

Testing the Saint and the Control of the Mind

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. Where the *Vedas* and the *Puranas* have got exhausted praising the *Sadguru*, in all aspects, there I, an ignorant person, unenlightened, better be silent.
2. Really speaking, to remain silent, is, in essence the praise of the *Sadguru*. But Sai's attributes are such that they make you forget to remain silent.
3. Blessed are Sai's indescribable *leelas* ! When I realise that, I cannot remain silent. When I find the flavour of those delicacies to be sweet, I am reminded of the listeners.
4. I feel they must join me in partaking them, so that my own enjoyment is increased two-fold. This is my reason for arranging this feast.
5. If there are no friends or virtuous people to share them with, even the best of delicacies lose their flavour when one is alone.
6. Sai has had all his wishes fulfilled. Sai is the adornment of all the saints. Sai is the refuge of his devotees and the destroyer of difficulties of the whirlpool of life.
7. I have no words to describe his *leelas*. My speech is incapable of describing them. Inconceivable is he and his skills are beyond understanding. How can I know them!
8. He is the epitome of well-being. That Sai, by his grace, reminds me of his stories to complete this book. Know that.
9. I try to sing of his indescribable greatness but who is qualified to do so? When *para*¹ returns without doing anything, what can *pasbyanti*² and *madhyama*³ do?
10. When all the three do not open their mouths, what can the fourth

viz. *vaikhari*⁴ do? Though I know that fully, yet I am unable to control myself.

11. Without being humble at the *Sadguru*'s feet, self-realisation cannot be achieved. Saints are the embodiment of the Lord and I seek their hand of blessing.
12. Love for the Guru's feet, this itself is the attainment of every thing. May the desire for the company of Saints, and the love for them be ours!
13. He who is full of ego is not fit to be called a devotee. He is a true devotee who is totally without ego.
14. One who is arrogant because of his knowledge, and vain because he considers himself great is only the personification of pride. How could he be a reputed devotee?
15. Unfortunate are the ones who do not sing the praises of their Guru, and those who do not hear them despite not being deaf are the embodiment of dull-wittedness.
16. Practising penance is better than pilgrimage, observing vows, sacrifice and charity. Worshipping the Lord is better than penance but meditation on one's own Guru, is the best of all.
17. Only Sai is the object of meditation for his devotees; only Sai is their deity for worship; only Sai is their hidden treasure, which should be protected but not in a miserly way.
18. If sometimes I am lazy, Sai who dwells in the innermost soul is not. If I forget the story, he gives me a timely reminder.
19. If I think of sitting quietly, I have no power to do so. The inspiration for the story arises so unexpectedly that I am compelled to take the pen in hand.
20. Thus for his listeners to hear his unfathomable story and for my own selfish reasons, he has made me write this *Satcharita*.
21. Even otherwise, the stories of Saints are created and written by them. If there is no inspiration from them, they would be dull and dry at every step.
22. So, merciful Sainath entering my mind got his book written by me and also thereby fulfilled my wish.
23. I am completely contented if I am constantly chanting Sree Sai's name, thinking about his sayings, and meditating upon his form.
24. Sai is deeply indebted to him who repeats Sree Sai's name, feels love for him in his heart and does all actions for his sake.
25. There is no better means for breaking the bondage of this world.

