

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. In the last chapter, the narration of the leaving of the body by Saint Sai *Samartha* was given. Now what remains unfinished will be completed in this.
2. My unique love for Sai has been kindled by that *Samartha*. Hemad has surrendered at his feet and outlines the story.
3. It is he who gives a liking for devotion; it is he who increases the greatness of the stories; it is because of him that worship through *bhajan* has attained glory and brings about aversion to this mundane world.
4. Therefore, with my whole heart and soul, I do obeisance to him countless times. I cannot even fully think of his greatness in meditation but it is possible only through complete surrender.
5. In order to completely wash off the accumulated defilement of the sins and to have self-purification, other means are futile.
6. There is not another simpler way to have self purification than to remember the glory achieved by the devotee of God, and to do *bhajans* and *kirtans* of that glory.
7. So be it. Let us recollect the story already narrated in the last chapter and deliberate over it; then we may proceed further with the narration of Sai's merger in Self Bliss.
8. Earlier it has been narrated in detail why the leaving of the body took place on *Vijayadashmi* and how the future was predicted using Tatyā's name as a pretext.
9. Later, just before leaving the body, adhering to religious tradition how he gave the money to Lakshmi – all that has been described fully.

10. Now in this chapter, I will narrate how Sai listened to the *Ramayana*, for his own benefit, as read by a Brahmin, as the time for leaving the body approached.
11. Also, how the place for the *Samadhi* was chosen and how unexpectedly the brick had fallen down. Listen to it attentively.
12. Also how once he raised his *prana* high up (and went into *samadhi*) for three days. How could it be *samadhi*? People were absolutely certain that it was the leaving of the body.
13. Preparations for the rites were made but unexpectedly Baba attained consciousness and the people were taken aback! Listen to how it all happened.
14. So be it. Listeners will be irked by hearing the story about the leaving of the body. No one likes to hear such a story.
15. But this story of the leaving of the body of the Saintly Sage will purify the listeners and the narrator. For fear of its being lengthy, listen to it in parts, till you are satisfied.
16. By leaving the body, he became inaccessible; but for him it was a blissful state. Baba attained the eternal state never to be born again.
17. He was visible when he was in body; after leaving the body he was not perceivable. His *Avatar* at one place and for one mission ended; but he was at all places and all-pervasive and omnipotent.
18. He was freed from being bound to one place and was all-pervasive. He became absolutely eternal and merged with the Supreme Self.
19. Sai was the reason for everyone's life itself. Without Sai the villagers were devastated.
20. When his body became lifeless there arose a wail of sorrowing agony. The old and the young disturbed by grief seemed to become lifeless themselves.
21. Fever and other ailments which affect the common man do not unnecessarily trouble Saints and Ascetics.
22. By kindling their own lustre, Saints extinguish their own bodies. Baba did the same with his own hands.
23. What should never have happened, had happened! *Maharaj* became one with the Supreme Spirit. The people were dispirited, sobbed and whimpered.
24. 'It would have been better if I had not left. I missed meeting him in the last moments. If I had been there, I might have proved useful in some way. My wits were not about me, at the right time'.

25. In this manner, with similar thoughts, all and sundry felt dejected. Who could know, what Baba had in mind?
26. There was no death rattle nor troublesome breathing; no cough nor shivering nor any struggle. He passed away easily and peacefully.
27. ‘Now how would there be Sai’s *darshan*, or pressing of Sai’s feet, or drinking the *tirtha*?’
28. Knowing that the time for the end had come, then why were the loving devotees sent away though they had been so near? Why were they made to undergo this anguish?
29. Seeing the whole assembly of near and dear devotees near by, at the time of passing away, could Baba’s love have sprung up for them then?
30. Bonds of attachment come in the way of attaining salvation. If they are not broken at the right time, how can the mind be free of desires?
31. If death comes when this has not happened and life leaves with these desires and attachments, then immediately another cycle of existence starts, with a flood of attachments.
32. To avoid this, Saints and Sages are always alert. Baba’s determination also was only to practise the custom prevalent among the people.
33. In the last moments one should be alert about this. There should be peace and solitude, and the chosen deity’s image should be fixed in the mind without any distraction.
34. “One is reborn according to one’s last thoughts”, is the well-known axiom. Saints themselves practise this to maintain the prevalent custom.
35. When there were only fourteen days left for Baba’s passing away, Baba appointed Vaze to read *Ramvijay*.
36. Vaze sat in the *Masjid* and began the reading of the holy book. Baba began to listen to it. Thus eight days passed.
37. Then Baba ordered that the book be read without a break. So, Vaze read it in this manner, for three days and nights.
38. He sat for full eleven days. Later he was tired and felt weak. He was exhausted with the reading. In this way three more days passed.
39. So what did Baba do later? He stopped the reading. He sent Vaze away from there and kept quiet himself.
40. Listeners would ask the reason for sending away Vaze. So, hear what I am going to explain to the best of my ability. Hear it with concentration.

