Baba's remedy was absolutely different. He picked up each *beebe* ball in his own hands and pressed as much as possible one in each eye and then tied a cloth around them.
51. The next day, the cloth tied around the eyes was removed and the eyes were washed with cold water poured in a steady stream. All the swelling had disappeared and the pupils were clear.
52. Although a delicate organ like the eye was treated by *beebe*, there was no burning and the disease was cured. Such were the countless experiences.
53. He knew the *yogic* practices of *dhoti-poti*. Without anybody's knowledge he would go to a secluded place and while bathing, vomit out his intestines, wash them and put them to dry out.
54. At the same distance, as the *Masjid* to the well, there was further on a banyan tree at a certain spot; and, beyond it, another well, where he would go every third day.
55. Right at noon, in the blazing sun, having made sure that there was no one around, he would take out water from the well with his own hands and wash his face and perform his ablutions.
56. On one such occasion while he was having his bath, he took out his intestines quickly and started washing them on the spot.
57. When a goat is slain, his intestines are turned inside out. After being thoroughly washed, they are cleaned and folded.
58. Similarly, he removed his own intestines, washed them inside out, and spread them on the rose-apple tree. People were extremely amazed.
59. Amongst those who have witnessed this feat with their own eyes, some are still living in Shirdi. They say that he was an unique Saint.
60. Sometimes he would practise *khand-yoga* and separate his arms and legs. This way, they would be scattered here and there in the *Masjid*.
61. In this way, the body would be broken in bits and pieces. The whole sight would be very gruesome. When a number of people ran to see this, they would find Baba intact.
62. Once having seen such an incident, the onlooker got terribly frightened and thought that some wicked person had killed Baba and committed this outrage.

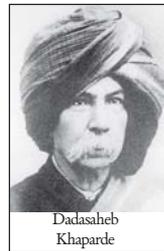
63. In the *Masjid*, here and there, the limbs could be seen in all the four corners. It was midnight and no one was around. He was worried.
64. To whom should he tell this incident? On the contrary, he may be hanged. Thinking this, he went and sat outside.
65. It did not even occur to him, even in his dreams, that it was the *yogic* powers of Sai; and looking at the fragments of the body, his heart thumped with fright.
66. Someone should be informed of this incident. This thought occurred to him over and over again. But being the first person to give the information, he might be held as the culprit.
67. Therefore, he did not tell anybody. Many ideas came to him. Therefore, in the early morning, he went to look again and was surprised at what he saw.
68. There was not a sign of the earlier happening. Baba was sitting hale and hearty at his usual place. The onlooker was astounded and wondered if he had had a dream.
69. These practices of *yoga* – of *dhoti-poti* – were practised by Baba since his childhood. Nobody could understand the depth of it and fathom his *yogic* state.
70. He never took a penny from anybody. By his own virtues, he became famous. The weak and the poor were bestowed with good health by him and he became a famous *hakim* in that province.
71. He was a *hakim* only for the sake of others. He was totally disinterested for his own gain. To achieve the good of others, he endured a lot of hardship and pain.
72. To explain this I will tell an unusual story, for the sake of the listeners, which will make known Baba's compassion and his universal (all-pervading) powers.
73. In the year 1910, on *Dhanteras* day¹⁵, Baba was casually sitting near the *dhuni* and burning firewood.
74. The *dhuni* was very hot and brightly lit up. He inserted his own arm into the fire and peacefully sat there. The arm came out scorched.
75. His servitor Madhav¹⁶ saw it by chance and Madhavrao Deshpande was also nearby. He also ran towards him immediately.
76. He went and sat cross-legged behind Baba, put his arms tightly round his waist and pulled him back. He asked, "See what has happened?"
77. "O' *deva*, what have you done?"¹⁷ At these words, Baba became aware of the circumstances. "A child suddenly slipped into the furnace from the arms being astride the waist (of the mother).

