

## Removal of Ignorance

*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. There is no limit to my obligation to my parents, who gave me birth as a human being and that I was not born as a worm.
2. I was not a torment to my mother in the womb. I was not born blind, lame, squint-eyed, stuttering, nor deaf and dumb. I was born hale and hearty, completely well-formed.
3. I was descended, with God's grace, in a high Brahmin caste family, whom even the gods respect, and was very fortunate.
4. As we are born millions of times, there is a mother and father for each birth. But there is a great rarity of such parentage which helps me in avoiding the cycle of birth and death.
5. The one who gives life is really the father; the other performs the thread ceremony; the third one is he who nurtures and fosters; the fourth one is he who protects from fear, troubles and tribulations.
6. In this world, they are all on an equal level. But there is no true father other than the merciful *Sadguru*. Listen to him in wonder for real achievement.
7. The one who impregnates the womb of the mother, by whom one is born, is the giver of life. He is the father in the popular sense of the term. But the *Sadguru* is the remarkable father.
8. He does not spend his seed and yet gives birth to his son, without the use of any bodily organs. He fully grants his grace.
9. I bow to him who frees one from the cycle of birth and death, the Cloud of Mercy, the Light of Knowledge, who gives the deep and the true knowledge of the *Vedas*, the best of all Gurus who pervades all.

10. I bow to the sun who is the remover of darkness of this world, one who has the knowledge of the Self and who is the most distinguished amongst the Saints, who is the moon for the minds of the devotees, who are like *Chakors*, like the wish-fulfilling tree, the best of all Gurus.
11. Unfathomable is the greatness of the *Gururaya* describing which words are inadequate and speech fails. It would be better to remain silent and keep one's head bowed at the Guru's feet.
12. Unless one has practised great austerities throughout the earlier lives, one does not have the *darshan* of a Saint, to remove the three-fold calamities.
13. One who desires to have spiritual gains, liberation and his own welfare, should surrender to a Saint. Then he will lack nothing.
14. Twice blessed is the company of the virtuous! How can its greatness be described! The virtuous devotees attain discrimination, detachment and supreme bliss near them.
15. Sai is Supreme Consciousness only. From the formless state, he took form. Who can definitely describe his desireless state!
16. He lovingly tells his own interesting story for the devoted and loving devotees, who are the listeners, being compassionate towards them. The stories are his temple.
17. The sense of ego is crushed by the touch of his hand on one's head, and gives way to the reverberations of the feeling of 'I am That', inundating the entire world with joy.
18. What power could an insignificant one like me have to describe his fame? He, himself, has brought to light this book, born out of the love of his devotees, by his grace.
19. I roll in the dust at Sai's feet, greet the assembly of listeners, bow to the sadhus, saints and virtuous people and lovingly embrace all.
20. Sai tells the stories as an easy sport, which are laden with the code of moral rectitude. Perpetual peace was his ornament. Even the great Saints meditated upon him.
21. It is not correct to compare him to the sun, because the sun sets; nor to the moon because it waxes and wanes. This Sai is always perfect.
22. Hemad humbles himself at his feet and lovingly appeals to the listeners to listen to this narration with faith, with complete attention and with interest.