41. It is the practice of Saints, Sages and wise people to listen to religious books, when the time for the passing away is near.
42. Acharya Shuka¹ recounted the 'Maha Bhagvat' in seven days to King Parikshit², who heard it and attained death happily.
43. While listening to the *leelas* of the Lord and keeping the image of the Lord before one's eyes, if one passes away then one attains the ultimate goal.
44. This is generally the trend amongst the common people. The Saints practise it themselves without fail. They do not break tradition, because they manifest to protect it.
45. They who disregard their bodies made of five elements, they have no pain or sorrow at the time of death. This is just natural for them.
46. So be it. Here listeners may doubt, if persons who are engrossed in Supreme Bliss, could be troubled by illusion and greed! How could one even think about it?
47. One who abided in the Self and always uttered "*Allab-Malik*", how could he be entangled by the nearness of his devotees?
48. He had transcended the world. His spirituality remained. Duality did not at all exist for him. He became one with the Supreme Spirit.
49. What I am telling you is nothing but the truth, word for word. There is no trace of untruth in it. But taking *Avatar*, for the good of the people, Saints are gratified knowing that they have fulfilled their mission.
50. The Saints are free from the six vices and passions. They are always present, invisible to the eye. They take form only for the salvation of the devotees. How could they have death?
51. The conjunction of the body with the senses, is being born. Their separation is death. This joining and separation is called birth and death.
52. Birth is doggedly pursued by death. They are inseparable. Death is the natural state of life. And living is life's distortion.
53. Those who remain after overcoming death, and even control death, how could they be concerned about their life span when they have manifested by their own wish?
54. He who takes different *Avatars* with the only desire of the welfare of the devotees how can he be touched by birth and death? These are both illusions.
55. Know that he who has reduced the body to ashes even before

- acquiring it, how can he have any fear of death. Death is reduced to ashes before him.
56. Death itself is body's natural state. Death itself is the happy state for the body. Life is the body's distortion. Ask the wise ones.
 57. Sai *Samartha*, the Cloud of Bliss, who did not know about the birth of his body, how could his body experience death? He does not know about the body's existence.
 58. How could there be birth or death for Sai, who is *Parabrahma* Himself? Knowing that *Brahma* is Truth and the world a mirage, how could he have body consciousness?
 59. Taking on life or abandoning it, or roaming the space formlessly, is done at will by the power of *Yoga*, for the benefit of the devotees.
 60. "The sun has been eclipsed and has disappeared completely", say the people. But it is merely the fault of the sense perception. The death of Saints is likewise.
 61. The body is merely a burden. How can they have pain or suffering? If they have any, it is because of the bonds of fate. But they are not concerned.
 62. He who manifested because of the past meritorious deeds of the devotees and was filled with devotion invisibly, he appeared for the welfare of the devotees. It was then that he was perceived in Shiridi.
 63. It was said that now the work of the welfare of the devotees was completed, and, therefore, he abandoned the body. Who will place faith in these words? What is life and death for a *yogi*?
 64. Sai *Samartha* abandoned his body as per his own will and burnt the body in the *Yoga Agni* (fire). He became one with the unseen but remained eternally in the hearts of the devotees.
 65. How can he die, the remembrance of whose name breaks the cycle of life and death for others? He attained his earlier Invisible Self.
 66. Going beyond the gross state Baba became one with the unseen, where he enjoyed being one with God. But always he keeps the devotees alert.
 67. He who throbs with the Supreme Spirit and is permanently engraved in the hearts of the devotees then how could his body be said to have ceased to be. Such words are unacceptable.
 68. Therefore, this Sai who is without a beginning or an end will ever be there until the *pralay* (deluge) of the world.
 69. Has Dñyanoba Maharaj gone away? He gave *darshan* to Eknath Maharaj after three hundred years and gratified the world.

