

Granting of Favour to Doubting Devotee

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. Now, as I begin this chapter, one very curious listener who also heard me with great reverence, asked whether Sree Sai was a Guru or a *Sadguru*.
2. For his satisfaction I shall narrate briefly the characteristics of a *Sadguru*, which can match those to be found in *Sree Sai Samartha*.
3. Those, from whom instructions in *Vedas* is acquired, as also the knowledge of the six *Shastras*, or those erudite ones who have explained the *Vedant* are not considered as *Sadgurus*, by the learned ones.
4. Those, who control the breath, or have *Taptamudra*¹, or entertain listeners with their eloquence on *Brahman*, are not considered as *Sadgurus* by the learned ones.
5. Such teachers give *mantras* to their disciples conforming to the *Shastras* and also instruct them to do name chanting. But no one can confidently say when these *sadhana*s would bear fruit.
6. Their description of the Principles of *Brahman* is very interesting; the worldly knowledge is specious; but there is a total lack of self-experience. But that knowledge is hollow and only full of words.
7. When one clearly hears such explanations, one would loathe both, worldly and spiritual experiences. But the taste of self-experience is explicit and only a self-realised person can give it to others.
8. He who has full knowledge of the *Shastras*, is fully experienced, and can give practical knowledge, alone is qualified to instruct the disciple. Such a person is called a *Sadguru*.
9. How can he, who is himself devoid of self-realisation, give it to the

- disciple? He does not deserve to be called a *Sadguru* who has no practical knowledge whatsoever.
10. Know that he is the *Sadguru* who does not, even in his dream, expect any service or profit from his disciple. On the contrary, he wishes to serve the disciple.
 11. Only such a *Sadguru* is beneficial who does not consider that a disciple is insignificant and the Guru is the best among all. He should be egoless.
 12. He believes that the disciple is *Purna Brahma* and treats him as his own son. He does not expect anything from him for his maintenance. Such a *Sadguru* is the best in the world.
 13. He, who is the abode of supreme peace, has no pride of learning, does not distinguish between the young and the old and the rich and the poor, is the embodiment of the *Sadguru*.
 14. Such are, generally, the characteristics of a *Sadguru*, which I have compiled and narrated briefly for the listeners who have completely surrendered.
 15. What more can I say to those fortunate ones who have been fulfilled by Sai *darshan*? These are the true characteristics of a *Sadguru*.
 16. Because of the store of accumulation of merits of many past lives that I attained the feet of this *Sadguru* Sai.
 17. Even in the full bloom of youth, he had nothing of his own—no family, no wealth, no support, no home. He hoarded only tobacco and *chillum* and had strong determination.
 18. Even at the age of eighteen, he had complete control of his mind. He lived in solitude always and fearlessly, always abiding in the Self.
 19. Seeing the pure attachment of his devotees, his creed was that he was at their service. To explicitly demonstrate his love for his group of devotees, he lived with them, with fond affection.
 20. Hail, Eternal *Parabrahma*! Hail, Helper of the Destitute and Blissful Countenance! Hail, Supreme Consciousness and One at the Service of the Devotees!
 21. Hail, hail to one who is beyond duality! Hail, hail to one who is beyond attributes and with attributes! One who witnesses everything and is transcendental, One beyond the understanding of all who are not the devotees.
 22. Hail, hail to the remover of the distress of worldly existence! Hail, hail to the destroyer of difficulties of those who seek refuge and have come full of love, *Sadgururaya*!