23. The earth is well ploughed, and the seeds are sown. But if you, the Cloud of Mercy, do not rain can there be a harvest?
24. When the stories of the Saints are heard, there remains no sinfulness. Merits sprout on listening to the stories. Take advantage of this rare and favourable opportunity.
25. The four types of *Mukti*<sup>1</sup> hold no attraction for us. Enjoin unwavering devotion to Sai. This is our supreme achievement.
26. Since we are not at all bound, what association could we have with *mukti* ? Let devotion to the Saints awaken within us, which alone will purify our inner selves.
27. Where the sense of you and I does not arise, which should really be a natural state, we need that devotion without duality. We ask Sai for this boon.
28. Now this is the only request to the listeners. When they take the book in their hands to read, the subject matter, the reading thereof and the reader should all become one.
29. Ignore Hemadpant, as he is not the author of this *Satcharita*. He is only the instrument for the welfare of the devotees.
30. If by good fortune you have got an oyster and you throw it away, you have lost a pearl. Why concern yourself about how the *Ashwatha* (Peepal<sup>2</sup>) tree flourishes. Do not lose hope of your welfare.
31. Here, there is no one but Sai who speaks the words and writes them also. He, himself, is the subject to be listened to, the one who makes you listen, and also the listener. This union or oneness should not be lost.
32. Where the ears are not ready to listen with respect, and where the mind is not concentrated, then there is no listening or reading at all. Then how would anyone know the meaning?
33. While listening, do it with humility. The listeners should only deem that Sai is in their mind. Only then the correct listening is accomplished. Let the oneness be continuous.
34. Then, just as the waves of the waters mingle with all the waters, so all the inclinations or activities of the senses would be one with Sai.
35. Only in this way, the knowledgeable learn about spirituality, those who are interested in humour will be delighted with the wit, and those who appreciate poetry will be able to enjoy the poetic stanzas. Everyone will enjoy this book.
36. Be it so. Earlier in this *Satcharita*, in the thirty-ninth chapter, the

advice that *Samartha* gave to one of his foremost devotees, has been mentioned.

37. When the devotee was near Baba, he was reciting the fourth chapter of the 'Bhagvad Gita', from the beginning, at that time.
38. On the one hand he was pressing Baba's feet, and on the other he was reciting that prayer. When the thirty-third verse was over, he started on the thirty-fourth.
39. With a calm mind, and with full absorption, he was uttering the words very, very softly. But others did not know the source.
40. When he started on the thirty-fourth verse, Sainath felt like gracing his foremost devotee and putting him on the righteous path.
41. That devotee's name was Nana (Chandorkar). Then, Baba said to him: "Nana, what are you muttering? Why don't you speak aloud?"
42. For some time, I have been watching that you are muttering something. But your voice is not distinct. What is this secret?"
43. Then Nana spoke clearly : "I am reciting the Gita. So that I may not disturb others, I am muttering the words".
44. "Let that be for others. But for me, speak clearly. Do you understand what you are reciting? Let me know clearly", said Sree.
45. Then, saying the verse in a loud voice beginning with *Tadviddhi Pranipatena*, Nana showed, what he was saying, with a prostration. Baba was satisfied on hearing it.
46. Then, when he was asked for the meaning of the verse, Nana said in detail the meaning as given by an earlier *acharya*. Baba shook his head.
47. Again he asked Nana: "Nana, consider the third metric foot, *Updekshyanti te gyanam* and try to concentrate on it.
48. In that, after the word 'te' there is a sign of suspension for the letter 'a'. If read as *agyan*, consider if the meaning becomes opposite.
49. Shankaranand, Dnyaneshwar, Anandgiri, Shreedhar, Madhusudan and other commentators make its meaning based on the word *gyan*.
50. And this is accepted by everyone, I also know that. But why should we knowingly be deprived of the marvel that can be enjoyed by inserting the suspension sign".
51. After speaking thus, Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, showered the drops of nectar of advice for the devotees, who were like the *Chakor* and *Chatak* birds. I have already narrated it earlier. (Chapt er 39).
52. But all the readers of this 'Sai Leela' (magazine in which the Satcharita

- chapters were being published) were not amazed by this meaning. However, some had doubts. This is amazing.
53. So that they may be satisfied, and the matter may be properly proved, I will make a little more effort to convince them of the rightful use of this word *agyan*.
  54. Some would even doubt whether Baba knew Sanskrit. There is nothing unknown to Saints. The reason for doubts seems to be something else.
  55. Who does not know the saying from the *Shruti* that “One who has understood the One, has knowledge of everything”. Sai had knowledge of the Self.
  56. What do the Saints not know who can see the whole universe as clearly as an *amalak* fruit held in their palm? Even the sun is illuminated by them!
  57. One, who has that Knowledge of The One, how can he have lack of any knowledge? Whatever is contained in any *vidya* is known to them. What is so important about Sanskrit?
  58. There are some readers of the Sai *Leela*, who say “Nana is dishonest. This is arisen and contrived by his own imagination, and he has written about this unwanted suspension indicating his ignorance.
  59. He has himself created this fictitious story about the suspension and the ignorance in relation to it. He has unnecessarily raised this fruitless wrangling to show off his great knowledge.
  60. Where there was no suspension, he has introduced it. In the place of the word *gyan* he has derived the word *agyan*. In this way, he has put forth a contrary meaning of the *Gita*”.
  61. But looking at the facts and thinking deeply over it, there is no inconsistency in the thirty-ninth chapter of ‘Sai Leela’.
  62. Whatever be your opinion, and whether Nana is honest or dishonest, do not believe what he has narrated to be nonsensical utterance.
  63. Leaving aside your aversion for Nana, the readers should not be swayed by emotions. When you set aside the apparent or superficial, he will be found to be innocent.
  64. ‘Sai Leela’ is one of the best magazines. Without reading the thirty-ninth chapter, it would not be easily possible to understand the present chapter.
  65. In the ‘Bhagvad Gita’, in the fourth chapter, called *Gyanyagnya* there is a discourse by Sree Krishna on ignorance and the thirty-fourth verse is about ignorance.