70. Just as Eknath became the light of Paithini, so did Tukaram Maharaj in Dehu and Narasimha Saraswati in Alandi;
71. *Samarth* Ramadas in Parli, Akkalkotkar in Akalkot, Prabhu Manik in Humnabad and similarly Sai in Shirdi.
72. 'One has experiences commensurate with one's faith'; even to-day. When the power of this axiom exists for him, how can there be death for such a one!
73. He, who espoused the causes of the devotees, has abandoned his body in Shirdi and is all-pervasive with the movable and the immovable. He is capable of taking *Avatar* again.
74. 'Now what is there in Shirdi, as the *Samartha* has mingled with *Brahman*?!' Have no such doubts, as Sree Sai is beyond death.
75. Saints are not born (from the womb). They manifest themselves for obliging others. They are the embodiment of *Brahman*. Only the fortunate ones so manifest.
76. Those who are incarnate are never born and they never die. As soon as their mission is completed they merge with *Brahman* and become one with the unseen.
77. A body is of a three-and-a-half hands' length. Could Baba be said to be contained in that? It is improper to say that he was of a particular size, shape or colour.
78. The eight *siddhis*, such as *anima and garima* do not increase or decrease by the coming or going of the people, for such persons. These are their own, eternal glories. They are famous for that.
79. The manifestation of such great souls is only for the welfare of the people. Their appearance, their existence and their disappearance happens as a natural phenomenon. The Saints are ever ready to get the people to follow them.
80. Birth is an illusion. Death is a delusion. Oneness of the soul is the state beyond decay – in fact, the highest bliss in a dream. Such is the condition of the Saints.
81. Even otherwise, for him who is a store of knowledge and is always one with the Supreme Spirit, to take care of the body or to leave it is the same.
82. Enough of this. As soon as Baba left the body, a mountain of calamity crashed on our heads. There was great lamentation throughout Shirdi. A great moaning arose.
83. The news of Baba having left the body pierced the hearts of everyone like an arrow. All routine work stopped and people ran around confusedly.

84. As this inauspicious news spread, everyone felt it was a thunderbolt. Some sensible ones sat silent while others began to wail.
85. Because of their excessive love, they were choked with emotion. Tears of sorrow trickled from their eyes. They loudly chanted: “Hail Shiva, Shiva!”
86. In every house there was tumult and confusion. It was the same turmoil everywhere. All hearts were palpitating.
87. By *Maharaj* leaving the body, it seemed as if all the village had died. They said: “Lord, this terrible event has pierced our hearts”.
88. Everyone got up and ran. All crowded into the *Masjid* and its courtyard. The situation was heart-breaking and the throats were choked with sorrow.
89. Shirdi’s glory was gone; its happiness and prosperity ended; everything was lost. Everyone’s eyes were filled with tears and their courage was shattered.
90. That which was counted amongst the seven holy places and which Baba always called *Dwarkamayi*, unfailingly, was the greatness of that *Masjid*.
91. Whether it is eternal emancipation, or abandoning of the body or death, Dwarka is the place for absorption into the essence of *Brahman*. He who constantly meditates on God has a place there.
92. That Gururaj, Sairaya, compassionate mother and father of the devotees, the abode of repose of the devotees, is remembered always.
93. Shirdi was desolate without Baba. The whole atmosphere (all the directions) had a vacuum and was sorrowful. Shirdi appeared like a lifeless body.
94. Just as the fish thrashed about in a pond whose water has dried up, so were the people of Shirdi, sorrowful and without zest.
95. Just as a lake is without a lotus, a home is empty without a son, or a temple is without a lamp, the environment of the *Masjid* was like that.
96. Shirdi without Baba, was like a house without its master, a kingdom without a king, an empty treasury – an impenetrable forest.
97. The love of the people of Shirdi and all the devotees towards Baba was like that of a mother for the child, or of the *Chatak* for the water from the clouds.
98. Shirdi appeared without zest, half-dead, wretched and poor. Like a fish without water, the people writhed.
99. All the old and young were like a wife rejected by her husband, or

like a mother refusing her suckling children, or like the calf separated from the cow.

