

## “Avataranika” (Epitome)

*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. Sree Sai is truly *Brahman* incarnate; the greatest among the saints, the Lord Paramount, whose fame has reached every corner of the earth and is the grantor of intelligence and inspiration.
2. I surrender to him with whole-hearted devotion. I do obeisance at his holy feet. He removes the fear of this mundane existence, and breaks the cycle of birth and death.
3. In the previous chapter it had been promised to give a review and then a table of contents or index, before concluding the book.
4. Though Pant Hemad said so, it did not happen that way. The table of contents was not drawn up or was overlooked.
5. He who starts the book should himself complete it, by giving the table of contents in the end. This is the usual procedure.
6. But there are exceptions to a rule; and this can be seen here itself. Nothing happens as one wishes. Only Baba's wishes are over-riding.
7. Hemad died unexpectedly. Everyone was sorrowful. The table of contents was not to be traced; and everyone was confused.
8. Annasaheb's records were difficult to find. His son, Shri Gajanan, made efforts to look and gave me whatever was needed.
9. Annasaheb was thrifty and did not waste even a scrap of paper. He worked with grace and tidiness, as was his nature.
10. He wrote a chapter on bits of paper and gave them, as is, to the printer. Unnecessary expense hurt him. He could not be compared to anyone else.
11. He felt pity for those lifeless, helpless scraps of paper. How would

they be uplifted unless they served the lion amongst the saints i.e. Sree Sai Baba?

12. Hemad must have felt this way and, therefore, collected these scraps of paper, so that they could also serve. That must have been the exalted intention.
13. The last chapter must have been done in the same way, and must have been written on scraps of paper. A lot of thought was given to the problem, yet the index could not be found amongst the bits of paper.
14. The matter was told to Gajananrao and others. It was also told to Babasaheb Tarkhad, the Treasurer of the Shirdi *Sansthan*. All of them were of the opinion that the index should be there.
15. Babasaheb fixed a time limit and published this also in the Sree Sai *Leela*. The time lapsed, yet the index did not come forth.
16. Hemad, Govind, was a mine of virtues. He knew the *Vedant* by heart which was at his command. His book exhibited the Guru's grace, like *prasad*. Incredible was the Guru's grace.
17. Innumerable were the devotees of *Sadguru* Sai from amongst whom Hemadpant was a gem of a poet. Only someone, who was as knowledgeable as he was, would be capable of writing it.
18. The index did not come forth from anywhere. I felt very dejected. I prayed to *Duttaguru*, Sree Saibaba, and pleaded for his mercy.
19. I am dull-witted and insignificant, without studious contemplation or even a trace of knowledge. Being totally devoid of poetic tendency, how could I compose verses!
20. But there was one support that I had. When Sree *Duttaguru* is favourable, even the Meru mountain can be lifted as easily as a mosquito. His powers are great.
21. Again I prayed to *Umaraman* Shiva, so that Sai Narayana would become merciful and give me the inspiration to write the index immediately.
22. I do not have the capacity to compose poetry. Sree *Gururaya* is aware of my limitations. Placing my head at his feet, I shall begin writing the index.
23. This part of the book, viz. the index, will be composed by Sai *Vakratunda* (*Ganapati*). His grandeur is unparalleled and immense. My mouth is only his instrument.
24. In the first chapter is the invocation to the remover of difficulties and the cause of the Universe, to the ornament round the neck of Uma and Shiva – obeisance to Sree Ganesh.