- The story of Sai is very purifying and savouring it always gives happiness.
26. Use the feet to circumambulate Sai, use the ears to listen to the *Satcharita*, embrace him lovingly with your whole body and use the eyes to have Sai's *darshan*.
 27. Come before him rolling, with eight-fold prostrations and place your forehead at his feet; use the tongue only to remember his name and use the nose only to sniff the fragrance of flowers that have already been offered to him.
 28. Now to continue the story mentioned in the previous chapter of a devotee who had love for witnessing a miracle – I will narrate it, as promised.
 29. He was not motivated by personal interest nor by any spiritual needs. He was ignorant of the greatness of Saints, yet if he was told of the glory of Saints, he would not believe that.
 30. His friends told the stories of Sai. He heard them but always found fault. Unless they were confirmed by his own experience he refused to believe them.
 31. His name was Hari Kanoba. He left Bombay on a journey, with his friends, to test Sai.
 32. But who can definitely know the skills of Sai who illumines everyone's innermost self? They are masterly and unique.
 33. Sai *Samartha* knew Haribhau's intentions as soon as he left for Shirdi. He was desirous only for a miracle and he deserved only that.
 34. He gave him a taste of it and made him his devotee, making his journey worthwhile. Saints are truly able to devise their skills.
 35. At Kopergaon, Haribhau got into a *tonga* with his friends, after having a bath in the Godavari. They left for Shirdi without delay.
 36. After arriving from Kopergaon, he washed his hands and feet and then Haribhau set off to have a look at the Saint and to know him.
 37. Haribhau was eager to have Sai Baba's *darshan* with a new pair of sandals on his feet and a *jari* embroidered turban on his head.
 38. Then, when he came to the *Masjid*, and saw Sai from afar, he felt like going near him and prostrating at his feet.
 39. But he had a problem with his sandals as there was no safe place to keep them there. Finally, finding a corner there, he shoved them in.
 40. Then he went up for *darshan*, lovingly bowed at Sai's feet, took *Udi* and *prasad* and returned to go to the *wada*.

41. When he went to put on the sandals, he could not find them. After searching a lot, he returned without them, quite morose, losing hope of finding them.
42. There was a large crowd there, coming and going. So whom would he really ask? He could not think of a solution.
43. Thus he was in a disturbed state. The sandals alone appeared before his eyes; his mind was concentrated on his sandals; and his whole being was centred on the sandals.
44. He had bought them with great eagerness but the sandals were gone and lost! He felt certain that they had been stolen by some thief.
45. So be it. Later, he bathed, and after doing *puja* and *naivedya*, he sat down with others to eat. But he was not at peace.
46. ‘The courtyard is Sai’s! Who could have taken my sandals, after eluding Sai’s eyes? Is this a small wonder?’
47. He was full of regrets. He could not concentrate on the meal. He came out, afterwards, to wash his hands.
48. In the meantime, a young Maratha lad came there, unexpectedly, waving the lost sandals at the end of a stick, like a flag.
49. The group of people were washing their hands after the meal. The lad was searching. He said: “Baba has sent me, giving me this stick in my hand.
50. “He told me ‘son, go calling out for Hari, the son of Ka, with a *jari* turban and give it to the one who claims it as his own, and grabs them anxiously.
51. “But, first ensure that it is given to Hari, the son of Ka, and that he has a *jari* turban. Do not make a big hue and cry”.
52. Hearing the boy’s cry and recognising his sandals, Haribhau ran to him, very surprised.
53. Haribhau’s eyes were filled with tears of happiness and he was choked with emotion on seeing his lost sandals. He was greatly amazed.
54. He said to the boy: “Come, come here. Let me see. Bring the sandals to me”. Seeing them he said: “Where did you find them? Tell me clearly”.
55. The boy said: “I do not know all this. I am only following Baba’s instructions. Whoever is Hari, the son of Ka, should show me the *jari* embroidered turban.
56. “I will give the sandals to him only. I will not recognise anyone else.

