

Grace that was Bestowed on Me

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. That Sai is subtler than the subtlest, greater than the greatest, all pervading, filling the entire *Brahman* and covering the universe.
2. A wish arose in my heart to perceive with these mortal eyes such a God, in the garb of some shape and colour.
3. The worshippers of the sun worship him with the help of a thin cotton wick; and the followers of Ganpati make an image of Ganpati out of a mound of jaggery and offer jaggery as *Prasad*;
4. or else, taking water in the palm out of a great ocean and offer oblation to it. All this seemingly looks odd.
5. The sun and the ocean are supreme. But they are only concerned with the faith of the devotees and do not bother about the right or the wrong. They are only concerned with the sentiments of the devotees.
6. ‘Birds of the same feather flock together’, it is said. Though this is a general rule, the union of the body and the *Atman* is the exception.
7. They are different in nature but there is a great friendship between the two. One cannot be happy without the other and they cannot stay separate even for a moment.
8. Yet, the body is transient. The *Atman* is unchangeable and indestructible. But the love between them knows no bounds. Therefore, the cycle of re-birth takes place.
9. *Atman* is the greatest power. It is more minute than that which is imperceptible, which is the ethereal air pervading the whole universe. The personified will of the Supreme Spirit in the creation is very subtle. It is also called *Maya*.

10. The *Purush* (the Supreme) is subtler than these. All the senses dissolve in it. That is the highest state and that itself is the Pure *Brahman*.
11. Such is that *Atman* which appears to belong to the material world; and has to follow the path of illusion and *karma*, though it is unchangeable and without a blemish, like a crystal.
12. A crystal can turn red, black, yellow as it reflects the colours but it is different from the colours. It is pure and separate and cannot change,
13. just as the mirage in the desert shines lustrously like a polished pearl, or a coil of rope appears like a serpent.
14. To consider the rope as a serpent is actually wrong. So, also to think 'My Body is my Real Self' and take pride in it is also wrong, because it binds the otherwise free *Atman*.
15. The *Atman* is unique. It is separate from the body, the sense organs, the mind and *prana*. It is self-illuminated, pure consciousness, not subject to change and without form.
16. Till you have the pride of body, intelligence, mind and *prana*, you have to face the consequences, enjoy and perform the duties, experience the happiness and sorrows also, which are unavoidable.
17. How minute the seed of the Banyan tree! It contains the strength of the Banyan tree. There are innumerable seeds on a tree and millions of trees are contained within them.
18. Thus, as many trees come into being as there are seeds. This phenomena can be witnessed till the end of the world. Such is the universe in reality. Observe it carefully.
19. Permanence, fearlessness, freedom, independence and oneness with the Supreme Self – these are the goals of the being. It should be the end result of being born.
20. Salvation is impossible without knowledge; and knowledge is impossible without detachment. The mind will not consider the world transitory till the concept of detachment takes root.
21. On the path of this transitory world, due to the delusion of the universe, the vision gets dazzled and the traveller fumbles mid-way and does not understand in which direction to go.
22. Such is the deception of the universe, it creates a false illusion for the beings. It seems like a colourful fantasy from a dream, created out of this material world. Therefore, why should one make efforts to cling to it?
23. When one awakes from a dream, the dream disappears. Therefore,

- he who has belief in his *Atman*, he does not care to remember the material world.
24. The enlightenment about the truth regarding the nature of the *Atman* and its union with the *Parmaatma* cannot take place without breaking the bondage of pain and attachment etc. This is known as awakening and nothing else.
 25. Although knowledge is the best of all, which Baba preached day and night, even then for the ordinary people, he advocated the path of devotion.
 26. He talked of the greatness of the path of knowledge which was like the Ramphal (bullock's heart fruit) and the path of devotion was like eating the Sitaphal (custard apple), which is simple and sweet.
 27. Devotion is like a pure Sitaphal and knowledge is like a ripened Ramphal, one juicier than the other, both with exquisite fragrance.
 28. He who waits to let the Ramphal ripen on the tree finds that it tastes very sweet; but if the pulp of the Ramphal is tasted when the fruit is taken raw from the tree and then ripened, it tastes sharp.
 29. The taste of the Ramphal is sweeter when it starts ripening on the stem of the tree. If it falls on the ground it tastes sharp. It becomes very sweet if it ripens on the tree.
 30. Whoever knows to ripen it on the tree, he alone can enjoy the sweet taste of it. But a Sitaphal does not require such efforts. Still it has good qualities and is also precious.
 31. Ramphal has the fear of falling down and even for a person who is in pursuit of knowledge, there is always the fear of falling from grace. He must conquer the eight *siddhis* and should not neglect this even for a little while.
 32. Therefore, Sai, the Cloud of Mercy often explained to his disciples about the importance of devotion and the chanting of God's names.
 33. Meditation on God is better than pure knowledge. Even Lord Krishna tells this to Arjun. Sai also said that it was the means to break the ties of the world.
 34. Enough of this. I will now tell the listeners the story which I was describing in the previous chapter and which was left unfinished. Please listen.
 35. An old and enfeebled woman, prepared to die, was bent on acquiring a *mantra* from Sai and began fasting.
 36. Seeing her condition, Madhavrao became apprehensive and went to Baba, on her behalf. The narration had advanced upto this point.
 37. The lamp of the Sree Sai Satcharita has been lit to indicate the