25. Obeisance also to the wonderful Goddess of Speech, full of wisdom, Sree Sharada, who entices the world and is the grantor of whatever is desired.
26. Obeisance to the Lord Sai, the Family Deity, the relations, the Guru brethren, the saints and virtuous people who are incarnations of God; and surrender to the *Sadguru*, who is the abode of salvation.
27. By narrating the story of the grinding of the wheat and how the cholera epidemic was removed was explained and the powers and greatness of Sai were described.
28. In the second chapter, the purpose for writing the book is given, also the naming of Hemadpant, the end of the debate of the necessity of a Guru and the first *darshan* of Hemad.
29. In the third chapter it has been fully explained how the permission was given for writing the book by Sai’s own words and the story about the Rohilla.
30. Next, the reason for the appearance of saints and sages, who are ornaments of the Ruler of the World, on the earth, has been explained in detail.
31. And the first arrival of Sai, Avatar of Dutta, Son of Atri, the wish-fulfilling tree, in Shirdi village – all that is described in the fourth.
32. The disappearance from Shirdi village and the re-appearance in the company of the well-to-do Patil which surprised all;
33. the gathering of Gangagir and other saints, the carrying of water in pots on his own head from afar to create a garden is all fully mentioned in the fifth.
34. In the sixth chapter, the big festival of Ramnavami where Bala Buva was the *Kirtankar* and the renovation of the *Masjid* is narrated in detail.
35. Next is about yogic practices of *Samadhi*, *Khandayog*, *Dhoti-Poti* etc., whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim; the unfathomable inner self of a *Saint*;
36. Baba’s dress, behaviour, giving of medicines, smoking of *chillum*, caste, *dbuni*, lamps, his illness, and service to him - incomprehensible was the sight of all this!
37. The seventh by the learned poet excellently narrates matters about Bhagoji Shinde’s leprosy, the medicine for the plague affecting Khaparde’s son and Nana’s Pandharpur *darshan* idea.
38. The unique greatness of human birth, the description of the mode

- in which Sai asked for alms, the service of Bayjabai to the saints and the offering of food to Baba with her own hands;
39. how Baba, Tatyā and Mhalsapati, all three of them, slept in the *Masjid* at night and Baba's excessive love for both of them, which was identical;
  40. and the mutual love of Baba who was the repository of peace and knowledge, and Kusalchand of Rahta village is all delightfully narrated in the eighth chapter.
  41. How greatly Tatyasaheb Noolkar, and Tatyā Patil, who were great devotees, as well as the English gentleman repented for not following instructions;
  42. how Baba made an offering to the five elements before savouring the food which had been given as alms, how Baba was qualified to seek alms is cleverly explained;
  43. and the excellent story of how the famous Babasaheb Tarkhad, the staunch *Prathna Samajist*, became a devotee of Sai, whole-heartedly, are all given in the ninth chapter.
  44. Yogeshwar Baba's bed, of a plank four-hands long and a span in width, hung from the rafters;
  45. a touching account of when Baba first arrived in Shirdi, how many years he lived there and when he left the mortal coil;
  46. though calm and desireless within, outwardly demonstrating a demonic nature and *Gururaya's* unflinching inclination to lead the people together on a particular path;
  47. the *Sadguru's* tremendous skill in teaching the *Ved-shastras* and the essence of religion, spirituality and the code of behaviour, and testing the intellects of the devotees as well as the non-devotees;
  48. Baba's usual seat, Baba's knowledge, Baba's meditation and Baba's dwelling – his power and his greatness – are fully described in the tenth chapter.
  49. Baba's fame everywhere as being the embodiment of *Satchitanand*, Doctor Pandit's loving devotion, and the narration of the behaviour of Siddique (Falke);
  50. his control over the clouds, his incredible power over fire and his protection from strong winds are interestingly described in the eleventh;
  51. Kaka (Mahajani), Dhumal, Nimonkar, a Mamlatdar and a Doctor – different incidents about each of them were narrated sweetly.
  52. And the unique Sai *darshan* of the *Agnihotri* from Nashik, the