- The person who satisfies these indications of Baba, he alone will take these sandals”.
57. “Oh, lad, these are my sandals only”. Though Haribhau said so, he would not give them to him. Then he tried to convince the boy with all Baba’s indications.
 58. He said: “Lad, I am that Hari, the son of Kanoba. These words are true in all respects. They apply to me, in every way.
 59. “Now, see this *jari* embroidered turban. It will remove all your doubts. Then, I will be recognised as the owner of the sandals and no one else can claim them”.
 60. The boy was then convinced. He gave the sandals to Haribhau. His wishes were fulfilled. He experienced that Sai was truly a saint!
 61. He thought: ‘Though I have a *jari* embroidered turban, is it so novel? It is on my head and visible to all.
 62. ‘But I come from a distant place. It is my first trip to Shirdi. How did Sai Baba know that my name is Hari?’
 63. ‘Kanoba is my father, and nobody knows him or has seen him. He used to be addressed as Ka. I am amazed.
 64. ‘Earlier when my friends told me of the greatness of Sai as a Saint, I did not believe them. I am now truly repentant.
 65. ‘Now that I have had this experience, I have learnt Sai Baba’s powers. There is no room for doubt. Sree Sai, I know, is a very great Saint’.
 66. One’s experience is dependent on one’s intentions. So was Haribhau’s. He had a desire to test a Saint and had no thought of spiritual gain.
 67. Friends and relations narrated that Sai *Samartha* was a very great Saint. The reason for going to Shirdi was to personally experience it or see a miracle.
 68. To offer your life at the feet of the Saint so that you can find God, was not at all his wish. How far can the chameleon go⁵?
 69. ‘I had thought of seeing a miracle with reverence at the doors of a Saint. Now the pair of new sandals have been received by me in my own hands. (as if, at my own doorstep!)
 70. ‘Even otherwise, they were only trivial sandals. If they were lost, what would have been the loss? But, thereby, the mind’s agitation would not have been resolved till they were found’.
 71. There are two ways to attain the favour of a Saint. One is devotion and the other is knowledge. The path of knowledge is deep and difficult. The means of devotion are simpler.

72. If devotion is so easy and attainable, then why do not all follow it? For that, one needs to have the greatest good fortune. Then, alone, can it be attained.
73. One meets a Saint only after lakhs of meritorious lives. Only the happiness of association with a Saint develops devotion.
74. All of us just know about this daily existence, where there is attachment but we don't know what is detachment. When such is the state of mind, can it be called devotion?
75. We will be granted our desires according to the strength of our devotion. This is true for all times. There should not be the slightest doubt about it.
76. We who had gathered around Sai for material benefits, day and night, received such gifts. But those who came for spirituality got that.
77. Be it so. Here is another story. A person called Somadev Swami came in person to Shirdi to test Sai.
78. In the year 1906, in Uttarkashi, this person met Bhajji, who was staying in a *dharamshala* or traveller's lodge.
79. Bhajji was the well-known brother of the famous, late Dixit. When he was doing the Badri – Kedar pilgrimage, he met him on the way.
80. Leaving Badri-kedar behind, Bhajji came down and came across several resting places on the way, and saw groups of travellers there.
81. Amongst them was a person, who later on became a well-known *Swami* of Haridwar, and who was destined to come under Baba's guidance.
82. This story about him is instructive. It will clarify Baba's nature. It will give pleasure to the listener and great happiness to all.
83. When Bhajji was on his way for the morning ablutions, he met this *Swamiji*. While casually conversing, they came to like each other.
84. When Bua was in Uttarkashi, down the Gangotri valley, about 70 *koss* from Dehradun, that this meeting took place.
85. Bua set out in the morning, with a *lota* in his hand and Bhajji also set out for the same purpose and same place.
86. At first, their glances met. Later, on the way, they made their acquaintance and inquired about each other's welfare with pleasure and contentment.
87. During the conversation, they began liking each other and inquired about each other's whereabouts.

88. “You live in Haridwar while I live in Nagpur. If perchance you come in that direction, give me the pleasure of seeing you.
89. “If you happen to come during your travels, purify our house and give us the pleasure, once again of seeing you and doing some small service for you.
90. “Please remember me and bring your feet to my home. This is my request. May the Lord grant it”.
91. This conversation, in this manner, took place in the year 1906, near Uttarkashi.
92. Both of them, took down each other’s addresses. When they reached the plains they parted ways.
93. When five years had elapsed and the time had come to be in contact with Sai, the *Swami* felt a strong restlessness to meet Bhaiji.
94. In the year 1911, *Swamiji* came to Nagpur. Hearing the stories about Sree Sainath gave him pure joy.
95. Bhaiji gave him a letter of introduction so that he could reach Shirdi comfortably. Thus planning the whole trip, the *Swami* left Nagpur.
96. When he got off at Manmad, the train for Kopergaon was ready. There he got into a *tonga* with happy anticipation of the *darshan*.
97. Wherever you go, the behaviour of a saint or his ways of living differ from one another. It is never the same everywhere.
98. The conduct of one Saint is not the same as another’s. It is not the yardstick to evaluate their worthiness.
99. Why should one have this anxiety when one goes for the initial *darshan* of a Saint? If one goes only to watch their conduct one is depriving one self of one’s welfare.
100. But *Swamiji*’s bent of mind was such that many conjectures and foolish fancies arose. When he saw from a distance the flags of Shirdi, his imagination ran riot.
101. All the other people with him, when they saw from a distance the flags fluttering over the top of the *Masjid*, bowed to them with love.
102. Though their hearts were anxious about the Sai *darshan* that they would have later on, yet they could not bear to disrespect his flags which they saw.
103. The *darshan* of the flags arouses a feeling of love. This is an experience known to all. It is a sign of loving devotion. There is nothing unusual about it.