78. “Hearing her husband’s calls, and being afraid, the blacksmith’s wife took her child into her arms and started blowing the bellows of the furnace.
79. “While blowing, she lost her concentration and forgot that the child was in her arms. The child was extremely restless and she slipped. Shama, no sooner had she dropped, that I picked her up.
80. “While I tried to take out the girl, that this incident happened. Let my damned hand be scorched, the child’s life is saved”.
81. For the pain and suffering due to the arm, what remedy and by whom should it be done? Madhavrao decided to write a letter to Chandorkar.
82. He wrote the letter in detail. Chandorkar arrived in Shirdi immediately, bringing along with him the famous Dr. Parmanand.
83. To ward off the burning sensation, Dr. Parmanand brought with him a number of medicines which would be useful and came to the feet of Sai to serve him, with Nana.
84. After having bowed down to Baba, he asked him about his well-being, told him the reason for his coming and requested him to show him his arm.
85. But since the time the arm was burnt, Bhagoji Shinde used to apply *ghree*, place a leaf upon it and tightly bandaged it, every day.
86. To remove the bandages, to show the arm to Dr. Parmanand, to start taking medicines to heal Baba,
87. with this good intention, Nana implored a great deal; and even Parmanand tried to remove the bandages and see the arm.
88. Not to-day, tomorrow again, the same thing, thus he never allowed his arm to be seen saying that his doctor was *Allah*. He was not the least disturbed about it.
89. Whatever medicines Parmanand had brought were never even opened in Shirdi. But, it was his good fortune to have Sai’s *darshan* and therefore, perhaps this incident happened.
90. It was always Bhagoji who served him. It was only Bhagoji who would massage the hand. Then, after some time the hand healed and everyone was happy.
91. In this way, although the hand was completely cured, one doesn’t know what was in Baba’s mind in allowing Bhagoji, every morning early in the day, to carry out the ceremony of tying the bandages.



Bhagoji Shinde

92. Although there was no pain, regularly and for no reason, with the help of *ghee* a massage was done and the hand was cared for till death.
93. These services were for the sake of Bhagoji. *Siddha Sai* never needed them. He made Bhagoji render regular service with love, as a devotee should.
94. Because of the sins of his previous birth, Bhagoji was suffering from leprosy. But it was his good fortune that he came in touch with Sai.
95. Whenever Baba started on his round to Lendi, Bhagoji held the umbrella over Baba's head. Though his body was covered with black leprosy sores, he was the foremost in his service.
96. Whenever, early in the morning, Baba was seated restfully against the pillar, near the *dhuni*, it was his good fortune to be there to serve him.
97. He would remove the bandages, massage the respective muscles, apply *ghee* to those parts, and thus be fortunate to serve him.
98. Bhagoji Shinde was a great sinner in his past lives. His whole body was bleeding with sores. He was greatly affected by this deadly disease. But he was a matchless devotee of Baba.
99. His fingers had become stumps because of leprosy and his whole body emanated a nauseating smell. Thus, the one with such a great misfortune, derived four-fold happiness from his services¹⁸.
100. How many such great miracles of Baba, can I describe to the listeners! Once when plague came to the village, listen to the miracle that happened.
101. Dadasaheb Khaparde's¹⁹ young son was staying with his mother and enjoying the pleasure of Baba's company.
102. As it is, the boy was very young and he got very high fever. The mother's heart grew anxious and she became agitated.
103. Her home was at Amravati. Therefore, she thought of going there. In the evening, at the proper time, she came to take Baba's permission.
104. While doing his evening rounds, Baba came near the *wada*. There, the woman bowed down at his feet and told him what had happened.
105. As it is women are timid by nature, and besides, the son's trembling²⁰ did not stop. Also, there was the scare of plague. Therefore, she told him what had happened.