100. Unbearable was this grief-stricken state! All the people of Shirdi ran here and there, in a disorderly manner and in all directions.
101. Shirdi was holy because of Sai only; it attained historical importance because of Sai only; it became a pilgrim centre only because of Sai. Sai only was the protector of all.
102. Some cried out aloud; some rolled in the dust; some lay unconscious. The people were full of misery.
103. Tears of sorrow trickled down from the eyes of men and women who were very morose. They forsook eating and drinking and became pitiable.
104. Seeing Baba's inert form, the villagers were extremely unhappy. All the devotees, young and old, were very uneasy.
105. That *Masjid*, where sweet and interesting stories were heard, where there was daily joyousness, and where one could not find even a small space to enter, was desolate.
106. That Shirdi, was always prosperous and auspicious earlier for all, only because of Baba, and now without him, the villagers were restless.
107. "The root and the embodiment of heavenly bliss, you took a form for the welfare of the devotees and when the mission was completed, how wonderfully you abandoned the body in the village.
108. "For all the twenty-four hours, you actively and earnestly taught us for our benefit, because we were confused, always.
109. "Your teachings fell upon us like water on an overturned pot and flowed away and we did not retain even a drop".
110. 'It grieves me immediately when you speak badly of anyone', you often repeated. Yet we did not obey you.
111. How many of us are guilty of not having obeyed this good advice! Have you repaid us in this manner for our disobedience and not atoning for it?
112. Baba does this requite all those sins? What is the point of now being repentant? It is necessary for each one to suffer for his deeds.
113. Is it because of that, that you have got tired of us? And placed yourself beyond the veil? How has death unexpectedly brought this calamity upon us?
114. It seems you became disgusted, dinning your lessons to us till you became hoarse and seeing our indifference.

115. Are you therefore annoyed with us and forgotten all your earlier love? Or is it that the bonds of earlier lives have ended to-day; or is it that the flow of your love has dried up?
116. Had we understood earlier that you would leave us so suddenly, it would have been much better. At least, the people would have been more alert.
117. All of us were lazy and were caught napping. Ultimately, we were thus trapped and good for nothing.
118. We became traitors to the Guru; as we did nothing at the appropriate time. We could not even stay peaceful.
119. We came to Shirdi from distant places and there too sat gossiping. We forgot altogether that we had come to a holy place and acted there, also, according to our own will.
120. Devotees of varied and different natures came – wise ones, egoistic, selfish, argumentative. But to the knower, they were one, in their pristine form and there was no difference between them as being superior or inferior.
121. He, who sees no other entity apart from God in all creation – in fact this is his glory and he has no second.
122. The devotee himself is God. The Guru is no different. But when both have forgotten the Real Self, the difference arises because of that.
123. In reality, we are God ourselves. But we have forgotten the divinity within us. This is the main reason for the difference and the fall from grace.
124. An emperor in his dream sees himself going from door to door begging for alms. On waking, he realises the truth and knows that his situation hasn't changed.
125. Activity when we are in the waking state ceases when we are in the dreaming state. Real awakening is Self Realisation and being completely absorbed in Unity, Consciousness.
126. He had immense love for the wise, the ignorant and all the dependents. He treated all of them dearer than life. There was not even a bit of differentiation.
127. Though experience had shown that he was God in human form, his pampering and indulgence became the undoing of all.
128. Some were given riches and wealth. Some were given happiness in worldly life and the boon of children. Because of that, there arose a strong delusion and acquisition of true knowledge was lost.

129. When sometimes he laughed and joked with somebody, that person became puffed up with pride thinking that he alone was greatly loved and others were not shown that affection.
130. Similarly if he spoke angrily to someone, they said that he was not liked by Baba and that Baba gave them alone all the respect and not to others.
131. While engaged in making such comparisons, which Baba did not even dream of, it's we who were the losers in so far as our good was concerned and forgot our ultimate aim.
132. By good fortune, *Parabrahma* and the Embodiment of the Supreme Spirit was so close to us. But we forgot the main purpose and lost the opportunity in fun and frolic.
133. As soon as they came, the people took Baba's *darshan* and offered him fruits, flowers and all other things. But when he asked for *dakshina*, they slipped away from there and did not stay there.
134. Seeing our petty faults and failings he told us stories for our welfare. It seems, however, that he was greatly troubled and left suddenly for his own abode.
135. "Will these eyes now ever see again your Self Blissful state? That blissful image is gone and lost for ever and anon!"
136. Oh, see this devastating fate! Sai, our friend is lost forever. He was selfless, and compassionate. Such a one has become a stranger to us!
137. "It is not good to harass others. It hurts me", he said. But we paid no attention to it and continued to quarrel as much as we wished to.
138. We lost you Sainath, as devotees and others harassed each other. We are now repentant as we now remember your words.
139. It is said that *Maharaj* had told his devotees that in time to come, he would reappear as a lad of eight years.
140. These are the words of a Saint and no one should doubt them. Chakrapani in the Krishna *Avatar* did exactly this.
141. Krishna appeared before Devaki in the prison as a lad of eight years, with a lustrous complexion wielding weapons in his four arms.
142. In that incarnation, the purpose was to lighten the burden of the earth; in this, the upliftment of his devotees; where is the reason for doubt, then? The ways of the Saints are really inscrutable.
143. This determination was not due to the contact of only one life but it was a relationship that existed for seventy-two generations, which was told by Baba to the devotees and which has been narrated earlier.