66. “*Tvadviddhi pranipatena, pariprashnena sevaya. Upadekshyanti te gyanam, gyaninastattva darshinah*”.
67. This is one of the important verses of the *Gita*. In the third metric foot, there is a suspension before the word *gyan* thereby *agyan* appears.
68. If the suspension is not considered, the word *gyan* can be undoubtedly read. There is no objection against that. That is generally the meaning that is elucidated.
69. “Liberation is achieved through knowledge”. These words from the *shrutis* are accepted by all. But it is not binding on the philosophers to teach *gyan* (knowledge).
70. I am the *Atman*, the pure witness, untainted, knowing, free and liberated, pervading the whole manifestation, supreme consciousness, unblemished, filled with the bliss of unity consciousness.
71. But I am neither ignorance nor am I the product of ignorance. Understand me to be “This Soul as *Brahman*” and know me to be the Treasure in the highest consciousness and also know me as Bliss.
72. “I am *Brahman*” (*Yajurveda*) is the saying that always inspires me. Know that this only is pure knowledge. “I am a sinner, unfortunate and godless”: these feelings spring from the mine of ignorance.
73. This *Maya* is an ancient or eternal power. Because of ignorance one is in a state of being bound; because of knowledge one is free from all bondage. This is the state of a being from times immemorial.
74. This total misconception of name and form is the complete illusion caused by *Maya*. Words are inadequate to describe *Maya* and it is very difficult to conquer.
75. The abode of *Maya* is in the fanciful thoughts that arise. The state of being bound or free certainly arises from the imagination.
76. “Liberation is achieved through knowledge”. This principle (verity) from the *Shrutis* is eternally true. But until the *karmas* arising from sins are annihilated, it is impossible for knowledge to dawn.
77. One who is impressed with pure knowledge, know that he has abandoned all desires. He is not bound by *Maya*. There is no place for passions or emotions in him.
78. A supremely knowledgeable person, like Shuka, came to a sad end also due to doubts. Ignorance is born due to doubts, which cannot be removed without the Guru.
79. When a doubt enters the mind of a knowledgeable person, even

