

Description of the Chavadi

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. Twice blessed is Sai's life. Blessed is his daily routine. His ways and actions are wonderful and indescribable in entirety.
2. Unfathomable are his true deeds. Blessed is the course of his life. Twice blessed is his irresolute and austere life of mighty resolves which was like walking on the razor's edge.
3. Sometimes he was intoxicated with Divine Bliss; sometimes he was content with Self Knowledge; sometimes he was aloof from all his actions. Such was his indeterminate state.
4. Sometimes he was quite actionless, yet not asleep. Keeping in mind his aim, he always abided in his own Self.
5. Sometimes he would be as propitious as the ocean, but also boundless, unfathomable and deep. Who can aptly describe his ineffable nature?
6. He regarded men as brothers and women as sisters and mothers. He was a perfect and perpetual celibate, as everyone was fully aware.
7. May the understanding we received in his pious company remain with us, undiminished, until death.
8. May our desire to serve him be abundant. Let our devotion be exclusively at his feet. May we see God in all beings and ever love his name.
9. Those who endeavoured to understand his every action were baffled and at the end could only be still and non-plussed.
10. Many people fight for the joys of heaven. They extol heaven's greatness. They consider life on earth contemptible since there is fear of death here.

11. In a way one assumes a form from the unmanifest. That is called the visible state. Again one returns to the unmanifest state. This they call death.
12. Unrighteous conduct, ignorance, anger, hatred etc. are chains which fetter us to death. Those who can completely overcome them, only can enter heaven.
13. Heaven? What else is heaven? Detachment is heaven. Consider one's own *atma* as the spirit that pervades the universe excluding all sorrow.
14. In that state, there is no cause for diseases etc., nor worries, problems, pains and no hunger or thirst; and none has fear of old age.
15. Where there is no fear of death, and no precepts and prohibitions, life carries on without any fear whatsoever. That is the divine heavenly state.
16. The same essence that pervades from Brahma to the animate, filling the movable and the unmovable alike, that same essence is also there in the other world as well as here. It excludes plurality.
17. Although this principle is devoid of all attributes of mundane existence, it appears to be non – *Brahman* to the individual soul, deluded by ignorance on account of the association with limiting adjuncts.
18. '*Parabrahma* is something different from me. I am different'. Those, who believe in such discrimination, are bound by the laws of death.
19. Death follows birth and after death re-birth. This interminable circle of nature is the fate of those who think thus.
20. What is the use of a heaven which is attained by the most difficult sacrifice, penance and charity, but is devoid of the remembrance of Narayan's (the Lord's) feet?
21. We do not wish for a place in heaven where there is only sensory enjoyment. Of what use is it to us, if it makes us forget *Govind's* (the Lord's) name?
22. Be it in heaven, or in hell, the sensual pleasure is the same. The pleasures of *Indra* and an ass are exactly of the same nature.
23. *Indra* moves about in his pleasure garden as happily as the ass rolls on the rubbish heap. The pleasures of both are comparable. There is not the slightest difference.
24. Why strive for a place from where one is bound to come down, once the accumulated store of merit has been exhausted? It is better, instead to be born on this earth. The greatness of this earth is unfathomable.

