

Leaving of the Body by Sainath

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. Aum. My deep obeisance to the *Sadguru*, the bestower of everything, dweller on the banks of the *Srimad* Godavari! He who is *Brahman* Incarnate, Wearer of the loin cloth, the greatest among Saints, I bow to you.
2. One who guides in crossing the river of mundane existence and who grants refuge to the distressed at his feet, he is the wish-fulfilling tree of the devotees. Such is Sai, the Saint Incarnate.
3. In the last chapter, there was the narration of the interesting story describing the marvel of how the picture of Sai was saved from immersion in the water.
4. Also, how he fulfilled the wish of a devotee by appearing in his dream and made him read the *Dñyaneshwari* apparently giving him his consent.
5. In short, when Guru's grace is yours, the difficulties of the worldly existence disappear, the doors to the right path are opened without effort and unhappiness is turned to true happiness.
6. By constantly remembering the feet of the *Sadguru*, the obstacles cease to have any effect; death loses its sting; and the worldly sorrows are forgotten.
7. Therefore, the listeners should hear the story of the *Samartha* for their own benefit, for listening to it would truly gain great purification.
8. Now in this chapter, we shall ascertain the nature of Sai – how violent or how mild he could be.
9. Till this time, you have heard with full concentration about Baba's

way of life and behaviour. In the same way, listen to how Baba abandoned his body, with excellent attention.

10. Blessed, blessed are the people of Shirdi who had the pleasure of being in Baba's company for more than fifty years. These must have been very happy days!
11. In *Shaké* eighteen hundred and forty (year 1918), in the first month of *Dakshinayan*¹, in the brighter half of the month, on *Vijaydashmi*, was the day of Baba's leaving the body.
12. It was the ninth day of the month of *Mohorrum* of the Muslims and the night of the long knives (massacre of Imam Hussain). In the afternoon, Sainath prepared himself for eternal emancipation.
13. Just as the day for the birth celebrations of Buddha, so became Sai's *Punyatithi*. The birth dates of Gods and Goddesses are as much a cause of celebration as the death anniversaries of the Saints.
14. The bell struck 12.30 and the *dashmi* (tenth day) was over. *Ekadashi* (the eleventh day) had commenced. Hence, his *Nirayan* was on *Ekadashi*.
15. As it was *Dassera* when the sun arose on that day², the day has been considered as *Vijaydashmi* ; and, therefore, the memory of it is observed on that day.
16. Tuesday night was the night of the long knives (massacre), hence the day was very important (for the Muslims). Therefore, on that day, the great Sai merged his light with the Supreme Light, the *Brahman*.
17. It was the day of the end of the *Durga* Festival in Bengal and also a day of celebration for all in northern India.
18. In *Shaké* eighteen hundred and thirty eight (year 1916), in the evening of *Vijaydashmi* itself, before nightfall, an indication had been given about the future.
19. I shall narrate the inconceivable marvel (as to how it was done) whereby the listeners will be amazed. Thereby they will come to know the incomprehensible ways of *Samartha* Sai.
20. In the year 1916, at the time of *Seemolanghan*³ of the *Dassera* festival, when the procession returned in the evening, this strange incident happened.
21. The clouds thundered in the sky and on and off lightening struck. In that manner, Baba manifested as a real incarnation of *Jamadagni*⁴.
22. Untying the piece of cloth from his head, removing the *kafni*

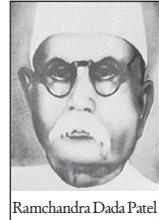
- suddenly, taking off the loin cloth, threw them all in the *dhuni* which blazed into flames.
23. The fire was already very bright and when it was fed by these offerings, it became more brilliant. The upsurge of flames rose high and mighty, and crackled loudly. The devotees were confused.
 24. All this happened unexpectedly. It was difficult to know what Baba had in mind. His way of behaviour at the time of *Seemolanghan* was very frightening.
 25. The fire's brilliance increased. But Baba appeared more lustrous than the fire. The people's eyes were dazzled and they averted their faces.
 26. *Agninarayan*, Lord of the Fire, was propitiated by this offering at the hands of the saint. Blessed were the eyes that beheld the *Digambar Jamadagni* !
 27. He glared with his eyes, red with anger. He said: "Decide for yourself now, whether I am a Muslim or a Hindu".
 28. In a loud thundering voice Baba said: "Look! Decide today itself whether I am a Hindu or a Muslim, unrestrainedly and remove all your doubts".
 29. Beholding the spectacle, the people around trembled with fear; and only thought about how he could be calmed down.
 30. Bhagoji Shinde - the leper, but a great devotee of Baba, gathered courage and came near Baba to make him wear the loin cloth.
 31. He said: "Baba, what is this behaviour? Today is *Seemolanghan*; and the festival of *Dassera*". Baba replied : "This is also my *Seemolanghan*", and began striking vigorously with the *satka*.
 32. In this way, Baba stood near the *dhuni* without any clothes. It was the day for holding the *chavadi* procession. How would it be held was the worry.
 33. The normal time for the *chavadi* procession was 9 pm but it was already 10 o'clock. Baba was not yet quietened down. The people remained rooted to their places helplessly, vacantly staring.
 34. By and by it was 11 o'clock. Baba was also a little bit calm. Wearing a new loin cloth, he afterwards put on a *kafni*.
 35. The bell for the *chavadi* rang. The assembled people were seated still in their place. The *palakhi* was decorated with flowers and was brought into the courtyard with his permission.
 36. The silver mace, paper buntings, whisks, umbrella, flags etc. befitting a king, with which the procession was held, every alternate day, came out.