- doubting Muley, a disciple of Saint Gholapram, in the twelfth chapter.
53. Bala Shimpi’s malaria was cured by giving curds to a black dog, and Bapusaheb’s (Butti) cholera was eradicated by feeding him walnuts and pistachios;
  54. the Swami from Alandi, who had pain in the ear, was cured only with blessings, and the diarrhoea that Kaka (Mahajani) suffered from was removed by peanuts;
  55. The devotee Dattapant from Harda, who suffered from a severe stomach ache, was freed from his trouble by blessings, in front of everybody;
  56. and one, Bhimaji Patil, had severe cough and tuberculosis. He was cured by an application of *udi* – all this is narrated in the thirteenth.
  57. Seth Ruttonji, a Parsi from Nanded, a famous businessman who was dejected was granted a son, placing him in the seventh heaven;
  58. how the saint Mauli Saheb of Nanded, who worked as a coolie and remained incognito, became known thanks to an indication from Sai is the amazing story in the fourteenth.
  59. The *kirtan* practice of Narada was told by Baba to Das Ganu; and Cholkar was requited for his vow by giving him tea full of sugar;
  60. a lizard from Aurangabad came and met one in the mosque, and the story of their chirrupings is narrated in the fifteenth.
  61. A gentleman, well-endowed with wealth and children, came to Shirdi having learnt of Sai’s fame, to acquire knowledge of *Brahman*;
  62. one who desires the *Brahman* should be detached from the worldly life and the greed for wealth should be discarded, as a first step,
  63. but if he could not give a loan of five rupees to Baba for a short while, even though he had a big roll of money in his clothes, how could he attain the *Brahman*!
  64. The method by which Sai taught the lesson was beautiful and Hemad’s words are like *prasad*, a mixture of milk and sugar. This enticing story is in the sixteenth.
  65. The continuation of the earlier story, a detailed discussion of the knowledge of *Brahman*, total destruction of the greed for money, is the interesting narration in the seventeenth.
  66. Sathe’s story about the Guru *Charitra*, the story about Radhabai’s *upadesha*, and the favour bestowed on Hemad are skillfully narrated in the eighteenth.
  67. The detailed narration about this favour, and the in-depth thoughts

- (of Hemad) according to the lesson taught by Sree Sai are given in the nineteenth.
68. Das Ganu commenced the “*Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini*”. In that respect he had some doubts which he asked Baba.
  69. Baba said that the maid-servant of Kaka (Dixit) would resolve it. The *Sadguru*’s greatness is extra-ordinary. An interesting narration of it is in the twentieth.
  70. A virtuous district officer, another learned man Patankar and the third, a brilliant lawyer – all three were granted favours, as mentioned in the twenty-first.
  71. *Mashidmai* helps to cross the ocean of existence. It is none other than *Dwarkamai*. Baba said this to all the people but no one understood its deepest meaning.
  72. The virtues of *Mashidmai* were praised; Mirikar and Butti were saved from snake bites; Amir Shakkar’s rheumatism was cured and he was saved from the danger of the snake.
  73. Hemad was saved from the danger of a bite from the scorpion and others from a snake and untimely death – all these incidents are published in the twenty-second.
  74. How the doubts of a student of *Yoga* were removed, how Madhavrao was cured of a snake bite; *dhuni* ; and fire-wood, and the killing of a goat are very interestingly described.
  75. The respect and glamour of Bade Baba, the lack of obedience to the Guru’s orders, his greed for more irrespective of what was given to him, and his dissatisfied nature;
  76. Kaka Saheb, the best among the devotees, who had supreme and unswerving faith in the Guru’s orders, and how the *Sadguru* sported with him is beautifully narrated in the twenty-third.
  77. Making grains of grams the excuse, Hemadpant was given a lesson that without remembering the *Sadguru* nothing should be enjoyed (eaten);
  78. Sai caused a quarrel between Anna Babare and Maushibai, and that uncommon incident of wit and humour has been sung by the inestimable poet in the twenty-fourth.
  79. A devotee, Damu Anna Kasar, a resident of Ahmednagar, was desirous of doing a big business of cotton and rice.
  80. There would definitely be a loss in the business. By eating the mangoes, sons will be born said Sai, the Sun of Knowledge. All this is described in the twenty-fifth.