- such a person becomes egoistic. Even a huge pot of milk gets spoilt by a drop of sour gruel and all the milk is spoilt.
80. Therefore, it is important to understand ignorance, at the outset. Once that is removed, the mind gets purified. After that happens, knowledge manifests infinitely and the mind will attain undisturbed absorption in contemplation.
  81. He, who is concentrated on riches and fame and is yet craving for sense enjoyment in spite of having had it and is incessantly thinking of wife and children, his knowledge is nothing but ignorance.
  82. Thus, one who is obsessed with wealth, sons, and wife does not know his well-being even though he may be knowledgeable. Therefore, so long as he is without devotion, his knowledge is veiled by ignorance.
  83. All living beings are full of ignorance. Becoming free from ignorance, become knowledgeable and then transcend that also. That stage is *Brahmaroop* or embodiment of *Brahman*, certainly.
  84. When ignorance disappears, knowledge manifests. He who is knowledgeable, is forgiving by nature. Till the pride for the body is not lost, he is under the control of *Maya*.
  85. *Avatars* like Ram and Krishna, Saints like Sanat, Sanak and others, the most knowledgeable ones, have *Maya* as their handmaiden; but she has fooled others.
  86. Though the Self resides in the hearts of all creatures, no one knows this. Such is the inconceivable state of *Maya*, it has unfathomable power of illusion to veil it.
  87. Unless the false pride of the feeling ‘I am the doer, I alone am the enjoyer’ is left off, and one does not surrender to the Dweller in the Heart, one cannot attain self-liberation.
  88. Discriminate between the transitory and the eternal and listen (to sacred texts), chant, meditate and contemplate on them, and enrich yourself with the six virtues such as *shama*, *dama* etc. Only that will drive away ignorance.
  89. ‘The world is different from me’; ‘I am small and limited’; the feeling that ‘I am the body’ – this is unalloyed ignorance.
  90. In this science of *Vedant*, which propounds knowledge, there are four necessary antecedents – the writer, in all compassion, has explained them in detail.
  91. The befitting person, the subject matter and the relation between the two are the three, and the fourth one, is the purpose. After

- carefully explaining the 'Purpose', there arises what is called the removal of ignorance.
92. Complete unity of the individual soul and *Brahman* happens to be verily the main subject of *Vedant* and the removal of ignorance involved in understanding the principle of this unity, happens to be the 'Purpose'.
  93. Therefore, removing this ignorance from the very roots is itself the attainment of Bliss of Self. Hence, using all contrivances, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.
  94. Until one has removed the feeling of duality, he cannot be called knowledgeable. The knowledge of a person who has bodily pride can be called complete ignorance.
  95. He makes a show of his own knowledge but performs improper acts. He is as good as dead. He is like the sleeping Kumbhakaran<sup>3</sup>.
  96. For him who does not behave in accordance with the *Vedas*, and does not follow the rules of the four castes, the only means to purify his intellect is the removal of ignorance.
  97. Even Brahma and others have been deluded by the three *gunas*, such as *satva* etc., also by words (speech), touch, form, taste and smell, and on account of the sex organs, and the tongue, with different permutations and combinations.
  98. All the movable beings in the world are encircled by Ignorance and *Maya* from times immemorial. They are engulfed by passions such as anger and hatred, and surrounded by ignorance.
  99. Every being is bound by ignorance. For its pure form to manifest, it is necessary to break the ties with ignorance, desires and the fruits of past actions.
  100. The cow's teats are so full of milk that it oozes out. The tick or cattle louse sticks fast there itself. But it enjoys the blood, so how would it have taste for milk?
  101. Notice the frog and the humble bee. The beautiful lotus houses them both. But the fragrant pollen is around which the bee hovers, while the frog feeds on the mire.
  102. Though a repository of knowledge is before a person, a foolish one is attracted by ignorance, and ignorance itself appeals as knowledge. What use to him is instruction in knowledge?
  103. When ignorance is removed totally, the knowledge of *Brahman* will manifest itself. Therefore it is necessary to explain what is ignorance, at the outset. Know that.

104. There is nothing purer than the knowledge of *Brahman* in all the three worlds. The teachings of that knowledge has a lot of reverence. Without it, life is in vain.
105. If this *Brahman* were an effect on par with objects cognised by intelligence etc. then there would have been at least some sense of enjoyment which would have been helpful in perceiving it, enabling one to say: “This is That”.
106. The principle of *Brahman* has intelligence in its purpose. But that which goes beyond the sense of enjoyment is perceivable by intellect and is the one that the *Smritis* declare but the *Shrutis* do not agree with it.
107. When intelligence etc. does not exist, then verily the instrument of cognition become extinct. Then, how can the existential character of *Brahman* remain as the basis for resort.
108. Whatever is experienced by the senses, all that exists and nothing else. This is well known to all. *Brahman* then does not at all exist.
109. This will be the meaning of all that is said so far. But if it is true it will be calamitous, making intelligence alone existent, through and through, helping one to understand the chain of objects that are subtle, subtler and the like.
110. Let it (intelligence) also dissolve; but there too it stays in the form of the combination of existence because undoubtedly the soul is the root cause of the world, and all dissolution is ultimately rooted in existence.
111. If a stone is thrown on a pot, its form is broken leaving behind the pieces. Though the shape of the pot is destroyed, the pieces indicate that it existed.
112. Although the effect in the form of the pot is destroyed, the existence of the pot knows no destruction, as the pot shards remain for continuity. So, indeed, is the essence of existence in them.
113. At no time the dissolution of the effect is one which ends in its void. The dissolution is rooted through existential character. This is valid as is seen in the cognition of *sat* having the idea of *sat* which is existence.
114. All the holy places and vows are holy or pure; but holier and purer is Knowledge of the Lord. Then without the Knowledge of the Lord, singing *bhajans* and worship is meaningless.
115. The mind is tainted by ignorance. That mind cannot be cleansed