37. A loud proclamation in unison of “Hail! Hail Sainath” reverberated. How could the loud invocation be described? There was a flood of joy.
38. Afterwards, finding out a white cloth in good condition, Baba wound it round his head. He took his *chillum*, tobacco and *satka*, as if it was the right and auspicious time to start.
39. Someone held the umbrella and someone the whisks. Some one carried the ornamental fan of peacock feathers, and someone the flag with the eagle and a silk *zari*-embroidered awning. The staff bearers took the staves in their hands.
40. Under such a pretext, Baba indicated to all that *Dassera* alone was the auspicious time to cross the boundaries of the worldly existence.
41. Thereafter, Baba enjoyed only one more *Dassera* with the residents of Shirdi. Considering the next *Dassera* to be an auspicious time, he offered his body to the earth.
42. Not only did he give an indication but made people experience this. He offered his own body, a pure apparel, which on that very day was offered as an oblation in the fire of *yoga*.
43. In the year 1918, at the time of the *Dassera* festival of that year, true to his words, he made it an auspicious time to merge himself with the Supreme Spirit.
44. While writing this, I am reminded of another incident of Baba, that this festival of *Dassera* was earlier ordained.
45. The Patil of Shirdi, Ramchandra Dada, fell very ill once. He could not bear the pain, which was beyond endurance.
46. No remedy was left untried yet the pain did not subside. He felt tired of life. Patil felt greatly worried.
47. When he was in this mental state, one midnight, suddenly Baba appeared at the head of his bed.
48. Then Patil clasped his feet and in desperation said to Baba: “When will death come to me? Tell me only that please.
49. Now I am tired of life. Nor am I afraid of death. I am only waiting for death to come to me”.
50. Then, Baba, the embodiment of mercy said: “Do not worry. Your fear of danger to life has been averted. Why do you unnecessarily worry?
51. “You have nothing to fear. Your death warrant has been sent back. But, Ramchandra, I do not see a chance of safety for Tatyā.
52. “In *Shaké* eighteen hundred and forty, when the sun is apparently

moving from north to south, in the month of *Ashwin*, on *Vijaydashmi* day, in the brighter half of the month, Tatyā will attain heavenly bliss.

53. “But do not tell him that; otherwise he will take fright and pine away day and night. No one likes death”.

54. Only two years remained. Tatyā’s time was drawing near. Ramchandra became anxious as Baba’s words were always true and like a thunderbolt.



Ramchandra Dada Patil

55. This prediction was kept a secret from Tatyā but he confided it to Bala Shimpi, with an earnest request not to reveal it to anyone. Both of them were now worried about it.

56. Since then, really, Ramchandra Patil recovered; and left his bed. One day passed off after another and time slipped away unnoticed.

57. The truth of Baba’s words is amazing! The month of *Bhadrapad* of 1840 *Shaké* was over and the month of *Ashwin* peeped in. Tatyā became ill and was confined to bed.

58. On the one hand, Tatyā was ill with fever (at home) and on the other, Baba was shivering. Tatyā had full faith in Baba and Baba’s protector was the Lord.

59. Tatyā was unable to leave his bed and come for Baba’s *darshan*. Immense was his physical suffering which he was unable to bear.

60. Though he was himself distressed with his suffering, his mind was attached to Baba. He could not move or stir and his suffering increased.

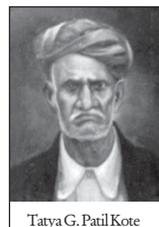
61. On the other hand, Baba’s moaning and wailing increased twice as much, day by day. In no time, the ailment became uncontrollable and did not subside.