inner thought of Sai. May its brilliance guide the path of the devotees.

38. Let us continue with the interesting story that Madhavrao had started telling me, according to Baba's orders.
39. He said that seeing the old woman's insistence, Baba graced her. He made her change her mind. This is really an unusual story.
40. Later on Baba called out to her lovingly: "Oh mother, why are you sitting thus in protest?"
41. Baba addressed any elderly lady as 'Mother'; and men as 'Kaka, Bapu, Bhai'. That was a very pleasing way of his.
42. As his heart was full of love, his speech was also sweet. He was a solace to the down-trodden and miserable. Oh, that compassionate Lord Sai!
43. So be it. He called her and made her sit in front of him. Then, as it were, he lovingly handed over the secret key of his own teachings to her.
44. To ward off the sufferings of the world, Baba, the cloud in the form of the Supreme Spirit, showered that water in the form of contentment to quench the thirst of the devotees, who were like the chataks (birds).
45. Baba said: "Mother, tell me the truth. Why do you torment yourself? I am a mere fakir who begs for alms. Look at me kindly.
46. "Really speaking, I am like a son and you the mother. Now pay attention to me. I will tell you about an amazing thing, which will make you very happy.
47. "I had a Guru who was a great *Aulia*, an ocean of kindness. I served him, as much as I could, but he would not whisper any *mantras* to me.
48. "I too had a great longing to receive a *mantra* from his lips, whatever efforts I may have to put in. I resolved never to leave him.
49. "In the beginning he had my head shaved and asked for only two pice, which I gave immediately. I ardently prayed for him to give me those magical words of a *mantra*.
50. "My Guru was a person who had fulfilled all desires. Why did he need two pice? and how could I call him desireless who asked money from a disciple?
51. "Never have such doubts. He did not wish for the coins of the realm. That was not his idea at all. What use did he have for *bullion*?
52. "Faith (Shraddha) and Patience (Saburi) – these were the two (pice)

- and nothing else. I gave them immediately, by which, my Guru was pleased with me, who was like my mother.
53. “Courage is itself patience, oh woman. Never let it leave you! In times of difficulties, it will stand you in good stead.
54. “The valour of a human being lies in being patient. It wards off the sins, worries and miseries. The difficulties are cleared, in some way or the other; and fear and panic vanish.
55. “Patience gains success ultimately. Difficulties run off helter-skelter. The thorn of evil thoughts have no scope.
56. “Patience is a mine of virtues. She is the queen of pious thinking. Faith and she are true sisters and they dearly love each other.
57. “A human being without patience becomes miserable. He may be a scholar or a virtuous person, but life without it is futile.
58. “Though a Guru is very powerful, he expects only wisdom from his disciple, firm faith, lots of courage and patience at the feet of the Guru.
59. “Just as a stone and a gem, if both are rubbed against a grindstone, both shine – but a stone is a stone and a gem after all, a lustrous and precious stone.
60. “Both undergo the same process of polishing. But can a stone shine like a gem? A gem may become a luminous diamond– but the stone will remain the same, only it will become a little smoother.
61. “I lived at his feet for twelve years. The Guru brought me up from childhood. There was never a dearth of food and clothing and he nurtured immeasurable love for me.
62. “He was the embodiment of love and devotion and had genuine affection for a disciple. A Guru like mine would rarely be found. I cannot describe the rapturous joy.
63. “How could I describe that love! When I looked at him he seemed as if he was in deep meditation and we both were filled with bliss. I could never look anywhere else.
64. “I would go on looking affectionately at the face of the Guru, day and night. I knew no hunger or thirst. My mind would get restless without the Guru.
65. “He was the only object of my meditation. I would have no other goal than him. He, alone, was my constant goal. The ways of the Guru are mysterious.
66. “This was the only expectation of my Guru. He did not desire anything more than this. He never disregarded me and always protected me from difficulties.