81. A devotee named Pant, who was a disciple of another saint, was immediately given an indication, which made Pant overjoyous;
82. the son of devotee Harishchandra Pitale, who was suffering from epilepsy was completely cured by only a merciful glance;
83. Pitale was given three rupees and was told that he had been given two rupees earlier. Baba told him to worship them. It is a charming narration in the twenty-sixth.
84. Kaka (Mahajani) placed the Bhagvat *pothi* in the Lord’s hands, with the hope of getting it back as *prasad* but the Lord gave it to Madhav (Shama);
85. the *pothi* of *Vishnusahasranam* was in the collection of a Ramadasa. Baba took it from there without his knowledge and gave that also to Madhavrao.
86. The story how Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, granted a boon to Shamrao (Madhavrao) by giving him the *Vishnusahasranam pothi* is narrated in the twenty-seventh.
87. Lakhmichand Munshi, Chidibai of Burhanpur and the most virtuous Brahmin, Megha, came to Baba’s feet.
88. By giving them all a dream vision, gave them experience in the waking state. Incredible are the feats of the *Sadguru Mauli*. All this is lovingly narrated in the twenty-eighth.
89. A group of bhajan singers from Madras gathered at Shirdi to witness the spectacle of generosity and giving of charity by Baba, the guileless Shankar;
90. the way in which the examination of Raghunath Tendulkar’s son and his pension problems were resolved are the pleasant *leelas* of Baba; and
91. how Dr. Captain Hate, who was a very loving devotee of Sai’s feet, was given an early morning dream vision is the graceful story in the twenty-ninth.
92. A person named Kakaji Vaidya, a devotee of Saptashrungi Devi, was given a dream vision by the Devi, to have the *darshan* of Sai, the foremost amongst the saints;
93. Shamrao had taken a vow to the same *Devi*, so to fulfil that vow Shama went to Vani after thirty years; and
94. how Sai spoke “come to Shirdi” in the dreams of both, Seth Kushalchand of Rahata and the Punjabi Brahmin, Ramlal, is narrated in the thirtieth.
95. Vijayanand, a *Madrasa sanyasi*, set out for Manas Sarovar. Baba, Sree Hrishikesh personified, held him back at his own feet;

96. and the upliftment of the distinguished devotee Mankar, who hovered over Sai's feet like a bee over honey, and the afflicted, cruel tiger is beautifully narrated in the thirty-first.
97. The story about four virtuous people wandering in the woods, in search of God, and the *darshan* given by *Gururaya* to one (Baba) as he had shed his ego;
98. the unusual episode of the fasting lady Gokhalebai and another similar story told by Sai himself, are sung by Hemad in the thirty-second.
99. A friend of Narayan Jani was suddenly stung by a scorpion, while the daughter of another devotee was suffering from high fever;
100. how the difficult labour of Chandorkar's daughter frightened her and how unhappy and worried everyone was;
101. the staunch devotee Kulkarni Saheb, the *bhajan* singer Bala Bua really understood the efficacious power of the '*udi*';
102. and the enchanting story of the *dakshina* of Haribhau Karnik, a devotee full of faith and religious feelings, which teaches a lesson, are all in the thirty-third.
103. The great distress of the Malegaon doctor on account of the bone abscess of his nephew, the difficult illness of the staunch devotee Dr. Pillai from guinea-worms;
104. the torment of Bapaji of Shirdi (Shama's brother) on account of the bubonic plague of his wife, and the epilepsy of the young girl of Irani, which greatly troubled her;
105. the gentleman from Harda who was in great pain due to stones in his bladder and the difficult labour of a lady from Bombay, of the Kayasth Prabhu caste;
106. the complete removal of the above-mentioned maladies or troubles by the mere application of the *udi* without loss of time, are interestingly described in the thirty-fourth.
107. A friend of Mahajani, who totally believed in the Formless, became a devotee of the Form, after only one *darshan* ;
108. the greatest of Gurus turned grapes with seeds into seedless ones immediately and gave them to Dharamsi Jethabhai Thakkar, a solicitor from Bombay;
109. a Kayasth gentleman from Bandra who could not sleep at ease and Bala Patil of Nevasa both had experiences of the *udi* which are given in the thirty-fifth.