without devotion to God; and without devotion, knowledge is not born.

116. Therefore, know what is ignorance at the outset. After it is described and you derive the lesson therefrom, only then will the bondage be broken. Devotion is the only means to do that.
117. If collyrium is applied to the eyes of a child, born with feet foremost, it can find wealth which is underground. Similarly, when devotion is practised, ignorance is destroyed and knowledge dawns.
118. Knowledge itself means attainment of Self-realisation, for which the main thing is to destroy ignorance. Unless devotion to God is achieved, the power of *Maya* is boundless.
119. Knowledge and ignorance are mixed together. Throw away ignorance and pick up only pure knowledge, like discarding the stones or impurities from the grains of rice, before the rice is cooked in warm water.
120. The Lord exists in all living beings. Doing a *yagnya* for knowledge and other worship, if one sees Krishna (i.e. the Lord) as all-pervasive, ignorance burns away leaving behind knowledge.
121. Now let us see the nature of the *yagnya* for knowledge. The pillar to which the sacrifice is tied is the 'I am *Brahman*' axiom, the five elements of the universe are the courtyard for the *yagnya* and the animal that is sacrificed is the belief that there is a difference between a living being and God.
122. The five senses and the five *prans* are the only requirements for this *yagnya*. In the hollow space of the mind and the intellect, kindle the fire of knowledge.
123. The being is the one who performs the *yagnya*, offering oblations of ignorance, in place of the clarified butter. He is completely engrossed in the Bliss of the Self, and that being is bathed in the water of purification, at the end of the sacrifice.
124. In conclusion, without the oblations of ignorance, in place of the clarified butter, the fire of knowledge can never be kindled. By burning the difference between a living being and God, manifest the knowledge of unity consciousness.
125. Just as a clean mirror is covered by dust and the light of the fire by smoke, similarly knowledge that is controlled by anger and desires, is covered by ignorance.
126. Just as Rahu hides the moon or moss covers the water, *Maya* puts a veil over the self-luminous knowledge.

127. The intellect of the great knowledgeable ones is corrupted and they fall into disgrace. They know how to remedy the situation but do not follow it. They act as they wish.
128. Though able to see, they act like the blind. Leaving aside their good attachments, they behave in a shameless manner. They become a source of worry on account of evil association, almost by force and continue to act at their free will.
129. Those who have retired from worldly life return as householders; and with determination indulge in forbidden acts. They accept loathsome objects as most pleasant.
130. Those mistakes and sins which they have avoided by effort, they fall into due to ignorance or fate. What could be said about such a state! Is this the wisdom of a knowledgeable person?
131. Even if there is a very knowledgeable person and does not wish even for the shadow of a sin, he gets deceived like a moth by the light and does not distinguish between the good and the bad deeds.
132. He knows fully well that doing a sin is ignorance but because of the inclination for desire, he does not pay heed.
133. All these deeds are performed due to desires. Desires are the cause of all destruction, which matures in the form of anger.
134. When there is obstruction to the fulfilment of desire, then thwarted desire becomes anger. At every step it hinders liberation. This course of action is an impediment to knowledge.
135. This living being is caught up in the difficulties caused by anger and desires. The embodiment of *Brahman* is very close and dwells near knowledge, on the same level.
136. They (that is, anger and desires) drown one without there being any water; burn one without there being any fire; kill one without there being any weapons; and bind one without there being any rope.
137. Even the knowledgeable cannot withstand them and are defeated if they wager against them. They have the power to bring about the destruction of the universe and swallow the living beings without their knowledge.
138. Desire and anger envelop the foetus of knowledge like a membrane, just as the killer snake encircles the roots of the sandal wood tree.
139. The senses, intellect and mind are the abodes for those desires. With the help of these, the knowledge of the living being is dimmed and he is lured.
140. If you want to obtain sandal wood, then you will have to kill the