144. Bonding with such ties of love, it seems that *Maharaj* has gone on a tour and the devotees have a firm belief that he would return.
145. He gives divine visions to many; he appears in dreams to quite a number; and he grants miracles to several people secretly.
146. He is never seen by those who have no faith; while the devotees and the believers find him near them always. One experiences according to one's mental state.
147. In the *chavadi*, he is present invisibly; in the *Masjid*, he is Brahma Incarnate; in the *Samadhi (Mandir)* he is in *Samadhi*. The bliss of his presence is everywhere.
148. So, at present, this is the belief that devotees should hold. Sai *Samartha* is always there, permanently and continuously.
149. Deities leave for their abode. Saints remain in *Brahma* state. There is no coming and going for them. They merge with the Supreme Spirit blissfully.
150. Therefore, this is my only request. I bow down in all humility to all, the young and the old. Listen respectfully to all I say.
151. Develop companionship or association with those who are well-known, virtuous and divine; have selfless love at the feet of the Guru; have inclination to tell stories about the virtues and glory of the Guru.
152. Develop inseparable love for the Guru; never let that bond of love break. Let the devotees remain blissful, at the feet of the Guru, day and night.
153. So, then, all the people, the devotees and the villagers began to discuss about the befitting last rites for the body.
154. Shrimant Butti, a great devotee, had already built a huge pleasing *wada*, which would be a future memorial.
155. Then, later, there were discussions for thirty-six hours on the subject where the body should be placed. Whatever was to happen did take place.
156. One said that the Hindus should not now be allowed to touch the body. It would be taken with pomp and show and placed in a Muslim Tomb.
157. Another said that it should be interred in an open space and a beautiful mausoleum should be built over it, where it should remain always.
158. Kushalchand and Amir Shakkar had the same opinion. But, "Place the body in the *wada*", were the words of Baba.

159. Ramchandra Patil was a very resolute person. He was an officer of the village, and a loving servitor of Baba. He spoke to the villagers.
160. “Whatever may be your opinion, it is not at all acceptable to us. Sai’s body should not be placed anywhere else, outside the *wada*, even for a moment”.
161. The Hindus held opinions as per their religious beliefs and, likewise the Muslims. There was a discussion about what was right and what was wrong throughout the night.
162. Now, Lakshman *Mama* who was in deep sleep at his home, in the early morning hours had a dream that Baba held his hand and said: “Get up quickly and come.
163. Bapusaheb will not come to-day. He believes that I am dead. At least you do the *Kakad Arati* for me with the *Puja*”.
164. Immediately, as per the usual practice, bringing with him all the *puja* necessities, Lakshman *Mama* came on time and got ready to do the *puja*.
165. He was the village astrologer of Shirdi and uncle of Madhavrao (his mother’s brother). He daily worshipped Baba in the early morning.
166. Lakshman *Mama* was a staunch *brahmin* and uncle of Madhavrao. After taking a bath in the morning and putting on clean washed clothes, he would take Baba’s *darshan*.
167. He would wash Baba’s feet, apply sandalwood paste with consecrated rice, offered flowers, leaves and *tulsi* and afterwards burnt incense, lit the lamp and offered *nai vaidya*. Then he offered *dakshina*.
168. After offering eight-fold obeisance with prayers, he took Baba’s blessings. Then he would apply the sandalwood paste *tilak* to all and distribute *prasad*. Then he would leave.
169. After that he would offer worship to the village deities of Gajanan, Shanidev (Saturn), Shiva (Umaraman) and Maruti, the son of Anjani.
170. In this manner, the astrologer Buva worshipped all the village deities daily. Therefore, he brought all the *puja* paraphernalia for doing *puja* for Baba’s body with loving devotion.
171. As it is, *Mama* was very devoted; and, moreover, he had this vision. So he came with all the *kakad arati* requirements and did an eight-fold obeisance.
172. After removing the cloth covering the face, and looking at it with love, he washed the hands and feet, took a sip of the pure *tirth* (from the washings) and did the *puja* with all rituals.