Dadasaheb
Khaparde

106. Baba lovingly assured her with these words: “Know that the skies are overcast. The rains will come and the harvest will ripen. The clouds will clear up.
107. “Why are you afraid?” Saying this, he lifted his kafni upto the waist and showed everybody the fully developed bubos.
108. In four places, there were four bubos of the size of a hen’s egg. He said : “See, I have to bear this because of your difficulties”.
109. People were amazed to witness this divine and unique ordeal. How the Saints suffered for the sake of their devotees!
110. Their heart is softer than wax – just like butter appears outwardly. They have selfless love for the devotees as if they are his kith and kin.
111. Once it so happened that Nanasaheb Chandorkar left Nandurbar to go to Pandharpur.
112. Nana was very lucky. His whole-hearted devotion to Sai had borne fruit. He had the earthly paradise,²¹ as he had got the *Mamlatdari* of that place.
113. When he received the orders at Nandurbar, he had to leave immediately. Hurriedly he made all the arrangements, desiring in his heart the *darshan*²².
114. Along with his wife, and family circle, he thought of going to Shirdi, as Shirdi was his Pandharpur; and he wanted to pay his respects to Baba.
115. He did not send a letter to anybody nor did he send any message. He gathered together all his belongings and got into the carriage hurriedly.
116. In this way, Nana started and nobody in Shirdi knew of it. But Sai knew everything, as Sai was all-pervading.
117. Nana started immediately. He must have been at the outskirts of Nimgaon. Now listen carefully to the miracle that happened at Shirdi, in truth, at that time.
118. Baba was in the *Masjid* with Mhalsapati. Appa Shinde and Kashiram, the devotees, were seated chatting.
119. At that moment, Baba said casually, “Let four of us sing a *bhajan*. The doors of Pandharpur have opened. We can sing joyously”.
120. Sai had knowledge of the past, present and future. He had already learnt the news. Nana was near the stream at the outskirts, when Baba was singing the *bhajan* zealously.



Bhajan

“I am going to Pandharpur – going, going.

There I will stay. There I will stay, stay.

That is the abode of my Master.”

121. Baba himself sang the *bhajan* and the devotees who were sitting around followed him. They were engrossed in their love for Pandharpur. Just then, Nana arrived.
122. He bowed down at his feet²³, with his wife and said that Maharaj should go with them to Pandharpur and settle there undisturbed and without any worry.
123. This invitation was not necessary. Already Baba was in joyous mood; and people told him²⁴, that he was ready to go to Pandharpur as the *bhajan's* words indicated.
124. Nana was extremely surprised and seeing the *leela* was amazed. He put his head at his feet and was deeply emotionally moved.
125. Taking his blessings, *udi* and *prasad*, and bowing again, Chandorkar set out for Pandharpur, after getting his permission to go.
126. If such stories are to be narrated, this book will extend beyond limits. Therefore, we shall curtail the subject of the warding off of other's sufferings.
127. Let us end this chapter now because there is no end to Baba's good deeds. In the next chapter, I'll relate some other stories, for my own well-being.
128. I have been unable to eradicate this ego of mine though I'm trying to do so. Who am I, I cannot understand. Let Sai tell his own stories.
129. He will tell of the importance of human life and will tell why he believed in being a mendicant, of Bayjabai's devotion and what was his state of mind during the meals.
130. Also, how Baba would sleep in the *Masjid* together with Mhalsapati and Taty Ganapati Kote – listen to that.
131. Pant Hemad surrenders to Sai and calls himself an insignificant devotee, as humble as the slippers on his feet. He obeys Sai's orders and has completed the narration upto this point.

