

The Description of Sree Sai's Greatness

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. This is the continuation of the previous narration – Baba's sleeping on a narrow plank – his climbing up and descending, which was inconceivable and difficult to describe.
2. Whether a Hindu or a Muslim, he behaved equally towards both. This became the mission of his life. Such was he, the Lord, who was worshipped in Shirdi.
3. Now this eleventh chapter, consisting of the delightful story of the life of the Guru, I have thought of offering at the feet of Sai, with utmost devotion.
4. By this you will be able to meditate on the manifested form, know how he was worshipped¹ and his control over the five elements. Baba's greatness will thus be understood.
5. Oh listeners! please pay attention, how *Indra*, *Agni* and *Varun* obeyed Baba's commands. I shall now narrate that.
6. Let us remember him with love. He was the personification of non-attachment. Such was his manifested form. He was the refuge of numerous devotees.
7. Honour the words of the Guru and give him a seat in your heart with faith. With complete resolution and abandoning all aspirations let us worship him with only this desire.
8. Guru-raj is even greater than all the seven – image of God, sacrificial altar, fire, supreme light, sun, water, *Brahmin* (those wearing the sacred thread). Let us single mindedly worship him.
9. The devotees of the Guru experience, on resorting to his feet with full faith, that not only Guru but *Parabrahma* is moved. Such is the marvel of Guru *Puja*!

10. As long as the worshipper has a form, then it is essential that the Guru also has a bodily form. For the formless, abstract energy, no bodily form is required. This is what even the *Shastras* emphasise.
11. Unless and until one worships the bodily form, true devotion does not spring forth; and, till there is no such devotion, full of love, the inner mind does not blossom.
12. Unless that blossoms, only the lotus bud does not have either the fragrance or the honey. You will see that even the bee will not pause there for a moment.
13. That which has attributes (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) is with form; that which has no attributes is without form. Both are not different from each other. The formless and the one with the form are one.
14. Though frozen, it is *ghee* only, and when it melts it is also called *ghee*. The concrete and the abstract are one and the same, and the abstract is spread in the form of the universe.
15. Whosoever one can feast one's eyes on, on whose feet one can rest one's head, on whom one can meditate suitably, love develops there.
16. In whose company one can chat lovingly, and who can be worshipped with *sandal-wood* paste and rice, coloured with turmeric and *kumkum*, for that a form is a necessity.
17. It is really easy to understand the nature of a bodily form rather than the formless. Once love for the *saguna* increases, it is the awakening for the formless (abstract).
18. Baba would evolve various means to enable the devotees to experience the abstract. By his authority, he would make them sit far and forbade *darshan* for a long time.
19. One would be sent on tour; one would be isolated in Shirdi; one would be confined to the *wada* and made to read the *pothi* regularly.
20. When such a studious training is undergone for a number of years together, then the craving for the abstract will develop. While resting, sleeping and eating, one would then enjoy Baba's company mentally.
21. The body is perishable certainly. It is going to come to an end, at some point of time. Therefore, the devotees should not feel distressed but should concentrate on the eternal.
22. This manifold perceivable world is the manifestation of the unknown (or invisible). It has taken shape or form from the invisible and will return to the invisible.

23. The universe which has evolved from *Brahman*, with each part having the same divine essence as the whole, will also be assimilated with the invisible from where it has taken birth.
24. Therefore, no being dies. Then how can there be death for Baba? - Sree Sai is always pure, enlightened, perfect and untouched by death.
25. Some may call him a devotee of God; some may call him a great Soul; but for us he is truly the very embodiment of the Lord.
26. The Ganga flows to meet the ocean, and on the way she cools those who are distressed by the oppressive heat; gives life to the trees on the banks, and quenches everyone's thirst.
27. Similar is the manifestation of the Saints. They appear and disappear. But their behaviour purifies the world.
28. Of an extremely forgiving temperament, soft spoken, gentle, tolerant, and also incomparably contented,
29. outwardly though possessing a form, yet he is without a form, without qualities (of passion). He is without attachments and within him, he is liberated, though he lives an ordinary life.
30. Krishna who is himself God, says "A Saint is as it were, my soul, my living image and a Saint is my beloved and is myself.
31. It is not befitting to call Saints as my images. Saints are undoubtedly my own Self. Therefore, for their sake, I shoulder the burdens of the devotees.
32. One who completely surrenders to the Saints, I also bow down to his feet". So said Sree Krishna to Uddhava while describing the greatness of the Saints.
33. One who is the most virtuous amongst the virtuous; the one without a form amongst the formless, the one who excels amongst those endowed with excellence, he is the king of virtuosity amongst the virtuous.
34. One who is completely satisfied by having fulfilled one's mission (duties); one who is contented because his desires are fulfilled, one who is engrossed in the Self and is beyond pleasures and pain;
35. one who is the glorious form of inner bliss, who can describe that greatness! It is truly indescribable! He is the incarnation of *Brahman*.
36. Or is it this indescribable power which has manifested itself on this earth – the incarnation of the *Sat-Chit-Anand* ? He is the treasure of knowledge.
37. One who is absolute *Brahman*, in every respect; one who is detached