173. The Moulvis and the other Muslims objected to his touching the body. But *Mama* took no notice, applied the sandal paste and completed the full *puja*.
174. After all the body was of the *Samartha*, the Deity he worshipped. He did not even think for a moment whether it was *Hindu* or Muslim.
175. When Baba was in body, what a joyous occasion it was to offer *puja*! Now that there was no life, it was still not a mere ritual.
176. Seeing Baba in this condition filled *Mama* with a lot of sorrow. He had come to do the last *puja*, as he would not be able to have further *darshan*.
177. *Mama* could not bear to see Baba in this condition. His eyes filled with tears and his hands and feet trembled. *Mama* was miserable.
178. Opening the closed fist, placing *pan-vida* and *dakshina* in it, covering the body as earlier, *Mama* left.
179. Later on, the noon *arati* of Sai was done by Bapusaheb Jog, as usual, in the *Masjid*, along with others.
180. So be it. What happened later on will be narrated in the next chapter – how Baba’s body was prepared with all the *Hindu* rituals, in a large place.
181. Also how, a brick, which Baba loved very much and which had been his companion for many years, broke which was a bad omen and a precursor of death.
182. Also, how it would have been if this event had taken place thirty-two years back, when Baba had raised his *prana* high up (and gone into *samadhi*). It would have been a difficult situation.
183. How devotee Mhalsapati took care of Baba day and night; and how when all had given up hope, Baba had got up all of a sudden.
184. How can the glory be described of that *Yogacharaya*, who practised *Brahmacharaya* till the end of life and who was the foremost of the wise!
185. So let us offer obeisance to the one who has such greatness. Humble Hemad surrenders whole heartedly to him.

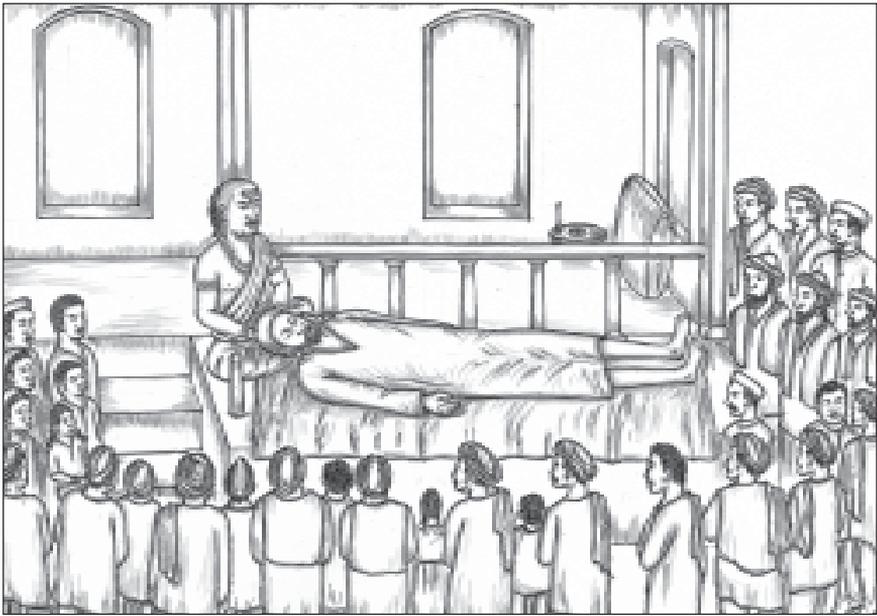
May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-third chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called “Leaving of the Body by Sainath”.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Shuka was a born philosopher.
2. He was cursed by a Brahmin to die within seven days. Hence Shuka recounted the philosophy. It is said that *Kaliyug* commenced with this king’s reign.



(Baba going into a breathless trance in the lap of Mhalsapati for 3 days)

Also, how it would have been if this event had taken place thirty-two years back, when Baba had raised his *prana* high up (and gone into *samadhi*). It would have been a difficult situation! (Ch.43, ovi 182)

How devotee Mhalsapati took care of Baba day and night; and how when all had given up hope Baba had got up all of a sudden. (Ch.43, ovi 183)