- snake. Remove the veil of desire and anger and attain the store of knowledge.
141. Without killing the snake, can anyone attain the sandal wood? Without killing the black snake, can you obtain the buried treasure?
142. Similarly, to achieve *Parabrahma* and Self-Realisation the only means is to remove the curtain of *Maya*.
143. Therefore, at first, control the senses, thereby anger and desires will be destroyed. A living being is controlled by anger and desire and knowledge is veiled by ignorance.
144. The senses are subtler than the body; the mind is more subtle than them; the intellect is subtlest compared even to the mind; the Supreme Being is subtler than even the intellect.
145. This most high, supreme truth transcends all worldly existence and righteousness. That Supreme Spirit is the most beneficial. That is the nectar-sweet Eternal Self.
146. The pure witness, untainted, eternal, free and liberated— that indeed is the principle of the Non-Duality State; that alone is the nature of Supreme Bliss in apposition to sentience.
147. That which is known as *Panchikaram* <sup>4</sup> is verily the display of the form of *Maya*, the only instrument of superimposition and sentient. It is necessary to be conscious of this.
148. These five elements without their judicious combinations are called the subtle elements. Their evolutes viz. the vital airs, the senses, the mind and intelligence form the ‘subtle’ body of the soul.
149. Do appreciate that the five elements combined in the five ways give rise to the ‘gross’ part of the *Atman* and this ‘gross’ body of the soul. The knowledgeable ones call it *VIRAT*, which is the gross or the material body.
150. The cause of the origin of gross and subtle bodies is the ignorance of the real nature of the Self. Know that with its appearance, which is *Avyakrit* <sup>5</sup>, the body is the cause of the *Atman*.
151. This is known as the causal body which is associated with the reflection of sentiency. It becomes the cause of ignorance which is known as the unmanifest and not evolved.
152. The reason for all this is neither impartite or partite nor both. For the body to be destroyed the only knowledge to be attained is the union of *Brahman* with the *Atman*.
153. To be in the state of one’s own form that is known as *moksha* or

- liberation. There is no *moksha* other than to be in one's own proper form.
154. If only knowledge about the union of *Brahman* with the *Atman* is achieved, then ignorance is removed. Therefore, it is necessary to describe what ignorance is.
155. That which has become soiled because of ignorance, has reached a state of being tainted. That state came to be called as existent. It thus assumed the state of being denoted or connoted by the word.
156. Though originally it was beyond the ken of the senses, it was made understandable by word. It was only then that the form entered the mind and assumed the form of *Aumkar*.
157. Blessed indeed is him whose body falls while meditating upon this *Aumkar – Brahman* along with the remembrance of the Lord.
158. So be it. From the spoken word, *Aum*, that is the form of *Brahman* which is unseen, there appears the Unmanifest. From this Unmanifest arises the principle of this *mahattatva* <sup>6</sup> which is an evolute from the Unmanifest and it is from that that the ego is born.
159. Ego originates in the subtle rudiments, further giving rise to the gross elements and verily this world is born from these five elements.
160. Cosmic ignorance is verily the indication of the form of this world; and for the demolition of this nescience, it is necessary to explain ignorance.
161. That which is pure consciousness is the pristine form totally pure and unsullied. Whatever is different from this is soiled. It is not proper to mix the two.
162. Know that the *Brahman* is very different from that which is expressed inwards. Therefore, with the help of the power of proper instruction it is necessary to set aside the layers of ignorance.
163. The mind experiencing a dream in sleep sees or visualises the three worlds by itself without eyes. Ignorance is the cause for all this.
164. While perceiving one entity, it appears to be different like a rope that appears in the form of a snake and silver in the interior of mother-of-pearl.
165. Perceive only the rays of the sun. People call it a mirage. But this is only a sport of *Maya*, before which even the knowledgeable ones become helpless.
166. When one brandishes the burning wood, round and round, what is seen is the firebrand. Even here, it is the wonder of illusion.