62. The day predicted by Baba drew near. Bala Shimpi quaked with fear and so did Patil Ramchandra.

63. They said: “Baba was absolutely correct. Now that is certain. The symptoms are not at all good and the suffering is on the increase”.

64. The tenth day of the bright half dawned. Tatyā’s pulse became slower; and he was in a death-like trance. The relatives gathered round him were exhausted.

65. But then occurred a miracle! Tatyā’s danger to life was also arrested. Tatyā lived and Baba left, as if he had exchanged places with him.



Tatyā G. Patil Kote

66. Now, recall Baba’s words. Though Baba used Tatyā’s name, he made preparations for his own departure, correct to the minute.

67. It is no use denying it that when he had given the indication, he had thrown light on the future. But until the event happened, none had realised the implication.
68. People say that Baba averted Tatyā's death by giving his own life. He alone knows the truth.
69. On the night that Baba left his mortal coil, early morning at sunrise, Baba gave a dream vision to Ganu Das at Pandharpur.
70. "The *Masjid* has collapsed. All the grocers and oil mongers of Shirdi troubled me a lot, so I am leaving that place.
71. Therefore I have come here. Cover my body with *Bakbhal* flowers. Fulfil this desire of mine. Come quickly to Shirdi".
72. Just then, from a letter sent from Shirdi, he learnt about Baba's *Mahasamadhi*. Learning this news, Das Ganu left for Shirdi, without losing a moment.
73. Bringing with him all his disciples, placing themselves in front of the *Samadhi*, he commenced doing *kirtan* and *bhajan* of the Lord's name, in a loud voice, and continued the whole day.
74. Weaving a beautiful garland of flowers, with his own hands, studded with Lord Hari's name, he offered it at the *Samadhi* with love and with food offerings.
75. Listening to the continuous reverberations of the chanting of the Lord's name, Shirdi seemed like a heavenly place. The whole atmosphere was filled with the chanting of the Lord's name and Ganu Das gave a plentiful feast of it, for all to partake.
76. Why did Baba like *Dassera* only? Because, it was one out of the three and a half auspicious days in the year (when there is no need to find out the *muhurat* or auspicious time). All know very well that an auspicious time for departure is valued or chosen.
77. It is also not proper to say this. One who is beyond birth or death, how could there be a departure for him or the necessity of an auspicious time for it?
78. One who is not bound by religion or otherwise; one who has control over all attachments; one who has no ascending of his vital life force – what is *Niryan* for him?
79. *Brahmaiiva Sanbrahmapayeti* ⁵. For Sai Maharaja this description is applicable. So he has no beginning nor end. What is *Niryan* status for him?
80. Whether the sun is seemingly travelling to the north or the south, he who has not to undertake the journey at all, and whose life force

- merges with the Supreme where he is, it is like the light of the lamp being extinguished and it becoming dark.
81. The body is a loan taken from the five elements. Once its task is accomplished, it returns to the same elements.
 82. Earlier, Baba had given an indication of what was to happen in a marvellous way. The precious time has passed but the glory remains.
 83. Getting fever was a pretext. Imitating ordinary people, he moaned and groaned at times. But within, he was always alert and conscious.
 84. After 9.30 or 10 in the morning, when the time for *Niryān* came near, he sat up by himself, fully conscious.
 85. Seeing Baba in such a condition, the sea of hope rose in the hearts of the people. All felt that the dangerous or evil time had passed.
 86. So, as all sat dejected and worried in this way, the time for Baba's *Niryān* came near. Listen to what happened then.
 87. Where there were only a few moments left for the *niryān*, none knew what was in his mind. He put his hand in the pocket of the *kafni* knowing that it was the right time for charity.
 88. A greatly virtuous woman, named Lakshmi, whose deeds matched her name, who was always devoted at Sai's feet, was near him at that time.
 89. Baba, very cautiously, donated some money to her since Baba had realised that his *Niryān* was imminent.
 90. She was the same Lakshmi Bai Shinde who came to Baba in the *Masjid*, connected with some work or service as needed.
 91. During the day, it was the rule that the *Durbar* was open for all. Generally, nobody was refused permission. But there were strict rules for the night.
 92. When the evening round was over, the assembled people returned to their respective homes (from the *Masjid*) and returned to the *Masjid* only the next morning at sunrise.
 93. But considering the devotion of *Bhagat* Mhalsapati, Dada (Kelkar) and Lakshmi, they were not denied permission even at night.
 94. The same Lakshmi, with great love, daily sent vegetables and *bhakeris* for Baba, at the right time. How can this service be adequately praised!
 95. When you hear about the origin of the practice of sending *bhakeris* you will understand about Baba's compassionate nature, and his oneness with dogs and pigs. You will be amazed.