- from all mundane existence (*samsar*) – permanently non-attached, in a state of oneness with *Brahman*, and incarnation of bliss.
38. 'Brahman is Bliss', the *Shrutis* say. Listeners have heard this often. The learned read this in the scriptures. The devotees experience this in Shirdi.
 39. This world (*samsar*) is utterly unique. It has both the righteous and the wicked elements. Those who do not have the knowledge of the Self need to be protected from such a world at every moment.
 40. But this is not a problem for those who are Self-realised. They have a refuge in their Inner Self. They are always liberated, full of bliss, and engrossed in the Supreme Being.
 41. Baba is the abiding abode of all. Why would he need a seat? That also a silver one? But it is only because of Baba's devotees' desires.
 42. For a long time, there was an old seat – which was a piece of sack cloth. On that, the loving devotees had put a nice mattress for him to sit.
 43. Against the wall, behind, on which he rested, the devotees put a bolster. Baba abided by the devotees' wishes.
 44. Though his residence appeared to be in Shirdi, he was all-pervasive. This was always experienced by his devotees, by Sai's powers.
 45. Though immutable, he accepted the worship and honours (rituals), according to the faith of the devotees. He accepted (the devotion) in all the different ways.
 46. Some waved the whisks – some fanned – some played *shehnai* or drums and auspicious musical instruments and some offered *puja*.
 47. Some would lave his hands and feet (to drink the water as *tirth*) – some annointed him with *attar* and *sandal-wood* paste – some offered him betelnuts made out of thirteen ingredients² – some offered *mahanaivedya*³.
 48. Some applied *gandh* paste, with two fingers, horizontally across the forehead, as it is done for Shiva linga, without a break – some applied *kasturi* mixed with perfume – and also, applied *sandal-wood*.
 49. On one occasion Tatyasaheb Noolkar's friend, by the name of Dr. Pandit came to Shirdi only once to take Sai Baba's *darshan*.
 50. No sooner than he arrived at Shirdi, he went first to the *Masjid* and after doing obeisance to Baba, sat quietly for a moment.
 51. Baba then said to him: "Go to Dada Bhat's. Go, go this way", showing the way with the fingers of his hand.

52. Pandit went to Dada's. Dada gave him a suitable welcome. Then when Dada set out for Baba's worship, he asked him if he would come along.
53. Pandit accompanied Dada. Dada worshipped Baba. Till then no one had dared apply fragrant paste (*gandh*) *tilak* (circular, auspicious mark on the forehead) to Baba.
54. Whosoever may be the devotee, he would not allow him to apply the fragrant paste to his forehead. Only Mhalsapati smeared it on his throat; others applied it to his feet.
55. But this Pandit was simple and full of devotion. He took away Dada's *puja thali*, and holding Sree Sai's head, he annointed him with the three fingered parallel lines; (*tripunda*).
56. Seeing his daring, Dada's heart began to beat hard. He thought that Baba would be enraged. What a rash act this was!
57. Thus the impossible had happened! Baba did not utter a word. On the contrary he seemed quite pleased and did not get angry with him at all.
58. So be it. He let that moment pass. But Dada felt a disquietude. Then, that same day's end he asked Baba about it.
59. "When we try to apply a small *tilak* of paste to your forehead, you do not allow us to touch your forehead – but what happened this morning?"
60. "You dislike our *tilak*. Yet Pandit's *tripundara* was found favourable! Why this unusual behaviour? There seems to be some inconsistency".
61. Then very lovingly Sai smiled and spoke to Dada. Listen to that sweet remark with devotion, all of you.
62. "Dada, his Guru is a Brahmin. I am by caste a Mussalman. But believing me to be his Guru, he did Guru *puja*.
63. "I am a great, pious Brahmin. He is an unholy *Yavan* (Muslim). How should he be worshipped? He had no such doubts.
64. "This is how he ensnared me. There I had no alternative. There was no room to raise any objection. He overwhelmed me".
65. Though such a reply was heard, Dada took it lightly. But the essence was realised when Dada returned (home).
66. This inconsistency of Baba greatly hurt Dada. But, while talking to Pandit, his doubts were immediately clarified.