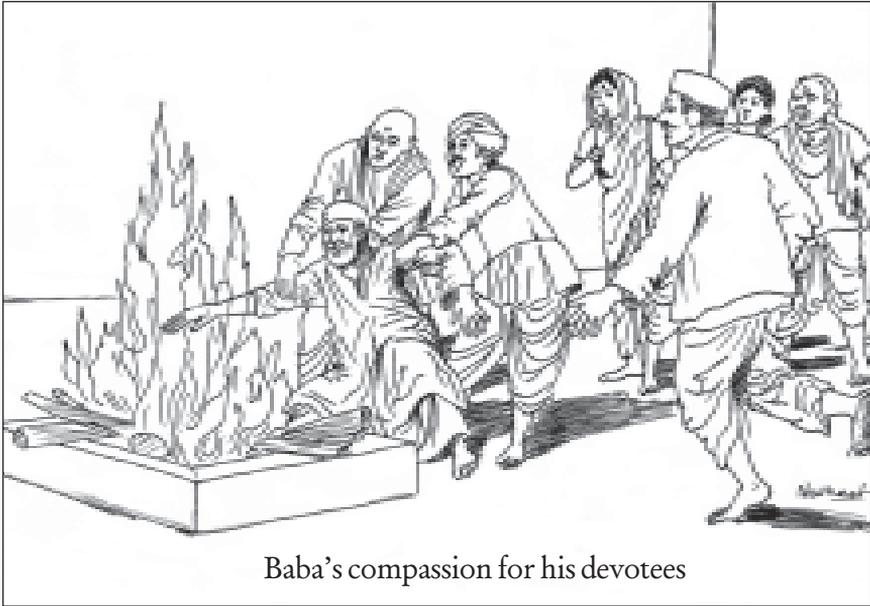
May there be well-being! This is the end of the seventh chapter “The Narration of Various Stories” of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. State of ecstatic and complete trance, with absolute control over all faculties, physical or mental. It is the highest state of *Yoga*.
2. Particularly shaped vessel containing sandalwood, taken to the niche of the *Masjid* in a particular ritual.
3. Krishna's birth celebrations.
4. *Id* days commemorate Muslim spiritual days.
5. The bier supposed to be symbolically, the tombs of Hassan and Hussein carried in procession at *Muburram*.
6. Brahmins that maintain a perpetual and sacred fire.
7. One big grinding-stone was provided by Lakshmibai Shinde.
8. Holy basil is planted in a little tower-form erection for worship.
9. The chariot was donated by M.B. Rege, Dajisaheb Avasthi and others to the *Sansthan*; but is presently kept in an adjoining room.
10. A black wooden baton, about two-and-a-half feet long and thick as a big toe of the foot, also remained near Baba always. When he went to the *chavadi* from the *Masjid* and returned, he carried his *chillum* and tobacco pouch in one hand and the baton in his other.
11. Money given as a present at *darshan* to a saint.
12. Knower of herbal remedies.
13. Myrobalan.
14. Myrobalan.
15. Day on which the Goddess of wealth, Mahalaxmi, is worshipped – two days before Diwali.
16. Madhav Fasle.
17. Madhavrao exclaimed.
18. Baba never objected to anyone rendering services to him. In fact, he dealt with them lovingly. Once a woman came to him who was suffering a grievous malady. Maharaj told a Maratha woman, by the name of Bhimabai, to take her home and give her a place to stay there. Bhimabai said: "Maharaj she has a grievous malady. Is it not? How can I give her a place to stay in my home?" Maharaj replied: "What if she has a grievous malady! She is my sister; my very own sister. Take her to your home". After Baba spoke those words, Bhimabai took her to her home and kept her there. That woman stayed there for a month and passed away there. Another incident related to Balaji Patil Nevaskar. He came once to ask permission to leave for his home village. Maharaj replied: "That Dagadu Bhau is ill. You look after him". That man was a Muslim, suffering from black leprosy. Everyday, Patil would remove the worms from his body, clean all the pus himself and bathe him too. He carried on like this for a month. Then that Dagadu passed away and Patil was given permission by Maharaj to go to his home.
19. The Honourable Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde, Member of Legislative Assembly.
20. Due to high fever.
21. Pandharpur is known as 'Paradise on Earth'.
22. Of Baba at Shirdi.
23. Baba's feet.
24. Nana.



“O *deva*, what have you done?” At these words, Baba became aware of the circumstances. “A child suddenly slipped into the furnace from the arms being astride the waist (of the mother). (Ch.7, ovi 77)



Bhagoji Shinde