96. One evening, Baba was sitting against the wall, leaning his chest against the bannisters, engaged in lovable talk, when Lakshmi arrived there.
97. Tatyapa Patil was near by and there were others also. Lakshmi made her obeisance to Baba, when Baba said to her:
98. "Lakshmi, I am hungry". "Baba, I will go and bring *bhakri*. No sooner than I go that I shall return with it".
99. Saying this she left immediately. She baked some *bhakris* and returned without loss of time, along with some vegetables and chutney, and placed this snack before Baba.
100. Baba picked up the plate and put it before the dog as it was. "Baba what have you done?", Lakshmi asked promptly.
101. "In spite of my having gone so swiftly and baked the *bhakris* quickly, you offered them to the dog! What is this novel way of yours!
102. "You said you were hungry. What kind of marvellous hunger is this? You have not even had one small morsel of it! You have unnecessarily troubled me".
103. Then Baba said to her: "Why do you fret unnecessarily? Satisfying the hunger of this dog is the same as giving me appeasement. Bear this in mind.
104. "Isn't this dog a living creature? All beings experience the same hunger. Though it is dumb and I can speak, is there any difference in the hunger that both experience?
105. "He who feeds those distressed by hunger really serve me with food. Know this and regard it as an axiomatic truth".
106. This incident was a simple one, connected with daily life, but the lesson was full of spiritual value. Sai's words for such a lesson were perfectly flavoured with love and kindness.
107. Speaking in words of daily parlance, he imparted the outline of spiritual teaching. Without pinpointing anybody's shortcomings and follies, he kept his devotees happy.
108. From that time onwards, according to the advice, started Lakshmi's *bhakari*, crushed into milk and offered with love daily.
109. Later Baba began to eat that *bhakri* offered with love and devotion, daily. When there was a delay, he was uneasy and he did not feel like eating.
110. If there was a delay in getting the *bhakri* from Lakshmi, though it was past meal time, he would not put a morsel in the mouth.
111. The food served in the plates would get cold. He would wait

- though hungry; but till Lakshmi's *bhakri* came, he would not eat any food.
112. After some time had passed, Baba asked daily for vermicelli made by Lakshmi in the afternoons, and would eat with her sitting beside him.
 113. Baba ate very little and sent what remained, with Lakshmi to Radhakrishna, who savoured the leftovers with great love.
 114. While the narration was about abandoning the body, why should he tell this irrelevant story about the *bhakri* ? Let not the listeners ask this. It is indicative of Sai's all pervasiveness.
 115. Sai pervades, perpetually, all that is visible and invisible, and is also the Supreme Spirit beyond that. Sai is He that is Unborn and Eternal.
 116. This is the essence of this story. That is why I was casually reminded of this sweet story of Lakshmi, I believe, for the sake of the listeners.
 117. So how could Sai forget such devoted service of Lakshmi? Listen with reverence to the narration of the marvellous way by which he remembered it.
 118. Though he was on the verge of breathing his last and the body was slackened and weak, Baba with his own hands gave a donation to her, at the time of passing away.
 119. Taking out from the pocket once five and then four rupees, he placed them on her hands. This was the last act of Baba.
 120. Was it indicative of the nine types of devotion, or was it because of the worship of *Ambika* at *Navrathra* ⁶ had been completed and it was the *Seemolanghan*? Was it the *dakshina* of *Seemolanghan*?
 121. Or was Baba giving a reminder of the nine good qualities required of a disciple as told by Sree Krishna to Uddhava of the 'Shrimad Bhagvat' ?
 122. In the eleventh *skanda*, tenth chapter and sixth verse, there is a marvellous description of how the disciple should behave to acquire spiritual progress.
 123. Earlier, in the first, half, five qualities are described and in the next half only four. Since Baba also followed this pattern, I think he had this same purpose.
 124. A disciple should be modest, able, free from envy, unselfish or disinterested, always ready to serve the Guru, eager to have spiritual knowledge and of steadfast temperament.
 125. He should have no hatred, nor engage in loquaciousness. These are the qualities required to please the *Gururaya*.