25. Is that heaven important because one's life span there is of thousands of years? This brief span on earth is far better than that.
26. In life which is transient, whatever action is done, if it is all surrendered to the Lord, the person attains freedom from fear.
27. Of what use is a place where the devotees do not listen to and recite God's and Guru's stories or dance and sing to worship God?
28. Knowledge acquired about the union of *Brahman* and *Atman*, that is permanent; and the means for achieving the very best. For that, the best place is earth and not the heavens.
29. Surrender to the Guru body, speech and mind and the five '*pranas*'. The questioning intellect should be merged in the Guru, totally dependent on him.
30. What fear of the world can there be after thus surrendering to the *Sadguru*? And why unnecessarily worry about the worldly transactions when he is there to solve all problems?
31. Where ignorance abides, there exists attachment for progeny and property and constant worries about the worldly matters, leaving not a trace of good thoughts.
32. Ignorance is the root cause for establishing this plurality. Therefore it is necessary to acquire knowledge of *Shastras* in *Sanskrit* through a qualified teacher.
33. Once this ignorance is removed, even a trace of plurality will not remain, and will release the person from the cycle of birth and death. This is caused by the knowledge of oneness.
34. He who has even the slightest trace of separate identity will suffer the cycle of birth and death, for creation and destruction invariably follow that feeling.
35. The 'good' or the well-being is the subject matter of knowledge undoubtedly; and where only the pleasant is the subject matter, it is definitely ignorance.
36. The greatest fear in the world is that of death. To escape from it hold fast to the Guru's feet, for it is he who will grant you unity consciousness.
37. Where there is duality and plurality, there only such fear can enter. Therefore, where there is not even a trace of such fear, serve the feet of such a Guru.
38. Adorn the forehead of such a Guru with sandalwood paste of pure love and offer him the yellow garments of your devotion. He will show to his devotees that which pervades the Universe.

39. Offer him the throne of firm faith, decorate it with the right 'satvik' emotions and bathe him with tears of joy. He will then be pleased.
40. Put arround his waist a girdle of devotion, ward off the evil eye with salt and lemon etc; surrender yourself to him and thereafter, do his *arati*.
41. The extinction or destruction of anything or any work is based on its existence. If an earthen pot is broken with a stone then its form no longer exists.
42. It does not mean that there is not a trace of the pot's existence. If the broken pieces of the pot are put together, then it can take its original form again.
43. Therefore, that which is known as the destruction of the effect is really dependent on the permanent existence of the cause. Therefore the end of the body of anyone results not in a void.
44. No action is done without a reason. What is imperceptible becomes perceptible because it is enjoined to truth always. This is well-known through experience.
45. The chain of cause and effect only displays the lesser and the greater degree of subtlety. In such a state the gross effect is destroyed. What exists or remains is verily the subtle cause.
46. On the destruction of that also, there remains something still more subtle where the cogniser reaches a state of cognising all the senses, the mind as well as the intellect.
47. In short, where the intellect comes to an end there alone the concrete turns back into the abstract. Nevertheless, the existence of the cause that is the abstract cannot be clouded, as existence shines everywhere.
48. Intellect gives support to desires. Therefore, immediately, on its extinction there appears *Atman* and the state of non-decay at the feet.
49. Ignorance, illusion, desire and action are verily the main attributes of death. On alleviation of all these, bondage comes to an end.
50. On the destruction of all bonds, *Atman* effortlessly manifests, just as on the scattering of clouds the self-luminous sun is revealed and shines.
51. 'I am the body, this is my wealth'. This is immense ego. These are the knots with which *Maya* ties our hearts and which are the causes of all our sorrows.
52. Once if this body dies and another is acquired because of *karmas*, to annihilate the seeds of those *karmas*, then if one fails to destroy those *karmas*, then another birth is certain.