67. Pandit was enjoined to the feet of Raghunath, a sage from Dhopeswar, well known as 'Kaka Puranik'. The deep relationship was that of a disciple.
68. He invoked Kaka. He experienced such a feeling (that Baba was one with Kaka). As per one's faith, devotion is rewarded.
69. So be it. He would get all the rituals done if only he so desired. Otherwise he would throw away the *puja thalis* and he would become 'Narasimhan Incarnate' (display wrath).
70. When he displayed this nature, who would be so courageous as to withstand it? Everyone would run for their lives when he was furious.
71. Suddenly, at times, he is furious and full of fire and brimstone, with his devotees; sometimes, he is softer than wax – the image of peace and forgiveness.
72. At times, he resembles an erupted volcano (fire at the time of destruction), and would keep the devotees at the razor's edge (hold them in mortal fear); at times he is softer than butter, and shines with bliss.
73. Even if he trembles with rage and rolls his eyes, round and round, but within his heart there is a spring of kindness like a mother's towards her child.
74. Within a moment when he resumes his normal behaviour (after his anger subsides) he would call his devotees by name and say: "When I get angry with anyone, I am not aware of it.
75. "If a mother kicks her child, or the ocean rolls back the water of the rivers, then only would I scornfully neglect you and would harm you.
76. "I am under my devotees' obligations. I am always beside them (standing close). I am always hungry for love. I am at their beck and call".
77. In the course of writing this part of the narration, I am reminded of an apt story, which is exemplary. Listen to it with respect.
78. Once a Muslim, resident of Kalyan, by the name of Siddique Falke, after a pilgrimage to Mecca – Medina, arrived at Shiridi.
79. That old Haji stayed in the *Chavadi* ⁴ facing the north. For the first nine months Baba was displeased with him and was not ready to meet him.
80. The auspicious hour did not come for him. His wearisome trips



Raghunath Dopeswar
alias Kaka Puranik

were futile (i.e. between the north *Chavadi* and the *Masjid*). He tried different ways and means but could never exchange glances (with Baba).

81. The *Masjid* was always open to everyone. No one was debarred or prohibited. But that Falke had no permission to mount the steps of the *Masjid*.
82. Falke became internally dejected. 'What kind of *karmas* have been instrumental that my steps cannot enter the *Masjid*. What sins have I committed?
83. By what turn of events, will Baba be propitious towards me and come forward towards me' – that was the sole thought, day and night, in Falke's mind, like the throbbing of his own heart.
84. In the meanwhile, somebody advised him not to be dejected like this: 'Take Madhavrao's help and your heart's desire will be fulfilled'.
85. Before taking Nandi's *darshan*, can Shankar become propitious? He approved of following this method and liked the idea of using this means.
86. On the face of it, the listeners will think this to be an exaggeration. But, this was the experience, in Shirdi, at the time of *darshan*.
87. Whoever desired to be with Baba, without any disturbance, to have a dialogue, he was required to go with Madhavrao, at the outset.
88. Who has come, from where, and wherefor? – for the purpose of telling all this in a sweet and suitable manner and to introduce (Madhavrao was required). Then Samartha became willing to talk.
89. The Haji heard all this and persuaded Madhavrao. He said: "Once, at least, dispel my turmoil. Help me to attain the unattainable".
90. With this pressure on Madhavrao to find a suitable opportunity, he made a firm decision. Whether the task was difficult or not, he would make an effort.
91. He plucked up courage and went to the *Masjid*. He broached the subject very delicately. "Baba, that old man is greatly distressed. Please oblige him.
92. "That Haji has come to Shirdi for your *darshan* after doing the Mecca – Medina pilgrimage. How can you not be merciful to him? And not allow him to come into the *Masjid* ?
93. "Innumerable persons come, freely enter the *Masjid*, take *darhsan* and leave quickly. Why is only this one languoring in vain?