104. But seeing those flags from a distance, there arose numerous fanciful thoughts in the *Swami*'s wicked mind. Strange was the nature of his mind.
105. 'To have a liking for flags, is this an indication of sainthood? To put flags atop the temple indicates a deficiency in sainthood.
106. 'If a Saint seeks respect in this way, it is just to gain popularity. I cannot appreciate the greatness of such a Saint. It shows his imperfection'.
107. In short, in accordance with his opinion the *Swami* took a decision about the appropriate behaviour of a saint and determined not to have Sai's blessings.
108. 'It is useless having come here', he thought. The *Swami* was greatly disgusted and definitely decided then to return from there itself, immediately.
109. 'It is a false pride to gain cheap popularity. Why does a Saint need honour? From seeing the flags, I can come to no other conclusion.
110. 'This Saint attracts people for his *darshan* by flying the flags to show his greatness. This is the very lack of saintliness. Why should I go for *darshan*?
111. 'What peace of mind can I gain by such a *darshan*? This is a show of flags of pride. I can have no satisfaction from this'.
112. He said: "I better turn back and go home. Seeing him does not seem to have been such a good idea. I have been truly disconcerted".
113. "Then, his companions said to him : "Why have you come so far? Why should these mere flags disturb you so much?
114. "Now we have come near (to Shirdi). How much more agitated would you be, when you see the chariot, the palanquin, the horse and all the complete paraphernalia?"
115. Hearing this, the *Swami* was all the more aroused. 'Not a few such *Sadhus*, with tom-toms, palanquins and horses, full of airs, have I seen!'
116. When he thought thus, Somdevji started to turn back. "The idea of coming to Shirdi was not good. Let me take again the road to the river bank".
117. Then, his travelling companions began to urge him : "Now that you have come so far, don't turn back.
118. "Let us go forward, as we have come. Do not have these malicious or harmful thoughts. These flags that are flying atop the *Masjid* have nothing to do with the Saint.

119. “This Saint needs no flags, nor popularity, nor honour. It is the villagers who like this ornamentation. It is a symbol of their devotion.
120. “Do not look at the flags. Just go and take *darshan* only. Do not stay there even for a moment. Then you can leave at once”.
121. In the meanwhile, as they were close to Shirdi, he felt on hearing this simple advice that he should remove this inquietude of mind so that he did not feel restless later.
122. Be it so. When he saw Sree *Samartha*, *Buva* melted, his eyes were filling with loving tears and his throat was choked.
123. He experienced supreme bliss, his eyes were zestfully joyous and he felt anxious to roll in the dust of Baba’s feet.
124. Seeing that handsome and comely appearance, his eyes and his mind were wonderstruck and he remained staring intently. He was captured by love.
125. The evil thoughts evaporated from his mind. The mind melted with joy of the *darshan*. His eyes were absorbed in the divine form. *Buva* was deeply engrossed.
126. Gazing at the great Saint, *Somdev* was supremely delighted. He felt at peace and desired to stay here forever.
127. Merely by the *darshan* all the doubts disappeared. His mind became quiescent. The sense of duality left him and he experienced complete unity consciousness.
128. He was tongue-tied and his eyes did not even blink. Supreme Consciousness enveloped him. He was satisfaction personified.
129. At first, he wanted to turn back on seeing the flags. Later his eyes were filled with tears of excessive love. The eight *satvik* emotions gushed forth. He was wrapped in Baba’s love.
130. “Where the mind is fully absorbed that is our abode”. He recalled these words of his own Guru. *Buva* was choked with love.
131. The *Buva* came forward slowly and as he did so, *Maharaj* got into a rage. He showered abuses but that only doubled *Buva*’s love.
132. The great Baba’s behaviour was strange. He took an extraordinary form and displayed the *Avatar* of *Narasimha*. It was a close resemblance.
133. “Leave my false claims (humbug) to me. Leave and go back to your home. Beware! If you ever come back again to my *Masjid* !
134. “Why do you need to take the darshan of one who flies flags over the *Masjid* ? Is this a sign of sainthood? Do not stay here even for a moment!”