110. Two gentlemen from Goa had separately taken different vows – one for getting a job and another for finding a thief;
111. both had forgotten their vows but Sai *Samartha* made them remember. Who can describe the fame of him, who had the knowledge of the past, present and future and was omnipresent!
112. The wife of Sakharam of Aurangabad rushed to Sai’s feet for the boon of a son. How her wish was fulfilled by giving a coconut is the story told, with a purpose, in the thirty-sixth.
113. Hemad describes the *chavadi* celebrations and festivities, after seeing them himself, in an interesting narration in the thirty-seventh.
114. After putting different ingredients a variety of items were cooked in the *bandi* (cooking-pot) and distributed as *prasad* lunch to all – a pleasing narration of it is in the thirty-eighth.
115. The elucidation of the verse from the *Gita*, ‘*Tadviddhi Pranipatena*’ is told to Chandorkar to remove his false pride about his knowledge of Sanskrit; and
116. the king among saints gave a dream vision to Bapusaheb Butti instructing him to build a temple – that is the narration in the thirty-ninth.
117. Deo gave a feeding to the Brahmins in honour of his mother’s completion of vows, for which he invited Baba by writing a letter.
118. On that day, three eminent persons wearing the garb of *sanyasis* came and had their meals with the Brahmins. It is difficult to understand the sport of *Gururaya!*
119. After giving a dream vision to Hemad, Baba came for lunch in the form of a portrait – that is the lucid narration in the fortieth.
120. The poet narrates the story of the portrait at length to the devotees. The *Sadguru*’s greatness is inconceivable. The narration is enchanting and witty.
121. Assuming the *Rudra avatar* and becoming red as a blazing coal, Sree Sai showered a volley of abuses on Deo angrily.
122. The Lord Sai said: “Read the Sree *Dñyaneshwari* regularly” and even gave instructions in a dream about the method of reading. Hemad narrates this in the forty-first.
123. The application of the *Tripundra* by the devotee Date;<sup>1</sup> the early warning about Sai’s leaving the body; averting the deaths of Ramchandra (Patil) and Tatyā (Patil Kote); and
124. the story of Sai *Sadguru*’s leaving the body which caused deep sorrow

among the listeners and disturbed Hemad also—these are the holy stories in the forty-second.

125. The story about Baba's leaving the body which was certainly incomplete in the previous chapter is completed by Hemadpant in the forty-third, and forty-fourth.
126. Once when Kaka Saheb Dixit was reading the *Eknath Bhagvat*, with Kaka (Mahajani) and Madhav, had some doubts;
127. Madhav Rao clarified the doubt but Dixit was not convinced or satisfied. Anand Rao Pakhade narrated a dream and that removed the doubts;
128. Sai *Samartha* gave an explanation why Mhalsapati could not possibly sleep on a plank hung from the rafters—all stories skillfully told in the forty-fifth.
129. Baba's deeds are wonderful! He remained fixed in one place but roamed everywhere, showing people his miraculous appearances. Strange were his travels to Kashi and Gaya.
130. The gem among saints told Shama to go and attend the wedding celebrations of the son of Chandorkar, and Shama saw Baba at Gaya in a portrait at that time.
131. The earlier life story of two goats was narrated himself by Sai, the three-eyed one – pleasing, sweet, holy and deep is the story narration in the forty-sixth.
132. Similarly a story about a snake and a frog, or a greedy money lender and a borrower and their previous lives is told by Sai, who is truly Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar.
133. Enmity, murder and debt have to be repaid and for that there is re-birth – that is the nectar-like story that Baba imparts in a heart-warming narration in the forty-seventh.
134. One staunch devotee Shevade and the manner in which he faced his advocate's examination and the other a disbelieving Sapatnekar who was granted grace is in the forty-eighth.
135. Hari Kanoba, a resident of Bombay, and Somadev Swami, who had a malicious mind, came to Shirdi to test the saint, with pride in their hearts.
136. As soon as the *darshan* was taken, they were told what their intentions were and both were right away ashamed. They were attracted to Sai's feet and their sins of many lives were obliterated.
137. While sitting near Baba, Chandorkar's mind was disturbed and his