126. This was the only intention of Sree Sainath which he expressed in this manner. Compassionate Saints always do so only for the welfare of their own devotees.
127. Lakshmi was well-to-do. What could she care for nine rupees? She could gift away several times this amount. Yet this donation was invaluable to her!
128. She was exceedingly fortunate to have acquired such a grace, so that she received the nine jewels from Sai's own lotus hands.
129. Not only nine, but many times nine, would pass through her hands; but this very unusual gift would remind her of Sai, till she lived.
130. Though the time for abandoning his body was near, yet with proper planning, and giving of first five and then four, he left with her a memory, she would cherish till her death.
131. Having displayed such cautiousness, he sent the near and dear ones for lunch; but it was observed that one or two people from amongst the villagers were made to stay.
132. But quite a few from among his loving devotees insisted on not leaving Baba's side, knowing that the time was difficult.
133. But at the proper time, in the last moments, he quickly sent away all of them so that he may not be entangled by love and affection.
134. Realising that the time for departure was very close, Baba told Butti, Kaka and others: "Go, go to the *wada* and return after lunch".
135. Seeing the distress and concern of the others, Baba was disturbed himself. "Go, go. Eat and return. Go now," he ordered everybody.
136. These were his daily companions and frequent visitors who were near him day and night. Though they were distressed, they got up to leave according to his orders.
137. At that time they could not leave his presence nor could they disobey his orders. They could not go against Baba's wishes. So they went to the *wada* for lunch.
138. Their sorrow was unbearable. How could they have lunch or eat anything! Their hearts were with Baba and they could not bear to forget him, even for a moment.
139. Yet they left and sat down to eat. But soon thereafter, they were asked to return. They ran back leaving their meals unfinished but they were unable to meet him.
140. When the oil of the span of life finished, the flame of life dimmed. The body found rest on the lap of Bayaji (Appa Kote).

141. He did not fall on the ground nor did he lie on his bed; but sitting quietly on his seat, doing charity with his own hands, he threw off the mortal coil.
142. Nobody knew *Samartha's* mind or heart's secret. He left the body in no time and became one with the Supreme Spirit.
143. Wearing the cloak of the body, from *Maya*, the Saints manifest in the world. Soon after their work of upliftment is completed they merge with the formless.
144. An actor plays many roles but fully knows his own identity. Those who manifest themselves resume their own identity after their work is done. What is death to them?
145. He who manifested for the benefit of the people ended the *Avatar* as soon as his mission was complete. Could he be bound by life and death, who takes a form by his own divine sport?
146. How can there be a possibility of death for him whose glory is the Supreme Spirit? He who is the embodiment of detachment, how can existence or non-existence have any effect on him?
147. Though ostensibly he appears to be engaged in action, he hardly ever performs any. Being without any ego, when doing any action he believes that it is not he who is doing anything.
148. "Action does not end without experiencing its fruit". This is the essence of action as implied in the *Smritis*. There is no delusion in case of the knower of *Brahman*, since he sees *Brahman* in every entity.
149. This is the fruit achieved on account of a collection of deeds. Such a duality is well known but here, too, the knower of *Brahman* believes it to be *Brahman*, as a silver sheen on the oyster.
150. How could Baba, like a loving mother, fall prey to death? It was as if the day was eclipsed by a dark night.
151. Now let me end this chapter here. Keeping in mind the usual monthly instalment, if I exceed the listeners will become restless and be tired.
152. The remaining story of his leaving the body, listeners will be able to hear in due course. Hemad surrenders to Sai *Samartha*. He has attained his welfare by his Grace.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-second chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Leaving of the Body by Sainath".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

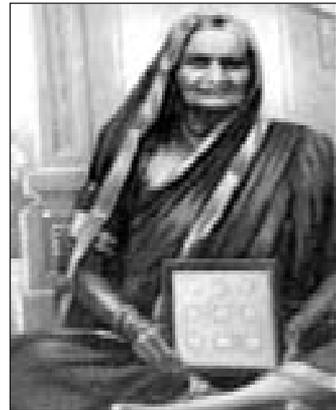
1. The half year in which the sun is said to move from north to south.
2. *Tithi* - the time between the two consecutive risings of the sun is the day, according to the Indian calendar.
3. The crossing of the border in pompous procession on the festival of *Dassera*.
4. A descendant of Bhrigu, follower of Parasurama. A pious sage engaged in study. He was anger personified.
5. One who has no desires, has no fruits thereof. So he is not re-born. Therefore, there is no departure of his vital life force. In this world, such a person is Brahma and attains *Brahman*.
6. Goddess *Durga* (also known as *Ambika*) is worshipped for nine days in the month of *Ashwin*.



When the oil of the span of life finished, the flame of life dimmed. The body found rest on the lap of Bayaji Appa Kote. (Ch. 42, ovi 140)



Bayaji Appa Kote



Lakshmibai with the 9 coins