135. Be it so. Later this *Swami*, who was a doubting Thomas, went into the courtyard. Looking at Sai's countenance from afar, he could not remain quiet.
136. 'These words are an echo of my own thoughts'. Hearing them, as they struck his ears word to word, *Burva* remained rooted in shame and realised that Maharaj was omniscient.
137. 'How foolish am I! And how wise is Maharaj! How wrong were my thoughts about him! How pure is his heart!'
138. Sai embraced some, and touched some with his hand. He assured some and cast a merciful glance on some.
139. He looked at some smilingly. He consoled some who had sorrow, and gave *udi* and *prasad* to some. Thus, he satisfied everyone.
140. 'This being so, he was annoyed only with me! It seems that is due to my earlier behaviour. It is not anger but a lesson to me. It will be beneficial to me'.
141. Be it so. Later, that is what transpired. *Swami* got so absorbed in Baba that with Sai's grace, he was purified and was a staunch devotee of Baba's feet till the end.
142. May the strength of the potency of Sai devotion remove all evil addictions and jealousy; give birth to peace, wealth and patience; and make his devotees accomplish their goals.
143. This movable and immovable world is full of celestial musicians, the servants of Kuber, the deities and the demons. In the whole universe, Sai is the all-pervasive One, filling it uninterruptedly and truly.
144. If he had not assumed a form and had always remained without form, then we mankind would not have had his help and been obliged at all.
145. In conclusion, if Sai had not taken form, as part of his divine sport, and not collected the people, or had not opposed the wicked and villainous, then how would he have favoured the devotees?
146. Now that the chapter is coming to an end, I am reminded of an incident. It is an example of Sai's teachings, therefore I think it will be beneficial to whosoever follows it.
147. The incident is very short; and, who remembers it will achieve his welfare. Therefore, listeners, I request your attention for a moment.

148. Once, the devotee Mhalsapati, along with Nana Saheb, were seated in the *Masjid*. Listen to the wonder that took place.
149. A rich gentleman, from Vaijapur, who was keen on the *darshan* of *Samartha* Sai, came along with his family.
150. Seeing ladies in *purdah*, Nana felt a constraint and thought of getting up and leaving, to give them space, greater freedom and satisfaction.
151. Therefore, Nana moved aside to get up, when Baba restrained him. He said: “Those who wish to come will come up. You can remain seated peacefully”.
152. “He has also come for *darshan*. But you came also. There is no problem”, was suggested to them. They came up and bowed to Baba.
153. One of the ladies, raised the veil while bowing. Seeing her incredible beauty, Nana was smitten.
154. He was diffident to look at her openly, but he longed to do so. How should he behave? He was unable to control his infatuation.
155. He felt ashamed, in Baba’s presence. Therefore, he did not raise his head, but the eyes strayed. Nana was in a dilemma.
156. This was Nana’s inner state (of turmoil). Baba, who was all knowing, knew of it. How could others know of it? They were left to unravel the meaning of the words.
157. Knowing Nana’s baffled state of mind, Baba decided to bring him back to his normal self. Listen to the advice he gave.
158. “Nana, why is your mind disturbed? Let the senses behave according to their inherent nature. Do not interfere. There is no harm in it.
159. “*Brahmadev* has created this beautiful world and it is our duty to appreciate its beauty, otherwise the creation will lose its value and charm. The mind will get steady and calm, slowly and gradually.
160. “When the front door is open, why go by the backdoor? Where there is a pure heart, there is no difficulty, whatsoever.
161. “If there is no evil thought in us, why should one be afraid of anyone? The eyes may do their work. Then, why should you be embarrassed?”
162. Madhavrao was there and he had a naturally curious mind. To satisfy his curiosity, he asked for the meaning of those words.