67. “Sometimes I would stay close to his feet and sometimes away from him. But I was never deprived of the closeness of his company. He looked after me with love and care.
68. “Just as a female tortoise nurses her little ones by her look, my Guru did the same and looked after me.
69. “Oh mother, sitting in this *Masjid*, whatever I tell you please accept as the truth. The Guru never whispered a secret *mantra* in my ear. How can I whisper into yours?
70. “The loving glance of the mother tortoise is enough to make the young ones happy. Oh mother, why do you unnecessarily trouble yourself? I do not know anything about *upadesh*.
71. “The mother tortoise lives on one bank of the river and the children are on the other bank. Their rearing is done by the exchange of glances. Wherefor the trouble of a *mantra*?
72. “Then, go and eat some food. Do not unnecessarily endanger your life. Just pay attention to me and you will achieve the spiritual life.
73. “You should regard me as the whole and sole. I will also regard you in the same way. My Guru did not teach me anything else at all.
74. “There is no need for any other means or money. It is also not necessary to be an expert in the six *Shastras*. Only complete faith is enough because a Guru is he who wards off evil and brings about good luck.
75. “Therefore, the Guru is considered great. Guru is the image of Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar. He who knows him in reality is the blessed one in all the three worlds.”
76. When the old woman was explained in this way, that story convinced her. She agreed to give up her fasting and thus honoured his wishes, by putting her head at his feet.
77. Having heard this complete story and having understood the propriety of it, I was happy and at the same time surprised at the revelation of the true meaning.
78. Seeing Baba’s powers, I was choked with emotions, my heart overflowed with love and now I fully understood the lesson.
79. Seeing my emotional state, Madhavrao said to me: “Anna Saheb ! why have you become sentimental? And why are you quiet?
80. There are innumerable such stories about Baba. How many should I tell now?” And then the bells (of the *Masjid*) began to ring while Madhavrao was speaking thus.
81. Every afternoon, before the meals, the devotees would go and sit,

in the *Masjid*, and perform Baba’s complete *puja* with *gandha*, *akshata*, *arghya* etc., that is with all rituals.

82. Afterwards, Bapusaheb Jog would take the five-wick lamp in his hand and lovingly wave it before Baba with devotion, while the devotees sang the *arati* compositions.
83. The bell proclaiming the *arati* began clanging and we started for the *Masjid*. My wishes were fulfilled.
84. Both men and women participated in the noon *arati*, the women standing up in the *Masjid* and the men remained below in the courtyard.
85. Accompanied by auspicious instruments and the resounding sound of the temple bells, the *arati* compositions would be recited at the top of the voice and joyfully.
86. We arrived at the gate of the courtyard while the *arati* reverberated to the skies. The men had crowded near the steps and there was no room to go up.
87. I was thinking that we should stay down till the *arati* was over and then go up near Baba, as soon as it was finished, along with the others.
88. Whilst I was thinking thus, Madhavrao climbed up the steps and also pulled me up, by holding me by the hand, and took me near Baba.
89. Baba was sitting on his seat, peacefully smoking a *chillum*. In front of him, Jog was waving the five-wick lamp and ringing the bell with the left hand.
90. In this atmosphere of the *arati*, Madhavrao himself sat to Baba’s right and made me also sit with him, facing Baba.
91. Then the peace loving, gem of saints, Baba sweetly said: “Give me what *dakshina* Shamrao has given for me”.
92. “Baba, this Shamrao is here. He is giving *namaskara* in place of *dakshina* and says consider them as fifteen rupees only. Offer these to Baba”.
93. “Very well. Did you have a talk? Did you both say anything to each other? Tell me what you discussed. Tell me everything.
94. “Leave aside the story about the *namaskar*. What did you say to him? Now, tell me fully about each and everything”.
95. I, too, was keen to tell the story. Although the loud *arati* singing was persisting, I was beaming with happiness and my uncontainable joy flowed from my lips.