23. You have become invisible merging with the formless, but you act for the welfare of your devotees even after leaving the body.
24. Those who are devoted to you still have the same experiences as they did when you were in body, though you are now invisible.
25. By making this insignificant one the instrument of dispelling the darkness of ignorance, you have manifested the Sun of your Biography, which has the power to uplift the devotees.
26. To have belief in the existence of God and faith in Him— these are the heart-lamps that a devotee must have. Light the wicks, soaked in the oil of love, and the light of knowledge will appear.
27. Knowledge without love is formal. What use can it be to anyone? Without love there is no satisfaction. Love should be unbounded.
28. How can I describe the power of love? Everything is insignificant before it. If there is no deep love, listening or reading is fruitless.
29. In the wake of love, follow devotion, dispassion, peace and contentment together with liberation and all its treasures.
30. Love is not born without faith. Where there is faith there is God. With faith there is abundance of love and it is only faith which is the means of liberation.
31. The *Sai Charita* is as pure as the waters of the Ganga. He himself has adorned his *stotra*. Hemad is only the instrument.
32. Listening to the *Sai Charita* purifies the listeners and the narrator always. The merits and the sins are obliterated and both attain salvation.
33. The listeners who hear it are most fortunate; and so is the narrator. Blessed is the *Sree Sai Stotra* and it is very purifying for his devotees.
34. He who listens to the *Charita* with great faith and pure mind, will find all his desires fulfilled always.
35. Whoever listens to this *Satcharita* with supreme faith and reverence will attain devotion at Sai's feet, immediately.
36. Remembering Sai and serving at his feet with devotion brings the senses under control, at one's will, and the ocean of existence is crossed easily.
37. The narration of this *Sai Charita* is like the pure water for the devotees, who are like the *Chatak* birds. Listeners should meditate on it after hearing, so that Sree's Grace is upon them.
38. If the listeners hear it with complete and concentrated attention, the crossing of the ocean of existence becomes easy, after the bondages of *karma* are broken.

39. Be it so. The listeners must be wondering when the story will begin. I'll drive out their restlessness by giving an introduction.
40. In the previous chapter it was stated that enmity, murder and debt have to be repaid in the next life, for which one is born to bear the fruits of one's *karma*.
41. Those who have committed these sins do not remember them but the saints do not ever forget. They help their devotees to overcome their problems, wherever they are born.
42. Here is another story of how faith placed at the feet of a Saint, in whatever one does, brings benefits to his devotee.
43. Before commencing any work, if the Guru, who is God, is remembered, and due attention is paid to the work, then he will ward off his devotee's worries.
44. I will only be the doer of the action. *Samartha* Guru, who is God, will give the fruits thereof. One who firmly believes thus will cross the ocean of existence.
45. At the outset, the Saints appear harsh. But, inwardly, they have unselfish love. One should have a little patience. They will ultimately act for one's welfare.
46. When one is under the mantle of an association with a Saint, then any ill that is wished upon one, or any misfortunes that crop up due to one's destiny, or the illusions of this world are immediately annihilated. Therefore, humble yourself at the feet of a Saint.
47. Surrender to a Saint in all humility and without being puffed up with pride. Pray to him for your own, secret welfare and he will grant peace of mind.
48. Those who are proud of their meagre knowledge and doubt the words of Saints suffer losses; but later on, with faith, achieve well-being.
49. Surrendering at a Saint's feet, in good faith or deceptively, ultimately results in liberation. The greatness of Saints is incredible!
50. Now listen with full attention to a story which illustrates this moral. The listener will be overcome with delight and the narrator will be enthused.
51. Listen to the experience of advocate Sapatnekar, resident of Akkalkot. You will be pleased.
52. When he was studying for law, day and night, he met another student Shevade and they had mutual discussions.
53. Other class fellows also came there and got together in one room.

To judge the extent of their preparedness, they began asking questions to one another.