53. Once again, the seeds grow into trees. The body is acquired because of the seeds of *vasanas*. Thus, this is an endless cycle till all the *vasanas* end.
54. Eradication of desires from the very roots will remove the knots of the hearts. Such a man becomes immortal. This is the teaching in the *Vedas*.
55. A condition, in which one has transcended righteous or unrighteous behaviour, as prescribed in the *shastras*, which is called *viraja* (pure) destroys all acts of ignorance and there is no place for death.
56. Deliverance from *vasanas* brings about an union with *Brahmananda* (Divine Bliss) that which cannot be described in words, spoken or written.
57. Complete knowledge of *Parabrahma* is itself the absence of all evil – that itself is the ultimate achievement, as laid down in the *shrutis* and the *smritis*.
58. “Knowledge and experience of Brahma is the ultimate”. This is the highest state of *Brahmanand*. What greater excellence can there be? “All the sorrows of the *Atma* are crossed over”.
59. To completely cross the worldly ocean and reach the yonder shores, Knowledge of Brahma is the best and essential means to attain everything.
60. Have full faith and absolute patience. They are *Uma* and *Maheshwar* in manifest form. The Lord who pervades the universe will not be visible in your heart till he lays his hand of mercy on your head.
61. Sainath, the Supreme Guru, whose words had unfailing potency said: “What is needed is faith and a little courage and the greatest glory is yours”.
62. All the world that is seen, is after all unreal. It is necessary to accept this. Take the instance of things seen in a dream which entirely vanish on coming to an awakening condition or stage.
63. So far is the ken of reason (intellect). Upto this only is the existential character of the individual soul. But that stage, where there is no room either for existence or non-existence, is really the stage of truth i.e. the Highest Soul.
64. That which is devoid of the cognition of *Sat* and *Asat* etc. from any idea of gender and is bereft of all attributes is verily the all-encompassing nature of the Preceptor expressed in the form of different words.
65. *Atman* is without any attributes, beyond old age, birth or death. It is ancient and eternal, indestructible and beyond decay.

66. It is perpetual, unborn, ancient, all-pervading like the sky, unending, and indivisible, ungrrowing and unchangeable.
67. Then who can describe that which is beyond words, without form, without beginning or end, unfathomable, imperishable, without smell, without taste and untainted.
68. Thus, this *Atman* which is attributeless and invisible is not known because of ignorance. Then remove this ignorance by knowledge. But do not ever call that *Atman* non-existent.
69. How wonderful was that realised state of Sree Sai, which was his personal grandeur! Time, the thief, has snatched it away. Would it ever be seen again?
70. Let us not bother about the devotees who are attached to money, progeny, wife. Even the most emancipated *yogis* who came for *darshan* got deeply attached to his lotus feet.
71. Blessed is the devotee who is in the world but detached from the bondage of all desires and deeds and from the body and home.
72. He who has Sai only as his object of vision, can he see anything else? Wherever he gazes, he sees no place which is devoid of Sai.
73. He who chants Sai's name and has love for Sai in his heart is always assured of his well-being and repose. Sai himself protects him.
74. Same is the case for him who hears only Sai, and speaks of nothing but Sai, inhales only Sai's fragrance and savours only Sai's name on his tongue.
75. How wonderful was Sai's smiling visage which granted the purest of happiness! Blessed and fortunate is he that saw it and savoured the nectar of his words.
76. The store of our well-being and the source of our peace and happiness, he was full of discrimination and detachment and ever alert from within.
77. Just as the calf though it has had its fill of milk does not leave the mother's side, similarly the mind should be tied with a rope at the feet of the Guru.
78. To attain the grace and love from the Guru, bow down in the dust of his lotus feet. Bear in mind his advice and experience it at every step.
79. While engaged in sense pleasures, to your heart's content, bear in mind the love for Sai, because that will be of help ultimately in the achievement of both – the worldly benefits and the spiritual goals.
80. The collyrium from one who has attained command over charms

and spells shows the wealth that is buried under the earth to the one who is born with legs foremost (*payalu*). Similarly, the dust from the Guru's feet gives the spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge.

81. Whatever are the characteristics of a *Siddha* should be the means for the seeker to learn with long practice and exercise.
82. Clarified butter (ghee) can be made from milk. But if the milk is not made sour, there will be no buttermilk nor clarified butter, because all these depend upon certain actions to be performed.
83. Without churning the buttermilk one cannot obtain butter; and unless the butter is boiled on the fire, tasty clarified butter will not be available.
84. What is required is the power of previous impressions and intelligence on account of practice in the past. Without studies there will be no purification of the mind, without which the acquisition of spiritual knowledge is really unattainable.
85. The mind needs to be purified. Then only can Self Realisation be achieved. So long as that stage is not achieved do not give up devotion to God.
86. One needs the foundation of devotion to God to erect the temple of Self Realisation and for the four spires of *Mukti* (liberation) to shine and the flag of asceticism to fly.
87. Day and night, the dogs and the pigs wallow in the mire and eat the excreta. They are enjoying the sense pleasure. Should it be the same with human beings?
88. The human being should do penance and achieve purification of the mind whereby the *Brahman* is attained completely. Such behaviour, in accordance with religion is needed, at the outset.
89. Service rendered to sages becomes the abode for deliverance, whereas sexual indulgences open the doors of hell. These are the words from the revered elders, which need to be borne in mind always.
90. One whose conduct is always correct and good, who eats just enough to sustain his body, and is not attached to home or wife – such a person is blessed and a sage.
91. Those who constantly meditate upon Sai (without closing their eyes), Sai himself thinks of them being obliged to them – see the wonder of this experience!
92. Blessed is the greatness of chanting the Lord's name! Even the Guru then remembers the devotee. The meditator becomes the one meditated upon, both completely forgetting themselves.