Madhavrao Deshpande
alias Shyama

96. Baba, who was leaning against the bolster, moved a little forward. I too, bowed forward and started narrating.
97. “Baba, whatever talks we had were all very interesting; but among all, the particular story about the old woman was astonishing.
98. “As soon as Shamrao told me that story, I understood your skill. Under the pretext of that story, I was sure that I had your blessings”.
99. Upon which, Baba very eagerly said: “Tell me the whole story. Let us see what was so astounding about it; and how you felt blessed by it”.
100. The story was fresh in my mind since I had just heard it. Besides, it had impressed me a lot. So I related it flawlessly and he seemed happy.
101. In this way, I told him the whole story. Baba also listened to it attentively and then said to me: “Always keep it in mind”.
102. And also asked me very enthusiastically: “How sweet is this story which I have just heard! Did it impress you? Did you understand its real purpose?”
103. “Baba by listening to this story, I have regained my peace of mind. My own hankering has disappeared and I have understood the right path”.
104. Upon which Baba said: “My ways are different. If you have imbibed the lesson of this one story, it will be beneficial to you.
105. “True knowledge of the *Atman* is to be desired the most and *Dhyana* is essential for this. During *Dhyana* one merges with the *Atman* which leads to quietening of desire.
106. “Detach your mind from the object of the senses and concentrate on that All-pervading Power. Your meditation will be successful and you will achieve the goal.
107. “Meditate always on my formless nature which is Knowledge Incarnate, Consciousness and Bliss.
108. “If you cannot visualise that, then follow the physical image of mine. Bring my image from head to foot, in front of your mind’s eye, day and night.
109. “When you will thus concentrate on me, the functions of your mind will unite and the distinction between the meditator, the act of meditation and the object meditated upon will vanish.
110. “Once this trinity disappears, the person doing the *dhyana* will reach that Supreme Energy – this is the goal of *dhyana*. You will then be one with *Brahman*.”

111. “The female tortoise is on one bank of the river. Her young ones are on the other bank. They get neither milk nor warmth – only her glances give nourishment to them.
112. “The young ones always think only of their mother. They don’t need to do anything else. They don’t need milk nor do they need food. The mother beholding them attentively is their only nourishment.
113. “This caring through just looking by the mother tortoise is actually like the showering of nectar. The young ones get happiness and they flourish. Similar is the case of the Guru and the disciple”.
114. As these words of Sai were uttered, the loud singing of the *arati* ended; and all shouted; “*Sree Satchitanand Sadguru ki Jai*” - *Jaikaar*.
115. The *Niranjan* (lamp) which was being waved and all the other formalities were over. The full-fledged *arati* was completed. Then Jog offered lump sugar to Baba and Baba opened his palm to receive it.
116. Jog lovingly put a handful of lump sugar in Baba’s palm, in keeping with the custom and did obeisance to him.
117. Baba put the entire handful of lump sugar in my hands and said : “Your state of mind will be like this sugar, if you remember this story.
118. “Just as this lump of sugar is sweet similarly your cravings will be satisfied; you will truly prosper and your heart’s desire will be fulfilled.”
119. Then I paid my respects to Baba and said: “Your blessings are enough for me. Only grant me this favour. Take care of me”.
120. Baba said: “Listen to the story. Repeat it. Recite it always. Remember it and concentrate, so that the essence of happiness will appear.
121. “If you keep in mind whatever you have heard, the mine of your welfare will be opened and your sins will be washed away.
122. “When the wind is blowing strong, quantities of bubbles and foam can be seen on the crest of the rising waves in the ocean and they dash against the banks.
123. Waves, bubbles, foam and eddies are many forms of the same water. They are only visual illusions and they last till the wind calms down.
124. “Should all this be called different kinds of water? Or should they be considered as having vanished? One should understand that this is all creation of illusion and their existence and non-existence is the same.

125. “Similar are the happenings of this creation. A discriminating person does not wonder at it. He does not hanker after the perishable, being attached to the eternal.
126. “*Dhyana* is more important than *Gyan*. But, for *Dhyana* the right knowledge is essential. So far as the concept of *Brahman* is not understood, perfect *Dhyana* is not achieved.
127. “For the sake of real knowledge, *Dhyana* is basically essential. This process is known as *Pratyag Atma Anushthan* i.e. realisation of the Atman. But that is devoid of any particular action. Therefore, how can one concentrate upon it?
128. “*Pratyag Atma* is itself God. God is Guru. There is not the slightest difference amongst the three. One who differentiates will be completely bereft.
129. “When with deep and intent contemplation, the difference between the meditator and the object of meditation disappears, the mind becomes like a lamp which is steadily burning. Peace prevails and that is itself *Samadhi*.
130. “Being absolutely desireless believe that He is present in all beings. When the state of oneness is reached, there is no fear and one is able to concentrate on Him as He comes in your meditation.
131. “Afterwards those ties which are formed because of actions due to ignorance snap fast. The restrictions of this worldly life also are removed and one enjoys the happiness of Bliss- Consciousness.
132. “At the outset, find out whether the *Atman* exists or not; whether it is a separate entity residing in each being or it is one residing in all; whether it is active or passive. Refer to the six *shastras* and find out.
133. “But the real knowledge about the *Atman* is the epitome of knowledge. That is itself liberation and eternal bliss which sprout from it.
134. “Even if a learned speaker like Brahaspati¹ is brought before a blind person to describe an elephant, then after listening to the speech, the blind one will not be able to perceive the elephant. Similarly, it is impossible to describe, in words, that which is beyond words.
135. “Can the oratory of a speaker or the ears of a listener bring back the eyesight which has once been lost? Truly speaking, only the eyes are capable of perceiving the elephant.
136. “If there are no eyes, how can a blind person understand an elephant? Similarly, that divine sight which a Guru bestows on the disciple alone is capable of procuring the wealth of knowledge”.