54. This was done to ascertain the errors if any, of one another, or the correctness of the answers, or to remove the doubts so that they would have peace of mind.
55. Shevade made a lot of errors in answering the questions. So, in the end, all the students wondered how he could pass the exam when his studies were inadequate.
56. Though they ridiculed him, Shevade had full confidence that he would pass at the right time, irrespective of whether he had adequately or inadequately studied.
57. “Even if I have not studied, my Sai Baba is there to ensure that I get through. Why should I worry?”
58. Hearing these words, Sapatnekar was surprised. Taking Shevade aside, he began questioning him:
59. “Oh! Who is this Sai Baba, whom you extol so much and in whom you have complete faith? Where does he reside?”
60. Then in answer, Shevade told him everything about Sai and his own faith in him, very frankly and clearly.
61. “In the well-known Ahmednagar district, there is a village called Shirdi. A fakir resides in a *Masjid*, who is famous and virtuous.
62. “There are saints in various places; but to have the good fortune to meet them is not possible unless one has considerable merit. Effort on one’s own part does not yield results.
63. “I have full faith in him. Whatever he says will happen and whatever he utters will come true. There will never be any difference.
64. “No matter what efforts I make this year I will not pass the exam. But next year even without any effort, I will pass. This is the truth and nothing but the truth.
65. “I have his assurance. I have full faith in him, because his words will never be belied. I am sure of that.
66. “What’s surprising about it? It will happen and I will pass in the next exam”. Sapatnekar found these words ridiculous and hollow.
67. Since he was full of doubts, how could he appreciate those words? Anyway, Shevade left from there. Listen to what happened later.
68. Then, after some time, Shevade’s words proved true. He passed both the exams and Sapatnekar was surprised.
69. Ten years passed. Sapatnekar got caught suddenly in misfortune and he became dejected. He was miserable.

70. In 1913, his only son died of diphtheria and he lost all interest in life.
71. He went to all the *Tirthas*, including Pandharpur and Gangapur, but he was not at peace inwardly. Then he read the *Vedanta*.
72. Some time passed in this manner. He waited for peace to come to him. While thus waiting, he recalled the incident of Shevade.
73. He recollected Shevade’s determination and faith in Sai. He felt he should also go for Sree’s *darshan*.
74. He thought of having the Saint’s *darshan*. In 1913, a visit to Shirdi was organised and he left with his brother.
75. Sai was summoning him to make obeisance at his feet, by making his recollection of Shevade the cause or instrument. Hear this carefully.
76. Sapatnekar left for Shirdi with his family, and his younger brother Pandit Rao, for the Saint’s *darshan*.
77. Thus, they both came there and started for Sree’s *darshan* immediately on arrival. They had Baba’s *darshan* from afar and felt very satisfied.
78. Though it was from afar, their eyes met and they quickly went near. Both of them folded their hands and stood waiting in front of Baba.
79. Both of them very humbly prostrated before Baba and offered a coconut at Sai’s feet with pure faith and love.
80. When Sapatnekar offered the coconut at *Samartha*’s feet, Baba said: “Get away!” with contempt to Sapatnekar.
81. Sapatnekar was full of worries. Why had Baba got annoyed? He thought he would find some one close to Baba and ask them.
82. Just as much as the *darshan* pleased him, these words had the contrary effect and depressed him. Hanging down his head with worry, he moved back and sat aside.
83. ‘Now to whom should I go? Which devotee should I consult? What is the meaning of Baba’s words? To whom shall I open my heart?’, he wondered.
84. Seeing this state of his mind, somebody suggested the name of Bala Shimpi, for his satisfaction. His whereabouts were found out.
85. Sapatnekar told him the whole story and said: “Baba has despised me and used very harsh words.
86. “You, at least, come with me and ensure that there is a peaceful *darshan*. I only want Baba’s merciful glance and do not wish him to be angry with me”.