93. "You are responsible for your actions. For me, I constantly dwell upon you". Many people will remember such loving words from Baba.
94. We do not need the scriptures. Just this one religious work on Sai is enough. Irrespective of the number of sins committed, he is our protector from all the difficulties.
95. If it is not possible to read consistently the entire book, just concentrate and fill your heart with the chapters on devotion to the Guru. Listen to them everyday as a rule.
96. Read this biography regularly at any time of the day. Sree Hari together with your *Gururaj*, will certainly meet his devotee.
97. Goddess Lakshmi will permanently abide in the home where it is read regularly. At least if one week's reading of the whole book is done, poverty will be driven away.
98. Do not think that I am saying this, because that will create doubts. Sai himself speaks through my speech. Leave aside troublesome imagination.
99. Sai who is the treasure house of all virtues, is the grantor of liberation to his devotees. His stories destroy all the sins of *Kaliyug*. Listeners should hear them.
100. The bliss of heaven is a mere trifle compared with the story of such a saint. Who would ever care to raise his head and look there, leaving aside the prompt benefit of this true story.
101. Happiness and sorrow are states of the mind. Association with a saint is always unchanging. It makes the mind one with consciousness and leaves no room for pain or pleasure.
102. Even *Indra* or *Chakravati* cannot experience the happiness, till the end of time, which the detached person sitting in solitude gets or which a devotee gets in *bhakti* (devotion).
103. Fate is very powerful. The intellect one has depends upon the actions of the previous births, but the destined consequences can be easily avoided by a devotee by the sport of the saint.
104. Though you make indefatigable efforts, you will not be able to avoid the experience of the fruits of *Karma* ; *Karma* which has started bearing fruit since it is associated with a stage of unavailability making the disassociation from it truly impossible.
105. The saints can foresee the consequences of fate and the unwanted pain or the unimaginable happiness which follows.
106. Continuous chanting of your name is our vow, penance and charity; and a visit to Shirdi, from time to time, is our only pilgrimage.

107. “Sai, Sai” is the name that we remember and it is the *mantra* to propitiate all Gods. This is our meditation and this is our repetition. Whole heartedly surrender to him.
108. His real worship is a guileless, loving relationship. Then experience within yourself his inconceivable attainments.
109. Enough of this long-windedness. We need something sweet immediately. All must be eager to hear the interesting story, indicated earlier.
110. Knowing the feelings of eagerness of my listeners, I have made compact the marvel of the story, indicated earlier, so as to preserve perfect attention.
111. I, the lowliest, slow-witted, ignorant of the most elementary knowledge of poetical grammar, am being made to write what Sai wishes me to write, while holding my hand.
112. Who am I to write this story, if Sai had not given me the intellect? He tells his own story and he writes it himself.
113. Thus, now to the story referred to earlier of the *Chavadi*, *Handi* and the *Prasad*, as promised earlier. Listen to that narration.
114. I shall also relate to the listeners similar stories or any other stories which I can recall. Listen to them attentively.
115. Blessed is the marvel of the stories of Sai! Twice blessed are the effects of listening to them. One can experience one’s Real Self by meditation on them, which increases our devotion at Sai’s feet.
116. Now, at first the description of the *Chavadi* and then to give a general outline of the ceremony. Baba slept on alternate nights at the Chavadi, as a rule.
117. This routine of Baba, of sleeping one night in the *Masjid* and the next one in the *Chavadi* continued regularly till the *Samadhi*.
118. Later, from 10th December 1909, Baba’s worship in the *Chavadi*, *bhajan* etc. also began.
119. Let me begin with the description of the ceremony in the *Chavadi* to the best of my ability. May Sai give me the grace of enthusiasm and God will help me in completing it.
120. On the night when Baba used to go to the *Chavadi*, the *bhajan* singing group came to the *Masjid* and the *bhajans* were done for some hours in the courtyard of the *Masjid*.
121. Behind, there was the beautifully decorated chariot; to the right was the small pedestal in which the sacred basil (*tulsi*) was planted; facing which Baba was himself seated; and, in the middle, were the singers doing the *bhajans*.