137. To know the nature of Sai is itself the real knowledge. He is the complete essence of that unique knowledge. *Dhyana*, *anushthan* and *darshan* are all combined in his case.
138. False knowledge, passion and chain of actions are the things from which total liberation is possible by meditating upon him and through nothing else. Bear this in mind.
139. Sai does not belong to you or to me. He resides in all beings. Just as the sun belongs to the whole world, he too belongs to all.
140. Now listen to his words which seem common place but are very valuable. If you remember them from time to time, you will succeed in whatever you do always.
141. “Without having an association from some earlier life, no one, not just human beings but even animals and birds, come across one another. Therefore, do not rebuff any one.
142. “Respect the strangers who come to your doorstep. Offer water to the thirsty, give bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked and some space to rest in your verandah to the needy. This will please the Lord.
143. “If anybody is in need of money and you are not desirous of giving, do not give; but at least, don’t behave in an insulting manner and bark like a dog at him.
144. “Anyone may call you names in a hundred ways, never retort with bitterness. Tolerate it with patience. You will gain tremendous happiness.
145. “Even if the world turns topsy-turvy, you should remain still. Be steadfast and observe passively.
146. “Break down the wall between you and me. Then the way to approach each other will be clear and there will be no fear.
147. “The sense of duality between you and me is the wall between the Guru and the disciple. Till this wall is not completely demolished, the state of oneness is impossible to achieve.
148. “Allah is the Master. Allah is the Master.’ There is no other protector than Him. His deeds are divine, invaluable and incomprehensible.
149. “It will be what He wills. He alone will show the path. When the time comes, without a moment’s delay, the wish will be granted.
150. “People meet as destiny decides. We come together because of good fortune. We should, therefore, nurture affection for each other and enjoy happiness and serenity.
151. “Who is immortal here? Blessed is he who has attained the supreme goal of life. Others only breathe to remain alive”.

152. When I heard these sacred words, my anxious mind was put to rest. My thirst was quenched. I was blissfully happy.
153. One may possess incomparable intellect and also firm faith. But to have the support of a Guru like Sai, one's luck must be in favour.
154. To give the essence of these words, Lord Krishna has said the same truth: 'I grant the fruits as per one's deeds, leaving the whole burden on the actions'.
155. The reward will be as per the deeds. The welfare depends upon the efforts. This is the essence of this chapter and this itself is the nectar-like preaching.
156. 'Meditate upon me single mindedly' is the essence of the Bhagvat Gita. God takes full responsibility for the welfare of such persons who have fully devoted themselves to him.
157. Having heard this valuable advice, I am reminded of a quotation from the *Smritis*: "Without the slightest doubt, worship the Gods and then they will take pity on you".
158. "You should take pains but give up worrying about the results completely. I am present, standing behind you and carrying the pot of milk (to give you the fruits). Thus I am always backing you.
159. But, if you think that I should exert and you should only drink the milk abundantly, I will not agree with this. On the contrary, you should be alert and perform the actions. Be active and work for it".
160. These are Baba's sayings or charters. Whoever will accept these words as the truth, he will enjoy the mine of happiness in this world as well as the world beyond.
161. Now I beg the indulgence of the listeners to listen to another personal experience which shows Sai's nurturing nature.
162. If you take a vow to do some good, how Maharaj encourages you! Listen without questioning and observe Sai's manner of blessing.
163. A devotee should surrender unconditionally and observe the remarkable results of devotion. Each day will unfold a new miraculous deed of Sai.
164. Be it so. If a good thought comes to your mind immediately on waking up in the morning, you should foster it.
165. If such a thought continues to prosper, it will bring contentment, sharpen the intellect and please the mind.
166. This is a saying from the saints and I felt like experimenting with it. When I experienced it, I got such a peace of mind that I was greatly amazed.