87. Thus, Bala agreed to it; and Sapatnekar felt relieved. Bala made him purchase a photo of Baba and then they left for Baba's *darshan*.
88. Bala Shimpi was with him, with the photo in his hand. Giving it, then, to Baba, he began entreating Baba.
89. "Oh Lord! Whose picture is this?" Looking at it, Baba replied pointing a finger at Sapatnekar: "This photo is of his lover".
90. Saying this, Baba laughed; and the whole gathering also was amused. "Baba, what is the secret behind this?", Bala asked Baba.
91. At that moment, Bala told Sapatnekar, "Take *darshan*. Act quickly". Then, when he made obeisance, he heard the words "Get away!"
92. 'The same earlier words 'Get away' are still hounding me. Now what should be done?' Sapatnekar was surprised and bewildered.
93. Then, as both of them were still standing with folded hands in front of Baba, Baba gave his ultimate order: "Go away from here, immediately".
94. "Sai *Samartha*, no one can ever disobey you. So what can be said of insignificant ones like us! I am leaving this very moment.
95. "Having heard your great generosity, I had come for the *darshan*. But I was welcomed with the words 'Get away', spoken with contempt. What is this marvel, I do not understand!
96. I had hoped for a merciful glance and your words of blessing. I hope that I will have your *darshan* again, very soon!" He asked for this assurance.
97. Who is so knowledgeable to know what Baba has in mind? But obeying his instructions, they returned to their home.
98. Such was their first *darshan* ! They were both, therefore, very dejected. They returned to their home, without any further delay.
99. One more year passed, yet his mind was not at peace. He went again to Gangapur, but his state of mind worsened.
100. Later, Sapatnekar went to Madhegaon for rest. Finally, he decided to go to Kashi.
101. When there were only two days left for their departure to Kashi, his wife had a vision and their journey to Kashi did not materialise.
102. I will narrate the marvel of this vision and its wonderful effect. Listen to it, right away. This is the sport of Sai's actions.
103. When she was asleep in her bed, she had this dream. She was carrying a water pot and was walking towards Lakkadshah's well.

104. “There was a fakir there, under a *neem* tree, with a cloth tied round his head, who came near me”, she said.
105. “Why do you unnecessarily take this trouble child?” The fakir said in a sweet and tender voice. “I will fill up your whole pot with pure water”.
106. She was frightened of the fakir. She took the way back home carrying the empty pot. The fakir followed her.
107. Seeing such a dream, she woke up and opened her eyes. Hearing his wife’s dream, it was decided to go to Shirdi.
108. They left immediately and reached Shirdi, the next day. As soon as they arrived they went to the *Masjid*. Baba was at the Lendi at that time.
109. They sat there till Baba returned, waiting for his arrival. Then, shortly thereafter, Baba returned.
110. The woman saw the same figure that she had dreamt of, to the last detail; and she was greatly surprised. Then, she kept staring.
111. After Baba’s feet were washed, this woman went forward to take *darshan*. After prostrating at Sai’s feet, she sat down gazing at him.
112. Noticing her humility, Sainath was pleased. Slowly Baba started telling a story which would remove her anguish.
113. Then, as was his custom, Baba began talking about his own ailment, in detail, to a third person who was there, in a loving voice.
114. In reality, it was the woman’s own story, as she would narrate it. It was told in her presence and she listened to it with great care.
115. “My hands, stomach and waist have been hurting severely since a long time. I am fed up of taking medicines as nothing gives me relief.
116. I am tired of taking medicines because they have no effect. But right now I am surprised to find that all the pains have disappeared, suddenly”.
117. Such a story was narrated to a third person without mentioning the woman’s name or indicating her. This was her story truly and it related to her only.
118. Later, after a month or two, as Baba had described, she was relieved of her pains. That was when realisation came to her.
119. The woman’s desires were fulfilled. Then Sapatnekar took *darshan* and Baba again greeted him with the earlier words ‘Get away’!
120. ‘I do not know how I have erred! Baba has unfailing contempt for