- emotions were aroused by seeing a beautiful woman. This story is narrated in the forty-ninth.
138. Raghunath’s son (i.e. Govindrao Dabholkar) gives in detail the meaning of “*Tadviddhi Pranipatena*” giving arguments in support and justification, in the fiftieth.
  139. How Dixit Hari Sitaram, the devotee Balaram Dhurandhar and an advocate named Pundalik of Nanded, arrived initially at Shirdi
  140. each one’s story is marvellous! Hearing them the listeners were amazed and their devotional feelings were aroused. All this is narrated in the fifty-first.
  141. After reviewing the book, Hemad asked for a boon—that the wickedness of the evil-minded be destroyed and that the virtuous are protected.
  142. Surrendering at the *Sadguru*’s feet and offering him his head and his pen, the book is completed and his objective is achieved in the fifty-second.
  143. Govindrao completed the series of chapters of Sree Sai *Satcharita* in this manner. I lovingly bow to his feet and also to the Guru, who is the Mother of the whole universe.
  144. Giving the summary of each chapter is itself called the *Avataranika*. It is the right or virtuous path for those desirous of attaining liberation.
  145. It may be scornfully neglected considering it to be a ragged border for a beautiful mantle, or robe. But this humble one appeals to the clever listeners to hear it once.
  146. Just as a black mark is put on the forehead of a plump, lovely child to ward off the evil eye, Bal (Deo) has applied this black mark in the form of this *Avataranika* to this robe.
  147. The beautiful book is like a well-flavoured meal and the chapters are like the different items. Buttermilk is necessary for digesting such a meal, if heartily partaken. This *Avataranika* is written for that purpose.
  148. The book is the ever-fruitful, wish-fulfilling cow and each of the chapters are holy and pure. The “*Avataranika*’ is the necklace of black beads put round the neck to avert the evil or malignant eye.
  149. So be it. I will explain to the best of my ability the method that Pant Hemad uses for the compilation of the chapters. Listeners should hear it with respect.
  150. At the outset, there is praise for the *Sadguru* and then there is

narration of the *Vedant*, description of Sai as *Brahman* Incarnate, followed by narration of experiences.

151. To begin with, Hemad was well-versed in *shastra* and literature; and with the propitiation of *Sadguru* Sai he was overnight turned into a genius, so that he could create this book like a well-flavoured meal.
152. He, who experiences its sweetness and goodness, will find that the cycle of birth and death has ended; and the legacy of the liberation will certainly be received.
153. How can the grandeur of the book be described when it has Hemad's lucid language and the sacrament of Sai. Truly, it is the mixture of milk and sugar cane juice.
154. There may be many authors but they do not have the authority of sacramental language for which a real *Sadguru* is needed, who is the Support of the Universe, and the Consort of Rama.
155. Even if the *shastras* are studied, such a book cannot be written without the Guru's Grace. This is absolutely true.
156. Who can describe Sree Sai *Satcharita*! How incomparably worthy is the book! For which an author like Hemadpant was found. It is the supreme good fortune for seekers of liberation.
157. As long as the book exists on this earth, its fame will spread amongst the people. Govindrao has given a timely abundance of wealth for the seekers of liberation.
158. Twice blessed is this surpassing book. which is the outcome of Sai *Sadguru*'s favour. It will be honoured by seekers of liberation and it will overcome their poverty of thought.
159. Because of the store of good deeds done in innumerable past lives, Govindrao got this opportunity to do this service for Sai, which bore sweet fruit in the authorship of this book.
160. Hemad Pant was a staunch devotee, poet and fond of the knowledge to be gained from the *Vedant*. He was devotedly attached to Sai's feet, day and night.
161. The subject of *Vedant* is very deep. Without the combination of detachment, devotion and knowledge and the grace of the Guru, it is impossible to write such a book.
162. These are not chapters but sockets of gold in which the priceless gems of the stories have been studded and from which sparks of knowledge and meaning have been drawn by Govindrao with an immense effort.