Nanasaheb Chandorkar

163. When Madhavrao asked thus, Nana said: “Wait a little, for the present. I will explain Baba’s meaning, when we are on the way to the *wada*”.
164. When the conversation about the general well-being was over, Nana bowed to Sai *Samartha* and started to return to his home. Madhavrao accompanied him.
165. He immediately asked Nana, “What did Baba’s words: ‘the mind will get steady and calm slowly and gradually’ mean? Explain the exact meaning”.
166. Nana did not feel inclined to tell the meaning. He tried to evade the matter. That created more suspicion in Madhav’s mind and he was restless.
167. Then opening up his heart, Nana told him all that had transpired there, because of Madhavrao’s insistence and thus unfolded the enigma.
168. How very alert Baba is! No matter whose mind strays where, he is himself witness to everything, and he knows everything.
169. The listeners must have been amazed on hearing this short but marvellous story. Seeing the deeper meaning one would gain priceless steadfastness and seriousness.
170. The mind is wavering by nature, but do not let it be unrestrained. Even if the senses are agitated do not let the body be impatient.
171. The senses cannot be trusted. Do not crave for the sense pleasures. Gradually, by steady practice, the frivolity will disappear.
172. Do not become a slave to the senses. They do not remain suppressed all the time. They should be systematically controlled, considering the circumstances.
173. Beauty is the object of the sense of sight. Beautiful objects should be seen fearlessly. Where is the need for shame or embarrassment? Only, do not entertain evil thoughts.
174. Making the mind desireless, observe God’s creation. Then senses will be easily controlled and one would forget the enjoyment of the senses.
175. The charioteer is the main cause to take the chariot to the right destination. Similarly, the intellect must remain always aware of the attraction of the senses.
176. Just as the charioteer controls the chariot, the intellect by subjugating the senses controls the wayward body and the exceeding fickleness of the mind.

177. Once when a person becomes free from the enjoyment of the body, senses and the mind, he attains a place at the feet of Vishnu. Such is the power of the intellect.
178. The eyes and all the other senses should be thought of as horses, and beauty, enjoyment etcetra, whatever be the pleasures, should be considered as roads, leading to hell.
179. Even a trace of desire of sensory enjoyment destroys the spiritual bliss. Therefore, abandon it completely and only then you will attain liberation.
180. Even if outwardly the senses are controlled, but inwardly there is attachment, the cycle of birth and death does not come to an end. The sense objects are great and deadly destroyers.
181. With the help of a discriminating charioteer, who keeps the reins in hand with discernment, then the horses (of the senses) will not go astray, not even in dreams.
182. If one is fortunate to have such a charioteer, who is astute and who satisfies one's needs, who is determined, skilful, careful and clever, how can the abode of the Lord be far away!
183. That abode is of *Parabrahma*, and whose other name is *Vasudev* — they are the highest states of being – the Abode of the Absolute and the Supreme.
184. So be it. This chapter is now completed. The next one is even more interesting, and will entertain the inner spirit of the virtuous devotees. Listen to it methodically.
185. Be it so. In the end, Hemad offers himself at the feet of the *Sadguru*, who is the mover of the universe, and the inspirer of the intellect, with deep gratitude.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the forty-ninth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called “Testing the Saint and the Control of the Mind”.

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

Notes :

1. Speech in the first of its four stages – the first stirrings of the breath.
2. The second stage of speech, from the first stirrings to articulate utterance.
3. The third stage of speech, from the first stirrings to articulate utterance in the trachea or larynx.
4. Actual words, or the fourth stage of speech.
5. It is said that the chameleon goes no further than the compound wall.



The king, the pauper, the poor, and the meek were all equal in his eyes. He was beyond honour or insults. He saw God in every living being. (Ch. 4, ovi 48)

He behaved ordinarily with all people, witnessed the dance and frolic of the *Muralis* ⁷, listened to the songs and *gazals*, swaying to them (with great relish), but his inner state of *samadhi* was absolutely undisturbed. (Ch. 4, ovi 49)