167. In a holy place like Shirdi, on a Thursday, an auspicious day, I wished to chant the name of ‘Ram’ continuously the whole day.
168. On Wednesday night, on the bed, until I fell asleep, I fixed my mind on the chanting of the name of ‘Ram’ and engrossed it in my heart.
169. When I woke up early in the morning, I was reminded of the name of ‘Ram’. When this happened, I thought that my tongue had really justified its existence.
170. Therefore I firmly decided to continue thus. Having finished my morning ablutions, I took some flowers, that I found, along with me and set out to have Sai’s early morning *darshan*.
171. Leaving behind Dixit’s home and passing outside Butti’s *wada*, I heard a sweet song beautifully sung by Aurangabadkar.
172. If I try to put the whole song in the ovi metre, the listeners will be deprived of its original beauty and may not enjoy it.
173. So, I will sing the whole song for you, word by word, by which the loving listeners will be happy. The song contains the basic *upadesh*.

Song

“Oh my brother, I have received the collyrium of Guru’s Grace.

I do not believe in anyone but Ram. (Chorus)

1. Within me is Ram and without is Ram.
Even in dreams it is Sita-Ram.
 2. Sleeping and waking is Ram.
Wherever my eyes go they see perfect Ram.
 3. The beautiful experience of the disciple of Janardhan – I
see Ram wherever my sight moves.”
174. Already, I had decided and resolved to chant the name of Ram. But before commencing to do it, this song which I heard added strength.
175. Thus, I was convinced. Had the great compassionate Sai showered that water on that seed of my resolve?
176. Carrying a *tamburi*² in his hand, Aurangabadkar, facing Sai, in the courtyard,³ was singing full-throatedly and the notes spread everywhere.
177. Aurangabadkar was Baba’s devotee. Like me, he had surrendered at his feet. Though he knew so many songs by heart, why was he inspired to sing the particular one at that time.
178. No one was aware of my resolution. Then, why was only that song

being sung? It is as if Baba had pulled the strings and inspired him accordingly.

179. We are all mere puppets and mother Sai is the controller. He rightly suggested the *upasana* without directly saying so.
180. My innermost thoughts were reflected in Baba's mind. In this way, he had actually proved his point. I definitely think so.
181. How great is the power of the name! Great saints have praised it all along. How far can a lowly person like me describe it – that which leads to realisation of God!
182. The fisherman, who was a bandit when he recited these two letters in the reverse order, he turned from an ordinary Valya into Sage Valmiki, and displayed extraordinary word power.
183. When he said the words, 'Mara, mara' the letters 'Ram' were naturally uttered by his tongue and enabled him to write the life and deeds of Ram even before his incarnation.
184. The name of 'Ram' is most pious, by which the sinner can be salvaged. The name of 'Ram' brings treasures of joy. The name of 'Ram' is equivalent to singing *bhajans*; and its recitation can lead to *Brahman*.
185. By simple repeated utterance of the name of 'Ram' the bonds of birth and death will be broken. By the remembrance of the name of 'Ram' the gains will be multifold.
186. Whenever the name of 'Ram' resounds, the *Sudarshan Chakra*⁴ of Vishnu will operate and it will destroy millions of obstacles. The name is the protection for the weak.
187. Sai does not require a particular place for his teachings – nor a right time or a right setting. Even while talking, walking or sitting he is able to effortlessly teach pure knowledge to all.
188. Listeners, now listen to an interesting story in connection with this, with respect. The story will show Sai's compassionate nature as well as his all-pervasiveness.
189. Once a great devotee, while somebody was talking of another person, was prejudiced and got deeply involved in criticising.
190. The virtues were overlooked; and only the criticism was recounted on all sides. The actual story was lost sight of and this became a reviling session.
191. If at all there is a reason (for disagreement), or if someone behaves abominably, then one should frankly and sweetly try to correct him, and should pity him.

192. Never belittle anybody. This is known to everyone. But such a nature cannot be suppressed. It cannot remain under control.
193. From within it rises, gradually, till it is blurted out of the mouth. When the lips open, happiness and contentment are pushed out.
194. There is none else better than a critic, in the three worlds. He can help a person. Criticism does good to a person and a critic thus obliges a person.
195. Some people remove dirt with the help of the soap-nut; some use products like soap; some do it with clean and pure water; but a critic does so with his tongue.
196. In a way, they bear the deterioration of their own character for the sake of others, to do good to them. Therefore, their deeds are, really speaking, indescribably benedictory. Surely, a critic should be highly respected.
197. At every step, he points out the hazards. He lets a person know his shortcomings under the pretext of criticising, thus helping him to avoid future calamities and obliging everyone. How much more could I praise him?
198. Many people have praised them. Even saints and sages have talked about their greatness. I bow down to that band of critics.
199. Those who were listening were nauseated. The critic left the scene and went to the toilet and the rest of the group started towards the *Masjid* for Baba's *darshan*.
200. Baba was omniscient. He instructed the devotees at the proper time. Listen, how he made use of this incident later on.
201. On the way to the Lendi along with the others, Baba inquired about that devotee and was told that he was at the village stream, for toilet purposes.
202. After completing his ritual, Baba returned from the Lendi; and that devotee also turned from the village stream to go home.
203. Both of them met. Oh, listeners! I pray to you to carefully listen to all that transpired at that meeting.
204. Nearby, next to a hedge, a village sow was eating excreta with great relish. Baba pointed out that to him.
205. "Look how its tongue is enjoying the taste of the human excreta! A person who reviles his own brethren to his heart's content is similar to it.
206. "If you are born as a human being, after doing a lot of good deeds in your previous birth, and if you thus waste the life, what good can Shirdi do for him, who is set to ruin himself?"