163. The different chapters are the fragrant garlands of flowers offered to the neck of Sree Sai *Sadguru* by Govind, the loving child, to the best of his ability and with pure devotion.
164. The various chapters are pure pots of gold which are filled with Sree Sai *Satcharita*, like the waters of the Ganges, by the son of Raghunath, to drive away the pride of the seekers of liberation.
165. In the canopy of the battlefield of various books, the son of Raghunath has raised victory pillars of the chapters for destroying the demons of evil feelings, deceit and false pride, with the sword of his intellect.
166. The book is a five-wick lamp, studded with gems to wave round the king among Saints. The chapters narrate the stories which are wicks of oil, the light of which brings detachment and peace.
167. The book is *Maya* which entices the world. The chapters are arms raised high and the meaning of the stories are bracelets (worn on the upper arm) decorating the body ready to embrace Sai, *Brahman* Incarnate.
168. The Sai *Satcharita* is the universal sovereign amongst books. The chapters are pleasing, clever minstrels, narrating faith, knowledge, the *Vedantic* beauty and its vast glory.
169. The Sai *Satcharita* is the market place for spirituality and each chapter therein is an emporium. The stories of the experiences are the objects fully stocked there, arranged neatly by the greatest among the poets.
170. The book is formidable as the span of the Ganges. The chapters are the compact *ghats* of just proportions. The flow of stories is sweet as nectar and vast, by the Guru’s Grace and formidable greatness.
171. It is not just a book but a wish-fulfilling tree, which the people engrossed in mundane existence find barren but for the seekers of liberation it gives only the actual experience of liberation.
172. This alone can be called a real memorial which destroys the darkness and tribulations of the mundane existence and saves from the hell of greed and illusion. It is certainly a giver of peace.
173. The author, Govindrao by being a bee at the lotus feet of Sai *Sadguru*, always savours the newly drawn sweet honey.
174. His surname was Dhabholkar and he was engaged in serving the British government. He was learned, full of humility, well-behaved and well-qualified.
175. Rakhumabai was his wife, virtuous, devoted and full of good

- qualities, dedicated to her husband and always submissive. She had confirmed faith in Sai.
176. Dapoli, near Vengurla, was the original place of domicile of the poet. Later on Kelva was the village, for the family forefathers.
  177. In 'Shake' 1781 (1859 A.D.) on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the dark fortnight of Margashir month, the blessed and meritorious Govind was born to Lakshmi, the wife of Raghunath.
  178. He belonged to the Goud Saraswat Brahmins caste and to the Bharadwaj *gotra*. He died at the age of seventy in Shake 1851, on the ninth day of the dark fortnight of Ashad month.
  179. In 'Shake' 1844 (1922 A.D.), in the month of Chaitra, he commenced writing this book and completed upto the fifty-second chapter by Shake 1851 (1929 A.D.), in the month of Jeshtha.
  180. Govindrao had only one son and five daughters of which four were married. The son was also married and was studying medicine; and the unmarried daughter was also doing the same.
  181. Now I shall mention the procedure of recitation (of the book), as well as the easy method of doing a reading within seven days, as laid down in the Gurucharitra or other such books. Listeners are requested to pay attention.
  182. Do the recitation with a pure heart and devotion, completing it in one day or two days or three days. Sai Narayan will be gratified.
  183. Otherwise, complete it easily in a week and you will have immense good fortune on a continuing basis. Sai will fulfil the heart's desire and the fear of the worldly existence will be destroyed.
  184. Begin the recitation on a Thursday, in the early morning after a bath. Sit on your *asan* (seat for prayer), after quickly completing your usual routine.
  185. Make a pleasing, large canopy with banana plants, *kardali* <sup>2</sup>, and beautiful cloth covering over it and let it be well-decorated.
  186. In it, let there be a raised platform (for the book) and decorate all the four sides of it with colourful *rangoli* <sup>3</sup>, which are pleasing for the eyes.
  187. Making an image of Sai *Sadguru* or taking a beautiful picture of him, place it carefully on the high platform. Make obeisance to him with love.
  188. Tying the book in a silken cloth, place it near the *Sadguru*. After worshipping both with *panch upachar*, <sup>4</sup> commence the reading.
  189. Observe the holy vows<sup>5</sup> for eight days, having only milk or fruits or