122. All devotees, men and women, who had a great respect for devotional songs, came to the courtyard early in all readiness for the *bhajans*.
123. The sound of the *bhajans* swelled on the waves of various instruments played by the devotees, such as *tal* ¹, *chipli* ², *Mridang* ³, *Khanjari* ⁴ and *ghol* ⁵, while some beat time with their hands.
124. Sai *Samartha* is the lodestone, who by his strength of the powers of attraction, dragged the devotees like iron filings at his feet without their knowledge.
125. The torch bearers would light their torches in the courtyard. The palanquin was decorated there itself by some. At the gates stood the staff bearers ready to proclaim salutations repeatedly.
126. At the road crossing (corner), there were arches, garlands and buntings. Flags flew high in the sky. The children were dressed in new clothes and ornaments.
127. Many rows of earthen lamps around the *Masjid* brightened it. At the entrance of the courtyard, the horse Shyamakaran stood fully caparisoned.
128. In the meanwhile, Tatyapa Patil would come with a group of people. He would sit near Baba, in all readiness to leave with Baba.
129. Though Baba was ready, until Tatyapa arrived he would remain seated in his own place, waiting for Tatyapa's arrival.
130. Until Tatyapa Patil made Baba stand up, putting his hand under Baba's arm, then only Baba made ready to go to the *Chavadi* from there.
131. Tatyapa addressed Baba as *Mama* (mother's brother or maternal uncle). Such was their reciprocal love and affinity. It was beyond compare.
132. He would be wearing his usual *kafani* ; and would place his *sataka* under his arm. He would carry the *chillum* and tobacco and throw a cloth on the shoulder.
133. When Baba was thus ready, Tatyapa would drape a beautiful *zari* embroidered cloak on his body and head, properly covering him.
134. After this, Baba moved a little bit the front of the bundle of fuel – sticks lying at the foot of the back wall with his right toe, at its own place, for a moment.
135. Also, immediately afterwards, Sai would extinguish the lamp that was burning there with his right hand. Then he would leave for the *Chavadi*.
136. When Sai set off all the musical instruments started playing. Fireworks were lit, also powerfully luminant lamps like offerings to the gods; and the earthen lamps illumined the whole area.