207. With these words, Baba walked away. The devotee was inwardly hurt. He remembered the morning's incident and those words pierced his heart.
208. So be it. Baba teaches his devotees lovingly, at the opportune time. If the essence of his teachings is retained, can salvation remain far?
209. 'If God cares for me, he will give me everything without my making any efforts is a promise. This is true as far as food and clothing is concerned.'
210. But if anyone, who is a spiritual seeker, applies it he will ruin himself completely. Baba's words: "He will reap as he sows" are invaluable, in that respect.
211. Some other words of Baba will bring about tremendous happiness. If only one has the warmth of faith and devotion, they will be deep-rooted in the heart.
212. "I do not reside in one place. I am present in the waters, on the land, in the woods, amongst the people and away from the people, in your own country and in foreign lands, in the skies and in the light of the sun.
213. "I have taken this human form to remove the misconception of those who consider me to be present only in this body of three-and-a-half arms length.
214. "Those who sing my praise continuously, day and night, they are themselves replicas of my inner self without any differentiation.
215. "If sweetness can be separated from jaggery, if the ocean can be separated from the waves, if the eyes can see without light, then only can my simple devotee be separated from me.
216. "He who definitely wishes to escape the bonds of birth and death, should follow the path of righteousness very meticulously and be always tranquil.
217. "Such a person should abandon harsh words; should not pick on others' weaknesses; remain engaged in good acts concentrating on one's own duties.
218. "Surrender your mind and heart to me. Remember me continuously. Do not bother about your body and leave it to itself. Such a person need not fear nor have to concern himself about the three-fold purification.
219. "He who looks to me with undivided attention, praises me and listens to my praises is blessed. He, who has no other desire except me, he only will reach the Supreme Self".

220. “Take my name and surrender to me” was told by him to everyone. But he asked those who wanted to know him to listen and meditate.
221. He gave different kinds of observances to different people. To one, he suggested chanting the name of the Lord; to another, he suggested listening to the deeds of the Lord and yet, to another the worship of the feet of the Lord.
222. To some he prescribed the *Adhyatma Ramayan*; to some the recitation of *Dr̥ṣyaneshwari*; to some he suggested reciting the *Harivardā*⁵ and to some to read *Gurucharitra*.
223. He would keep some near him; ask some to go to Khandoba’s temple; to some he keenly suggested to study and memorise the *Vishnu Sahasranama*.
224. To some he suggested the *Ram Vijaya*⁶; to some meditation; to some the power of the name of the Lord; to some he suggested the *Chandogya Upanishad*⁷ and *Gitarabasya*⁸ and told them that through faith only they could understand the essence of all.
225. His ways of teaching were exceptional. Some were taught in a particular way, some in a different way. To some he taught directly and appeared in the dreams of others.
226. Many people from different castes⁹ came for his *darshan* and help. He even appeared in dreams to those who were fond of liquor.
227. He would sit on their chest pressing with his hands and feet and making them take a solemn vow never to drink again.
228. Like the pictures that are drawn by an astrologer on the walls of a house where a wedding is to take place, he would write the *mantra* “Guru *Brahma*, Guru *Vishnu*”¹⁰ etc. in a dream vision on the walls of the house of another devotee.
229. If a person tried to practise the *yogic asana* and also the difficult *Hatha Yoga* without Baba’s knowledge, Baba would come to know about it because of his extra-sensory powers and then he would rightly penalise.
230. He would catch hold of someone, whom he did not even know, and send a message : “Can you not sit quietly, and patiently eat your bread?”
231. To some he would give an ultimatum and tell him that : “I am a very strict person¹¹ by nature. I will tell you mildly only once or twice and if inspite of that you don’t listen, at the end it will be very difficult for you.
232. “I will try to tell once, to tell twice, but if a person does not care to

listen to my words, even if he be my kith and kin, I will not hesitate to tear him apart and throw him away”.