- me. Whenever I bow to him, he has only one answer, which is customary to him.
121. “It must be some accumulation of sins of my earlier lives which makes him angry with me. Right before my eyes, he behaves towards others with great love.
 122. “The whole assembly of devotees seem to experience, mornings and evenings, a joy as if it were perpetually Divali. It is only my luck to be told ‘Get away’!
 123. “Some action of mine has aggravated him and caused me to be unrighteous. I am amazed. My sins must be multiple whereby he is displeased with me.
 124. “In the beginning, I was vile towards Baba and full of doubts. I feel that this is the reason why Baba is using this method to put me in my place’.
 125. Therefore, he decided that till Baba favoured him, he would stay there with a concentrated and peaceful mind.
 126. Who has gone away disappointed without finding relief, even if he is suffering from the three-fold calamities, if he is yearning for Sai’s *darshan*?
 127. That day, he was very depressed and lost his appetite. He did not feel like going anywhere and could not even sleep.
 128. He decided to find an opportunity when Baba would be alone on his seat with no one near him. He would then hold on to his feet.
 129. No sooner than Sapatnekar took this decision that his determination bore fruit. Becoming emotional, he fell at Baba’s feet and held them.
 130. When he placed his head on the feet, Baba rested his hand on his head. Then Sapatnekar began pressing his feet, when a shepherd woman (*Dhangar*) came there.
 131. As soon as the woman came there, she began pressing Baba’s waist; and Baba according to his usual practice started talking to her.
 132. The marvel of that story was that when Sapatnekar listened to it carefully, he found it to be the story of his own life, word to word.
 133. Although it was the shepherd woman who gave the appropriate responses to the story, Sapatnekar sat spell bound listening to his own story and was amazed.
 134. It was told as if it was the story of a grocer but in reality it was his, including that of his dead son and about death.

135. It was as if a close acquaintance or a relative was narrating the whole story, from the time of birth to death, in all details.
136. Though the story was being told to the woman, she had no connection with it at all. It was the story of the father and the son, and only concerned the two in all respects.
137. Be that as it may be. When Sapatnekar heard his own story from Sai's mouth, in this manner, he was greatly surprised and his reverence for Sai's feet grew strong.
138. He was very amazed! How did Baba know all this? But Baba knew all this as easily as if he were holding an *amalak* fruit on his palm.
139. When he was himself the Supreme Being, then the world was his family. He is all-pervasive in this world. This is Sai's attribute.
140. When Sai is the *Avatar* that bears witness to the unity of all beings, how can he differentiate? He himself is the whole universe.
141. With One who is one with God, how can there be a question of duality? The one who sees, the act of seeing and the object that is seen are not different for such a person, just as the sky is not affected by any colour or dirt.
142. Baba was very omniscient. This was realised by Sapatnekar. Good and virtuous people, hear now what Baba said to him.
143. Pointing his finger at him, Baba spoke these words in a tone of surprise: "He says that I have killed his son. He blames me for it.
144. "Do I kill people's children? Why does he come and weep in the *Masjid*? Very well, I will do this now. I will bring back his son through his wife's womb.
145. "Just as the dead Ramdas was given back to that woman, I will bring back his own son in his wife's womb".
146. Hearing this, Sapatnekar gazed at Baba and awaited. Baba placed his hand on his head and assured him.
147. He said: "These feet are ancient. Your worries are over now. Have full faith in me. You will be fulfilled soon".
148. Sapatnekar was pressing Baba's feet when he heard these sweet words. He was choked with emotion and his eyes filled with tears. He prostrated at Baba's feet.
149. He was filled with the eight *satvik* emotions. His eyes had tears of joy with which he washed Baba's feet with love.
150. Again Baba placed his hand on his head and said: "Stay peacefully and without worry". Then Sapatnekar left for the place where he was staying and returned very happily.