137. Some played the horns; some blew the large brass trumpets; some played the drums and the cymbals; and there was no dearth of people keeping time by clapping to the music.
138. The *mridang* and the *veena* clanged amidst the loud shouting of Sai's name. In keeping with the *bhajans*, the men and the women walked in rows.
139. Holding banners and standards, some of which had the eagle imprinted, the congregation moved, dancing and jumping with joy and singing *bhajans*.
140. All the people were very joyous. They would leave with banners and standards in procession. The metal gongs and wind instruments made tumultuous sounds, along with those who made proclamations with hands raised to the ears. There were salutations and the horse capered.
141. Thus, with the reverberations of the musical instruments, the procession left the *Masjid*. When Baba came to the steps, the ushers made proclamations.
142. The devotees would do *bhajans* with *tal*, *mridang*, *veena*, *chipli* and cymbals blissfully, at that place.
143. The devotees walked with delight holding the decorations and banners. On both sides of Baba, stood persons holding whisks and fanning him.
144. People folded their shawls, and cloths and spread them on the way, like carpets, on which Baba was made to walk, supported by devotees' hands, as other waved whisks over him.
145. Tatyaba held his left hand, while Mhalsapati held his right. Bapusaheb (Jog) held an umbrella as a conopy over his head and in this manner the retinue proceeded to the *Chavadi*.
146. In front was that copper coloured horse, which was called Shyamakaran. He was richly decorated and caparisoned and bells jingled on his feet.
147. The staff bearers walked ahead, proclaiming Sai's name. The canopy holders held on to it and the whisks were continuously waved by the whisk holders.
148. The musical instruments and the gongs played; and the devotees made the air resound with salutations. Thus the devotees collectively proceeded and the ushers lovingly made proclamations.
149. The ringing sound of the Lord's name was continuous. The *tal*, *jhanj*, *mridang* were harmonious. The devotees moved collectively to the beat of time, shouting and proclaiming.

150. Thus the devotees and the *bhajan* singers, full of delight and shouting hosannas (cry of adoration) to Sai on the way, arrived at the cross-roads.
151. The instruments, *tal*, *jhanj*, *dbol* and ghol, vehemently played. The surge of Sai's name was emphatic and the *bhajan* was loving and delightful.
152. Men and women walked with him, each filled with joy of the *bhajans*, shouting Sai's name, the sound of which reverberated in the sky.
153. The sky resounded with the playing of the instruments. The onlookers' hearts were filled with joy. The *Chavadi* procession was thus worth watching. The splendour and the decorations were incomparable.
154. As he stood facing the *Chavadi*, a lustre like the sun in the early morning or late evening sky shone like the heated, purified gold, from Sree's countenance.
155. The lustre of the face at that time shone like the spreading light of the early dawn. It was like the core of pure consciousness. Who would not take its benefit?
156. A *darshan* at that time was blessed! His face was aglow with a diffused red colour. He stood facing the north with a concentrated mind and seemed to be calling someone.
157. The musical instruments and the gongs resounded. Maharaj stood full of delight, moving his right hand up and then bringing it down, on and oft, at that time.
158. Dixit, a leading devotee, came with a silver platter filled with many flowers and showered the flowers on Baba's whole body, on and oft, at the time.
159. Kakasaheb kept on showering rose petals, mixed with red farinaceous powder, on Sai's forehead with love and devotion.
160. Thus, when Kaka showered those rose petals, mixed with red farinaceous powder, the gong, *jhanj* and *tal* sounded one beat, and the musical instruments played at their best.
161. The villagers who were Baba's devotees came for *darshan* with great love. At that time, Baba's cast of countenance emitting a reddish glow was marvellously evident.
162. Looking at that play of lustre on his face, the eyes of the onlookers widened with surprise. Their loving minds felt abundance of joy and were freed easily from the toil of existence.
163. Oh, that wonderful divine brilliance! Its beauty was like that of the