94. “Be merciful towards him, just once. Meet him in the *Masjid*. Then, he will also leave quickly, after asking the question in his heart”.
95. “Shama, the infant’s spume has not yet even dried on your lips. If Allah’s grace is not with him, what can I do for him?”
96. “If he does not have an indebtedness of *Allah-miya*, can anyone climb (the steps of) the *Masjid* ?! The Fakir’s actions are beyond understanding. And I have no control over them.
97. “So be it. There is a narrow foot path beyond the Barvi well. Go and ask him clearly if he will walk and come there correctly”.
98. The Haji said: “However difficult it may be, I will walk correctly. But grant me a personal meeting, and let me sit near his feet”.
99. Listening to the answer from Shama, Baba said, “Ask him further: Four times forty thousand rupees, will you give to me?”
100. When Madhavrao gave him this message, the Haji said: “What are you asking? If he asks, I will give forty lakhs! Where lies the question of thousands!”
101. Listening to this answer, Baba said: “Ask him. To-day we have a desire to slaughter a goat in our *Masjid*. What part of the meat, do you wish.
102. “Would he like bones with flesh, haunch or testicles? Go and ask that old man, what he definitely wants”.
103. Madhavrao related in detail to the Haji whatever Baba had said. Haji emphatically said: “I need nothing of all that.
104. “Give me whatever he wishes. But I have only one desire. If I only get a morsel from the *kolamba* ⁵ I will have attained my object and my well-being”.
105. Madhavrao returned with this response from the Haji. While he was presenting this statement, Baba became wild with anger immediately.
106. Picking up the *kolamba* and the water pot in his own hands he threw them out of the door. Biting his hand noisily, he came near the Haji.
107. Holding his *kafni* with both hands and lifting it up, he stood in front of the Haji and said: “What do you think yourself to be? Are you boasting in front of me?”
108. “You are giving yourself airs because of your age! Is that the way you recite the *Koran*! You are vain because you have done the pilgrimage to Mecca! But you do not realise who I am!”

109. In this manner he was reproached, using unspeakable words! The Haji was dumbfounded. Baba then turned back.
110. While entering the courtyard of the *Masjid*, he saw the gardener's wife selling mangoes. He purchased all the baskets and sent them immediately to the Haji.
111. In the same way, he turned back immediately, and went again towards that Haji. He took out Rs. 55/- from the pocket and counted them on his (Haji's) hands.
112. Thereafter, there developed affection. The Haji was invited to eat and both of them forgot all the past. The Haji was delightfully blissful.
113. Then he left and frequently came again. He took full pleasure in Baba's affection. Then Baba gave him gifts of monies, from time to time.
114. May that be whatsoever. Once I was astounded to see Sai Samartha exercise his authority over the clouds and saw him praying to Indra⁶.
115. It was a very frightful time. The entire sky was black and overcast. Birds and beasts were frightened. A hurricane-like wind began to blow.
116. The sun set and it was evening. Suddenly the whirlwind arose. Strong gusty winds blew. There was an irresistible commotion,
117. accompanied by peals of thunder, crackling of lightening, shrieking winds and torrential rains.
118. It rained cats and dogs, hailstones noisily descended, the village folk and the cattle had a fearful anticipation and cried and bellowed, creating a loud commotion.
119. Destitute beggars came for shelter under the eaves of the *Masjid* and were joined by the cattle and the calves. The *Masjid* was crowded.
120. There was water in all the quarters. The hay was completely washed away. The harvest was totally wet in the threshing ground. People were struck aghast.
121. The whole village was frightened and worried. They came in and filled the courtyard of the *Masjid* and some stayed under the eaves. They put forth their grievance to Baba.
122. Shirdi abounded in temples of Jogai, Jakhai, Mariai, Shani, Shankar, Ambabai, Maruti, Khandoba, Mhalsai.
123. Yet, at any critical juncture, no one was of any service to the villagers except the one and only, prompt and quick Sai, who helped in all difficulties.