151. He prepared the *naivedya* and handed it over to his wife. Then *puja* and *arati* was done. The platter was offered to Baba.
152. Water was sprinkled over it. All the rituals were done, like touching the water to the eyes, saying the *mantra*, offering the food to all the elements, etc. And then it was offered to Baba.
153. Then following the usual custom, Baba touched it with his hand in token of acceptance of the *naivedya*.
154. Then as the other devotees present prostrated at Baba's feet, Sapatnekar pushed his way into the crowd, and again did a quick *namaskar*.
155. Thus, in that hurry, heads knocked against one another. Then Baba spoke to Sapatnekar, serenely.
156. "Oh! Why so often do you do *namaskar* after *namaskar*? It is enough to do it once, with reverence and honour".
157. Be that as it may. That night, there was a *chavadi* procession and Sapatnekar liked it immensely. He lovingly started in front of the *palkhi* and delightedly carried the staff.
158. The listeners are already familiar with this *chavadi* procession. Therefore, to avoid making the book too long, I am not going to repeat it.
159. Later that night, Sapatnekar felt that instead of Baba he was visualising Pandurang. This was Baba's unfathomable *leela*!
160. Then when he asked for permission to leave (on the next day), he was told to eat and then go. He obeyed the instruction implicitly. Then, when leaving he went for *darshan*.
161. Then suddenly a thought struck him: 'If Baba now asks for *dakshina* how will I be able to give it?'
162. The money that he had was spent and only enough was left for the return fare. Therefore, he mentally prepared an answer if Baba said: "Give me *dakshina*".
163. He decided to give one rupee into Baba's hand even before it was asked; then if he asked, one more could be offered. If asked again, he would say he had no more.
164. He decided to frankly tell Baba that he had kept enough only for the train fare; and then he went to meet Baba.
165. According to his firm resolution, made earlier, he put one rupee into Baba's hand and he was asked for only one more. When it was given, Baba clearly told him:
166. "Take this one coconut. Place it in your wife's *sari* end. Then you go happily, leaving aside all worries of life".

167. Then, after a year had passed, a son was born to them. They both came again for *darshan*, when the boy was eight months old.
168. They laid the boy at Baba's feet. How, wonderful are the deeds of saints! Then, both of them folded their hands and entreated Baba. Listen to it.
169. "O' Sainath, how can we now redeem this obligation? We are at a loss to understand. We only place our heads at your feet.
170. "We are lowly, poor and insignificant. Have mercy on us, orphans. From now onwards, let us have refuge at your feet.
171. "Many thoughts and ideas trouble us in our waking hours and in our dreams, day and night. So fix our minds on your worship".
172. So be it. With that boy, Murlidhar, and with two others Bhaskar and Dinkar, Sapatnekar was fulfilled in their company, later on².
173. Then, along with his wife, he prostrated before merciful Sai. They attained mental peace and stability and returned after being fulfilled.
174. I had intended to tell this story briefly, when I commenced the narration. But Sainath is making me speak on, hence this chapter has lengthened.
175. This Hemad surrenders to him. Now let me give an indication of the story in the next chapter to the listeners.
176. That story is even more interesting than this. Sai fulfilled the wish of a devotee, who had a liking for miracles, silently.
177. When Sai's attributes are praised, there are people who are prone to find fault as they see them only. They have no motive for self gain nor are they attached to spiritual gain. Their only aim is to find fault.
178. "Sai Baba may be a saint. Yet unless he gives me some experience and unless I have some proof, I cannot believe in and accept him." This is what they say.
179. In the next chapter is the story of one who had gone only to test him but even his wishes were fulfilled. Virtuous listeners should hear it.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-eighth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Granting of Favour to Doubting Devotee".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Impressions made with a red hot stamping instrument, which maybe of copper, on their flesh, as done by the followers of Vishnu.
2. Lt. Col. M.B. Nimbalkar (Retd.) mentions that Sapatnekar and his wife Parvatibai had eight sons and one daughter. Baba is said to have done several *tilaks* of *udi* on Parvatibai's forehead and said that she could take as many children as she wanted.



Mahadeo V. Sapatnekar



Parvatibai M. Sapatnekar

“Take this one coconut. Place it in your wife’s *sari* end. Then you go happily, leaving aside all worries of life”. (Ch. 48, ovi 166)

Then, after a year had passed, a son was born to them. They both came again for *darshan*, when the boy was eight months old. (Ch. 48, ovi 167)