- rising sun! The gong and other instruments resounded in front of him for a long time.
164. For more than one and a half hours, Baba stood at one place, facing north, moving his right hand up and down constantly.
 165. His complexion, golden like the core of the *Ketaki* ⁶ flower, with a slightly reddish lustre on the face, cannot be described by the tongue. It has to be savoured by the eyes only.
 166. Sometimes, Mhalsapati began to dance being possessed by some deity; but all were surprised to see that Baba's concentration was not in the least disturbed.
 167. On Baba's right stood *Bhagat* (Mhalsapati) holding the hem of Baba's *kafni* very lightly; and to the left, Taty Kote walked with a lantern in his hand.
 168. How enjoyable was the celebration! which was nothing but a glorious exposition of love and devotion. The rich and the great gathered to watch the marvel of it!
 169. Self luminosity brightened the extremely fair complexion. The moon-like brilliant countenance had just a little reddish glow. People filled their eyes with this indescribable beauty.
 170. Baba walked slowly. The gathering of devotees walked on both sides with tremendous love and devotion, which choked everyone with exuberant delight.
 171. Such a celebration is no longer there for anyone to behold. Those days and those times are gone. Let us bring solace to ourselves with the memories.
 172. All the musical instruments played tumultuously. Hosannas were shouted on the way. Taking Baba to the *Asan* at the *Chavadi*, he was offered a grand worship (*puja*).
 173. The *Chavadi*'s ceiling was decorated with a white awning from which chandeliers and lamps were suspended, whose light was reflected in the mirrors. The whole place was brilliantly lit up.
 174. All the assembled devotees gathered closely at the *Chavadi*. Then, Tatyaba spread out the *Asan* and helped Baba, by holding him, to sit on it.
 175. On that excellent *Asan* which was prepared, a bolster was placed at the back for him to lean on. When Baba was settled in his seat, he was asked to wear an *Angarkha* (cloak).
 176. Beautiful apparels were placed on his body and he was worshipped with great joy. The *Arati* was done at the top of their voices and he was presented with garlands and bouquets.

177. Anointing his hands with sandalwood paste and perfume, ornaments were placed on him after the expensive clothes. A crown also was placed on his head and they stared at him.
178. Sometimes it was a beautiful golden crown, sometimes a lovely turban embroidered with gold and a bejewelled tuft on which shone a plume of feathers. Round his neck were diamonds and rubies.
179. Then a white pearl necklace was put around his neck. All these ornaments and clothes were brilliantly lit up by the lights.
180. On the forehead was drawn a vertical blackline of fragrant musk and as per the tradition among the *Vaishnavas*, a round black *tilak* was also put on the forehead.
181. That purple velvet cloak, fully embroidered with *zari*, was placed on the shoulders; and if it slipped, it was immediately gathered together on both sides.
182. Similarly, the crown or the turban was held aloft over his head and placed gently so that Baba was not aware of it.
183. Whatever it was the crown or the turban, as soon as it touched his head Baba threw it away. Though this was a great anxiety for them, their loving eagerness was very powerful.
184. Did Sai, who knew the innermost thoughts of all, not know of this surreptitious action of the devotees? But considering their love and affection, he deliberately kept quiet.
185. He, who has the glorious splendour of the Realisation of *Brahman*, of what avail is a full-embroidered *zari* cloak and ornaments? Or of what avail is the embellished crown to him who is radiating his inner peace?
186. Even so the devotees adorned Baba with a variety of ornaments and applied a beautiful *tilak* on his forehead mixed with saffron.
187. Some put diamond and pearl necklaces round his neck and some drew *tilak* on his forehead. Thus, the sport of the devotees went on.
188. How wonderful it all looked when the devotees had completed dressing and bedecking Baba, after the crown was on his head and the pearl necklace shone around his neck.
189. Nana Saheb Nimonkar held the white umbrella which moved in a circle on its supporting stick with its pendants and tassels.
190. Bapusaheb washed the Guru's feet with great love. He offered the oblations of water with great devotion and offered *puja* with all the rites.
191. Next he placed a silver dish (platter) with an edge and placed Baba's