167. While seeing the real fire there is no room for the fire-brand. Similarly, the expanse of the allurements caused by illusion creates the world which does not really exist.
168. When the illusion is removed with the help of such a resolve, then only this mundane existence ceases to exist. 'I am the body. She is my wife and this is my home'—all this is a futile exercise.
169. Even those who are called knowledgeable and learned, but are deeply involved in the attachments to son, cattle etc., i.e. to earthly possessions, do not enjoy the slightest of happiness.
170. The experts in the branches of knowledge endowed with intelligence do not consider any other person as their equal. This is a great conceit within the heart that causes discontent.
171. This itself, illusion or ignorance or state of nescience and the primordial matter, is the chief. At the outset, the knower has to start by removing these and then only knowledge would arise.
172. This knowledge, however, is self-luminous. It is not necessary to give instructions about this. When ignorance is destroyed, the exultation of knowledge will manifest.
173. It is like a gem, full of lustre, which is pressed down with dirt and dust for years together and the memory of which is extinguished.
174. Then, at some point of time, by chance, accompanied by action and aided by *Dharma* it comes to hand, it appears that all its pristine lustre is lost because of its having been with stones and clods of earth.
175. Then on cleaning it well and removing the dirt and dust, it acquires its pristine lustre. Similarly is the state of knowledge-realisation.
176. Dirt and dust are ignorance. This ignorance veils the knowledge. After removing the dust and the dirt, the jewel will shine easily.
177. Discrimination between the transient and permanent objects destroys sin. That itself grants refinement and rectification and that itself creates knowledge.
178. This world is a market place of *Maya* (illusion) flooded with real and fake objects. There are many customers ready to take the fake objects believing them to be real.
179. But many wise ones' wisdom is dissipated in ascertaining the fake from the real. One must know the indications which cause this deception.
180. Therefore, it is necessary to have an assayer to distinguish between

- the real and the fake. He (the *Sadguru*) will easily show the difference and ignorance will finally disappear.
181. Once ignorance is removed, then knowledge remains, and illusion will be easily removed. Whatever remains is the Self. Know that. There is no need for visible proof.
  182. Though the view of wisdom is clear, it is dimmed by the darkness of the imagination. This darkness flees with *upadesh* (spiritual instruction). What remains then is full knowledge.
  183. In reality if there is a garland lying on the way, which when seen at eventide, seems like a snake, the only reason for this is ignorance.
  184. When you light the lamp, hidden in the pocket, ignorance vanishes. The real form is clearly seen. The semblance to the snake automatically disappears.
  185. Therefore, the remedy to do away with the harm or evil of ignorance is *upadesh*. Therefore, the wise ones weary themselves by giving the *upadesh* of what constitutes ignorance.
  186. Being, presently, in the mundane world is due to *prarabdhi* (actions in the past life), which were done in the past, born out of ignorance. At the outset, this knowledge is necessary.
  187. ‘Knowledge is Truth and Brahman is Eternal!’ Ignorance, illusion, etc. are all the cause of erroneous conception. When this erroneous conception is removed, then only will the misconception about knowledge be dispelled.
  188. He, who has not lost the pride of the self, who will call him wise? He, who is the abode of wrongful pride, can be called ignorance personified.
  189. That which is called a flood of illusions, in which the world is fully engrossed, is but mundane existence for which ignorance is the basic prop.
  190. It arises out of ignorance; and its grandeur is born of ignorance. When there is plurality instead of unity, that too has its refuge in ignorance.
  191. When there is a little light and a little darkness (twilight or dim light), the rope on the road, though a rope appears to be a serpent, and one is terrified.
  192. The misconception that it is a snake is merely ignorance. That ignorance has veiled the truth. Until this ignorance is dispelled, the mind does not become free of fear.
  193. To some it appears like a garland of flowers, while some see it as a

stick. In short, it is all a misconception and a decline in excessive misjudging.