233. He was a genius and magnanimous. How can I, an ordinary person, describe his mysterious powers? He would give knowledge to some; develop non-attachment for some; some learnt goodness from him; some got awareness of true devotion from him.
234. In certain cases he advocated the right discipline of behaviour. I will give an example of such an episode to my listeners.
235. One day, at high noon, without any rhyme or reason, Baba suddenly came near Radhakrishni's¹² house.
236. There were some people accompanying him and he asked for a ladder to be brought quickly to him. Someone immediately got one for him.
237. Baba put it against the wall of the house and climbed up to the roof. No one knew what was in his mind and what was his plan.
238. “Actually, the ladder was put against Waman Gondkar's house and Sree Sai climbed up the ladder to the roof himself, very swiftly.
239. The houses were adjoining and he crossed over quickly to Radhakrishni's roof. Nobody could understand the mystery.
240. At that time, Radhakrishni was suffering from severe malaria and she was very restless.
241. Baba himself was so weak at that time that he had to be supported by two people on both sides. At that moment from where did he gather that strength?
242. Immediately he crossed to the other side of the roof and from the eaves came down the slope and descended by the same ladder which was fixed to that wall.
243. As soon as his feet touched the ground, he very meticulously gave two rupees to the person who had brought the ladder for him so promptly.
244. The man had only fixed the ladder at two places. That was the only work he had accomplished and about which he could be proud. And, in return, Baba gave him so much.
245. People were naturally curious and thought how could Baba give so much money to the person who had brought the ladder for him; and talked amongst themselves.



246. At that time, somebody took courage to ask. Baba replied: “Nobody should take another’s labour, in any way, free of charge.
247. “One can accept work from a person but one should always evaluate a person’s efforts and repay. One should discipline oneself never to take free services from anyone”.
248. Who can have the profound understanding of Baba’s behaviour? Only he knew! The minds of saints are not penetrable.
249. The words from his mouth that we listened to were our guides and support. If we firmly believe and behave accordingly, our daily lives will be smooth.
250. So be it. The next chapter is definitely more enjoyable than this. It is about an innocent young daughter of a maid servant who uncovers the very spirit of the *Shruti*.
251. Ganu Das, who was a blessed *kirtankar*, had taken to heart to translate the *Ishavasya Upanishad* into vernacular, for the benefit of the Marathi speaking people.
252. He wrote the book with Sai’s blessings but some deeper meaning was not clear to him and created doubts in his mind. See how Baba cleared them!
253. While sitting in Shirdi, Baba said to him: “When you return to Parle¹³, the maid servant at Kaka’s¹⁴ house will clear your doubt.”
254. The Deity of Speech, like a bee, hums around the lotus of *Ishavasya*. Only the most erudite may enjoy its fragrance and the clever listeners are invited to partake of it.
255. Enough. This will be narrated in the next chapter. Sai is the doer, the cause of the narration, the Cloud of Mercy. Listen according to your convenience, for you will be blessed.
256. Pant Hemad surrenders to Sai and also humbles himself before God and all the creatures. I request the attention of all the listeners to this wonderful story of Sai, which is very sweet.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the nineteenth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people called “Grace that was Bestowed on Me”.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Guru of the Gods, considered to be very brilliant.
2. A Turkish guitar with four wires.
3. Of the *Masjid*.

4. The discus of Vishnu, a flaming weapon.
5. Marathi commentary on the tenth *skanda* of the *Bhagvat* by Krishna Dayaranav.
6. Sreedhar Swami's story of Ram in Marathi in verse form.
7. One of the oldest and longest *Upanishads*. Deep and philosophical thoughts are explained herein.
8. Tilak's commentary on the *Gita* in Marathi.
9. Distinguishable by the way in which they tied their turbans or headgear.
10. The Guru is *Brahma*. The Guru is *Vishnu*. The Guru is *Maheshwar*. The Guru is *Parabrahman* made manifest. Obeisance to that Sree Guru.
11. Like a Rajput who gives a word and will not break it, even if it cost his life. They are called '*Kadva*' (bitter).
12. Sree Sai Baba used to call Radhakrishnabai by this name.
13. Ville Parle, a suburb of Bombay.
14. Hari Sitaram Dixit, who was called Kaka by Baba.



Bapusaheb Jog waving the five-wick lamp

Afterwards, Bapusaheb Jog would take the five-wick lamp in his hand and lovingly wave it before Baba with devotion, while the devotees sang the *arati* compositions. (Ch. 19, ovi 82)