- feet in it and washed them with great reverence. The hands were cleaned with perfume afterwards.
192. Taking a small bowl of saffron, he applied the fragrant paste to the hands. He offered betel leaf in Baba's palm. Sai looked pleased.
 193. When Baba was on his seat, Tatyaba and others kept standing. Holding Baba's hand they helped him to be seated and bowed at his feet respectfully.
 194. The *Chavadi*, a pure and holy place, polished like marble, was the meeting place of the old and the young, who were lovingly fastened at Sree's feet.
 195. When Baba's lustrous form graced the seat leaning against the bolster, the whisks and fans gently moved on both sides.
 196. Madhavrao crumbled the tobacco into powder and immediately prepared the *chillum* and passed it into Tatyaba's hands who took the first puff.
 197. After the tobacco was ignited and a flame appeared, Tatyaba placed it in Baba's hands. After Baba's first long pull he gave it to *Bhagat*.
 198. Then, in a circle, coming to *Bhagat*, Shama and Tatyaba, from time to time, till it was smoked out.
 199. Blessed it was, and how fortunate! We, the living, could not be compared in the service that it rendered, though it was inanimate.
 200. Its penance was arduous too! It was treaded upon in its infancy (by the potter); later suffering cold and heat (while drying) and finally, it was baked in the fire.
 201. By its destiny it was touched by Baba, then baked again in the *Dhuni*. Afterwards it was anointed with ochre – coloured powder and fragrance. Then it was blessed by the kiss of Baba's lips.
 202. Enough! camphor, saffron and sandalwood paste were smeared on both hands of Baba. After putting garlands of flowers around his neck, the devotees offered him nose-gays. (small bunches of flowers).
 203. He, whose face was ever smiling and who always looked with love and compassion, how could he have any pride at being decked like this? He allowed all this only to show regards for the feelings of the devotees.
 204. For him, whose body is adorned with devotion and who is bedecked with ornaments of peace, of what use are these worldly garlands and jewels?
 205. Of what use is an emerald necklace for him who is the embodiment

- of non-attachment. But, if offered, he inclined his neck to fulfil the desires of the devotees.
206. Glittering garlands of gold, emeralds and pearls shone round his neck. They were made of eight or sixteen rows, mixed with topaz.
207. Garlands of jasmine and basil, that were put round his neck, trailed upto his feet. His neck shone with unprecedented brilliance from the garlands of pearls.
208. Together with the emerald garland studded in gold, there was a gold gorget which hung over Baba's heart. The black *tilak* on the forehead had an enchanting beauty.
209. How can he be called a fakir, who looked like an effulgent descendant of *Vishnu*? Above him were the canopy and the whisks and his head was adorned by the *zari* embroidered cloak.
210. Generally, Jog, with great love, taking the five-wick lamp in his hands would wave it over Baba, in the midst of the din and clamour of the auspicious music of the instruments.
211. After offering the five oblations, together with the *puja*, then taking the abundantly-filled five burning lamps, with *niranjana* and camphor, he waved it round Baba.
212. Then after the *Arati* ended, one by one all the devotees prostrated with eight-fold obeisance, surrendering to Baba and left for their homes.
213. When Tatyaba took Baba's permission to leave for his home, after offering *chillum*, *attar* and rose water, Baba used to say: "Take care of me".
214. "Go if you are going. But during the night from time to time, inquire about me." Saying, "very well", Tatyaji would leave the *Chavadi* and go home.
215. Then when all the people had left Baba would himself untie the bundle and spread the folds of *dhotis*, making his bed with his own hands.
216. Then he himself spread sixty to sixty-five white sheets, one on top of the other, and Baba then slept on them.
217. Here ends the story of the *Chavadi*, as it used to happen. Now the story that still remains will be told in the next chapter.
218. I beg forgiveness from the listeners. As Sai's greatness is unfathomable though I wished to tell it briefly, I could not limit it, for it is all very significant.
219. Now the story of Sai's cooking vessels and whatever other stories

that have been left out will be narrated in the next chapter. Please be reverently attentive.

220. To always remember the Guru, that is the selfish motive of Hemad, to enable him to achieve whatever is desired in this world as also in the other. He can achieve all the four goals of life by prostrating at the feet of the Guru, as they are all contained therein.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the thirty-seventh chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called “Description of the Chavadi”.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Pair of cymbals.
2. Wooden sticks which are beaten to a rhythm.
3. Drum.
4. Small tambourine.
5. Ring with bits of iron loosely attached and fastened to the top of a staff.
6. Pandanus odoratissimus.





Sai Baba going in a procession to Chavadi

How enjoyable was the celebration! which was nothing but a glorious exposition of love and devotion. The rich and the great gathered to watch the marvel of it! (Ch-37, ovi 168)



Nanasaheb Nimonkar