194. One, who follows the writings of the *Vedas* and has a belief in God, he alone is qualified to have the Knowledge of *Brahman*. One who is an atheist for numerous lives can never be so qualified.
195. Those, who see the world as a dwelling place for movable and immovable persons and things and not as a manifestation of God in various forms, are confused. They never escape from the cycle of births and deaths and for them the essence of *Brahman* is unattainable or extremely difficult to attain, whereas it is very easily attained by those who are qualified.
196. No amount of sermonising is effective here, nor acceptance of the different *Vedas* ; nor the intellect to understand the meaning of various scriptural books; nor being well-versed (by reading or listening) to such books.
197. By the use of words, one can gain bookish knowledge. But can it give the knowledge of *Brahman* or Truth? The intellect is capable of discrimination but *Brahman* or Truth is not at its command.
198. The *Shrutis* have a vehement desire to describe it but have not attained *Brahman* or Truth. They have reverted to describing the glory of *Brahman* or Truth and given up their desire for the pursuit of that Knowledge.
199. The six orthodox schools of philosophy have spent themselves and indulged in arguments till this day but the Self remained undescribed and did not come within the purview of words.
200. The great, learned ones became like fire-flies before the sun, in respect of the Self. Once the Self is realised, the meaningless maze of words disappears.
201. Observe that, in the world, in the darkness of the night all activities are carried out with the light of lamps. But when the sun arises at dawn, the people disregard the lamps.
202. Therefore, that (i.e. Knowledge of the Self) which is not a subject to be described in words, how can it then be taught? Therefore, the narrator must have the aim of destroying ignorance only with words.
203. When worship is done with the belief and wisdom of the existence of the Self, then only is the *Atman* propitiated and reveals the Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, becoming extant to the worshipper.
204. In the place of *Atman*, if one meditates on *Paramatman* and there is no distinction made between the two, and worship is done in this manner, the *Atman* is propitiated with the worshipper.

205. There is no other better means than to propitiate the *Atman*. Seeing that the seeker is inclined towards the *Atman*, the *Atman* itself grants grace.
206. When the object of the book is accomplished, the narrator always implores the listeners to beg forgiveness for putting them through the ordeal of listening. This is the customary way.
207. But, this is not the case in respect of this *Satcharita*, because I do not have the capability for writing it. Sai himself has written his story, by giving the pen in my hand.
208. Therefore, I am not the author of the book and no one is put through any ordeal by me. If I ask for forgiveness of the listeners, I will be unnecessarily taking the responsibility of the deed.
209. I have no claims to its virtues nor are the imperfections mine. When Sai himself is the doer, that brings the matter to an end.
210. After taking Sai's permission, I have written exactly as he has narrated and I have considered ignorance distinctly, for the listeners.
211. By pervading my very being, *Gurudev* has thrown the light on the subject to make known his own splendour, his power and his grandeur.
212. Any one who finds virtues in this book, or imperfections, is deserving of my total veneration, as being the embodiment of God (*Narayan*) Himself.
213. Sree Sai has written this story, for the supreme benefit of his devotees, having created his own biography, holding Hemad's hand.
214. Sree Sai took the bodily form only to favour the people, to destroy evil thoughts and obstinacy, and to protect the people's togetherness.
215. Therefore, Hemad prostrates himself at his feet, with whole-hearted faith. The assembly of listeners must be completely attentive to hear the interesting stories to follow.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the fiftieth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant; impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "Removal of Ignorance".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

#### Notes :

1. *Salokata* residence in the same heaven with any deity. *Samipata*, nearness of proximity to the deity. *Saroopata*, assimilation with the deity. *Sayujata*, absorption with the deity.

2. It is stated in the *Venkatesh Stotra* that the *peepal* tree flourishes with the excreta of the crow, used as manure.
3. Ravan's brother, a giant who indulged in gorging and sleeping.
4. Combining amicably together of the five elementary substances.
5. Not developed. In the *Vedas*, an elementary substance from which all things were created.
6. The second of the twenty-five principles of *samkhyas*, one of the six *Shastras*.



Baba explaining to Nana the meaning of 'Tadviddhi Pranipatena - Gita ovi 34'



Nanasaheb Chandorkar