- roasted grain of any one kind, eating only once or having only one meal.
190. Facing the east and keeping the image of the *Sadguru* in the heart, do the recitation of the book with a calm mind and with joy.
  191. During the seven days, read the first eight chapters on the first day, then the next eight on the second day, followed by next seven on the third day. Then eight, six, eight and seven chapters on the following four days, and only *Avataranika* on the eighth day.
  192. On the eighth day, at the end of the observance of vows and of the offering of *naivedya* to Sai Narayana, feed friends, relatives and Brahmins with delicacies and give *dakshina* to them to the best of one’s ability.
  193. Inviting the *Vedic* Brahmins, have them chant the *Vedas* at night, offer them sugar flavoured milk and give them a respectful send-off, after they are well satisfied in body and mind.
  194. Finally, after doing obeisance at the *Sadguru*’s Feet, offer him appropriate *dakshina* and send that to the Treasury (of the Shirdi Sansthan) to augment the funds of the Sansthan.
  195. Lord Sai will be gratified thereby, and he will bless the devotee. The snake in the form of the worldly existence will be destroyed and the treasure of liberation will be revealed to him.
  196. Listeners, may you feel at home with the Saint. You may forget the *Avataranika*, but keep an eye on the meaning of the book. This is the earnest request of this humble one, at your feet.
  197. Virtuous listeners, be very merciful to this humble one till the end of time. I place my head at your feet. Baba’s Bal prays thus to you.
  198. Whatever is very deficient, attribute it to me. Take the essence, you listeners, and act in such a way that the mind is resplendent.
  199. Obeisance to Sai, the son of Shiva (i.e. Ganesha); obeisance to Sai, seated on the Lotus (i.e. Brahmadev); obeisance to Sai, the killer of the demon Madhu (i.e. Vishnu). Obeisance to Sai, the five-faced Lord (i.e. Shiva).
  200. Obeisance to Sai, the son of Atri (i.e. Datta); obeisance to Sai the killer of the demon Paka (i.e. Indra); obeisance to Sai, the lover of the night (i.e. the Moon); obeisance to Sai, the Lord of Fire.
  201. Obeisance to Sai the Consort of Rukmani, Obeisance to Sai the Sun of the Mind; obeisance to Sai the Ocean of Knowledge; obeisance to Sree Sai, *Driyaneshwara*.

202. The *Avataranika* is the verbal *pushpanjali* (offering of flowers). Similar is the obeisance of glorious names which I have prayed offering them at the feet of the Guru. Mother Sai be gratified.

This is the end of the fifty-third chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by Baba's slave, Bal, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "*Avataranika*" (Epitome).

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

#### Notes :

1. The story is given in Chapter 11 in respect of Dr. Pandit, so it is no longer being printed in Chapter 42 of the *Satcharita*.
2. Banana like plant with flowers.
3. Designs made on the ground (floor) with coloured, powdered chalk.
4. Sandalwood paste, flowers, incense, light and *naivedya*.
5. Bathing and wearing clean clothes, fasting, remaining pure and moral, celibate, and sleeping on the floor.



Baba was fond of playing with children