124. He did not need sacrifices of goats and cocks, nor offerings of money. All that he desired was true devotion to sweep away all difficulties.
125. Maharaj was greatly moved by seeing the panic of the people. He left his seat and came forward and stood near the plinth of the *Masjid*.
126. The sky was reverberating with the sound of thunder and the crackling lightening set the sky ablaze with light. In the midst of all this stood Sai Maharaj, shouting at the top of his voice.
127. Gods love their devotees and their Saints and Sages more than themselves. Gods heed their words and take human birth for their sake.
128. Gods have to espouse the cause of the devotees on hearing their appeals. They uphold all requests as soon as they are made, recalling the faith of the devotees.
129. Loud bawls followed one after another, resounding in the sky. The *Masjid* seemed to shake. Everyone was deafened.
130. The *Masjid* and the temples resounded with that earth-shaking voice. Then the clouds stopped their own thunder and even the rains stopped pouring.
131. Baba's loud bawling was so profuse that the whole courtyard full of people got rooted to the spot, whispering amongst itself.
132. Baba's skill and powers were inconceivable. It had an effect on the rains. The wind also was immediately controlled and the darkness caused by the fog was dissipated.
133. Slowly, slowly the rain decreased. The wind also lessened. The constellations became visible. The darkness was dispelled by that time.
134. Later the rains completely stopped. The galing winds quietened. The moon appeared in the sky. Everyone was cheered.
135. Indra melted at the plight and upheld the words of the Saint. The clouds were dispersed in all directions. The whirlwind calmed down.
136. The rains totally abated. The wind blew gently. The sound of thunder subsided. The birds and beasts regained their courage.
137. Leaving the shelter of the eaves, the cattle and calves came out and roamed again without fear. The birds also flew into the sky.
138. Having earlier experienced the terryfying incident, all the people returned to their homes after expressing their gratitude to Baba. The cattle also peacefully dispersed.

139. Such was Sai, the embodiment of mercy! He had great love for the devotees. His concern was like that of a mother for the children. How can I describe that loving nature!
140. Similarly, he had control over the fire. Listeners. Please listen with respect to a short story, as an example. You will realise the unexcelled power.
141. One afternoon the *dhuni* blazed uncontrollably. The flames billowed. Who could stay near it?
142. The flames of the fire increased fiercely and reached the roof of wooden beams. It appeared that the *Masjid* would quickly be reduced to ashes, as at the burning of Holi.
143. Nevertheless, Baba was composed while all the people became apprehensive. All the people were amazed at the ruination Baba was facing.
144. One asked: "Shall we bring some water?" Another said: "Who will pour it? Who will go near there to receive the blow of the *satka* on the head?"
145. Though everybody was restless, none had the courage to ask. At that moment, Baba made a movement and placed his hand on the *satka*.
146. Seeing the blazing flames, he took the *satka* in his hand and started forcefully striking, blow after blow, saying "Get back".
147. An arm's length from the *dhuni*, he was forcefully striking the pillar, while looking at the flames and saying: "Calm down, calm down".
148. With every stroke, the flames lessened and subsided. The *dhuni* became calm and the fear disappeared completely.
149. Such was Sai, the Doyen of the Saints, God Incarnate! On placing your head at his feet, he will lay the boon-giving hand on your head.
150. Whosoever reads this chapter regularly, with faith and devotion, all the problems will be resolved after the completion of the reading with concentration.
151. What more can I say! After purifying the mind, scrupulously do the *Sai pãrãyan!* You will attain eternal *Brahman*.
152. Attain the unattainable! Ultimately become desireless! Attain the difficult four-fold *mukti* and uninterrupted peace.
153. So be it. Those devotees who desire to enjoy the bliss of *paramartha* and perfect knowledge should read this chapter repeatedly, with great respect.

154. The minds will be purified. Savouring the stories will develop an attitude of spiritual inclinations. They will attain whatever is desired and whatever is not auspicious or desirable will be destroyed. Personally experience Baba.
155. Hemadpant surrenders to Sai. The next chapter is very sacred about the relationship of the Guru and the disciple, *darshan* of Gholap by the Guru *putra*.
156. No matter what the circumstances, the disciple should never abandon his own *Gurudev*. Sai gave specific experiences of this and increased the firm faith.
157. Those devotees, who came and surrendered, each had the unique *darshan* in different forms (of deities and/or Gurus) and their faith was confirmed.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the eleventh chapter, of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Description of Sree Sai's Greatness".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. With Hymns offered to *Rudra*, eleven times.
2. *Supari*, White Kat, Cloves, Nutmeg, Saffron, Dry coconut, Camphor, *Kankol*, Jaipatri, Cardamom, Almond, *Kasturi*, Lime.
3. Wide variety of delicious foods, which could be as many as sixty items.
4. There are two *Chavadis* in Shirdi – one faces the north and one faces the south. They face one another.
5. The mud pot into which all offerings of *naivedya* were placed and also the food which Baba begged as alms.
6. King of the Gods.





Seeing the blazing flames, he took the *satka* in his hand and started forcefully striking, blow after blow, saying “Get back”. (Ch.11, ovi 146)