

## Warding off of Untimely Death

*I bow down to Sree Ganesh*

*I bow down to Sree Saraswati*

*I bow down to the Guru*

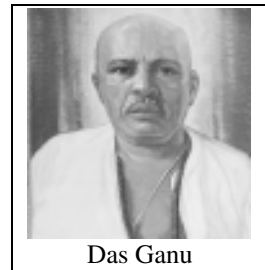
*I bow down to the Family Deity*

*I bow down to Sree Sita-Ramachandra*

*I bow down to Sree Sadguru Sainath.*

1. Hail *Sadguru*, the cloud of happiness! The Incarnation of Supreme Knowledge and Holiest of the Holies! Hail to thee the Remover of the Fears of this world and the Destroyer of the sins of *Kaliyug* by burning them.
2. You are the ocean of bliss on which waves of different emotions are formed. You, yourself, are in control of them. Bless your devotees.
3. The illusory snake of the semi-darkness becomes a rope in daylight. Both the semi-darkness and the daylight are your creation.
4. You are the one who gives birth to the notion of the existence of a serpent; and you are the one to change that form into a rope. You are the creator of the fear and you are the one who removes that fear in the end.
5. In the very beginning of time, when there is complete darkness, there is neither a serpent nor a rope and there is no scope of any notion of any kind, even that state of formlessness is only you.
6. Later on, when the formlessness develops into a form in the semi-light, it gives the false notion of a snake. That also is created by you only.
7. This concept of appearance and non-appearance is the manifestation of the sport of your changing moods. Your real nature is free of both - existence and non-existence. Thus, nobody can fathom you.
8. The *Shrutis* are silent about this. Even *Sesh* (the legendary serpent), with his thousand tongues, found them inadequate. Who am I then to understand it?
9. Baba! nothing else pleases me than your *darshan*. I feel that I should keep your form in front of my eyes all the time, and meditate on it.

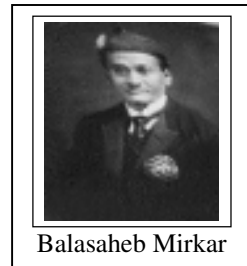
10. You are the incarnation of pure knowledge. To achieve the goal of happiness, there is no other path to us than to be at your feet.
11. Oh, how pleasing is your familiar posture when you are on your seat! Many devotees come to take your *darshan*, bow down their heads at your feet, gathering in their own happiness, lovingly.
12. And how does your foot appear? Your toe appears like a moon, seen between two branches of a tree, as you hold it between your fingers. It fulfils the keenness of *darshan*.
13. At the end of the fortnight of the dark part of the lunar month, after the last night of '*amavasya*' passes off, all people are naturally eager to have a look at the moon.
14. As soon as the bright half of the lunar month starts there is a hope to sight the moon and everyone eagerly looks at the sky in the westerly direction.
15. That keen desire of your devotees is fulfilled by you at that time when you sit with your right leg crossed onto your left thigh.
16. The index and the middle fingers of the left hand, (forming a V-shape) hold the right foot and the nail of the big toe is close to the thumb. This shines like the moon on the second day.
17. People have a great desire to look at the moon. But if the crescent of the moon is not seen in the sky, then those who have the knowledge tell you to look through your fingers.
18. And say: "Now look, look through this space. You will be able to see the moon in front of you. Although the crescent of the moon is small, you can see it right at the spot."
19. Great is the glory of that big toe! Becoming Venimadhava<sup>1</sup> yourself, you made the Ganga and the Yamuna appear, and satisfied Das Ganu<sup>2</sup>.
20. When he asked for permission to bathe at the Prayag, he was told: "Know that this, my toe, is the Prayag. Believe in this and have a dip here."
21. As soon as Baba said this, Das Ganu put his head on his feet and the waters of Ganga and Yamuna both appeared at the spot from his two toes.



22. Das Ganu has composed a song on that incident, with the words "Boundless is your power and marvellous your deeds" etc., which the listeners if they are keen to listen,
23. they can find it in the fourth chapter of the Sai Satcharita. Das Ganu has sung it himself. If the listeners read it again, they'll enjoy it again.
24. Therefore, like spotting the crescent moon between two branches, by keeping the index and the middle fingers on the toe of his foot, Mother Sai shows a simple way of meditation to his devotees.
25. This is to tell us that to be most humble before everyone, concentrate on the toe. This is a very easy way of devotion.
26. Now we will go back to the previous story about how the devotee was graced. Pay attention to the next part of the story, which is unparalleled.
27. Shirdi had become a holy place, the holiest of holies, because of Baba. Day and night there was a flow of devotees who were pious and desirous of acquiring merit.
28. In all the ten directions, people bore witness to the *Kalpavraksha* in the form of Sai, manifesting in Shirdi, through personal experience or that of others.
29. He regarded the rich and the poor alike and with inconceivable skill ensured the welfare of the devotees.
30. Oh, what a pure affectionate nature! His natural wisdom and his extreme brotherhood (uniform treatment of all)! Blessed is the one who experienced it!
31. Sometimes he is silent and that itself is a long lecture on *Brahman*. Sometimes when he is surrounded by the devotees, he is the Supreme Energy, the cloud of happiness.
32. Sometimes his speech is full of deep and secret meaning. Sometimes he talks humourously; and some other times he gives up indirectness and is outspokenly angry.
33. Sometimes he reveals inner feelings; sometimes he is controlled; sometimes he speaks openly and bluntly - thus he preaches different things, in different ways, to different people.
34. Such is Sai Samartha's pattern of behaviour - beyond the powers of the mind, intellect and speech. His deeds cannot be grasped - they are unexpected, incomprehensible and sudden.

35. Our longing to see his face, to talk with him and hear his 'leelas' was never satisfied. Still, we were overflowing with joy.
36. One could count the drops of rain; tie the wind in a leather bag<sup>3</sup>; but how can one measure his powers!
37. So be it. Now listen quietly to the story, further on, about how much Sai cared for the safety of his devotees and also about how he warded off their insurmountable difficulties;
38. and how he would forecast the difficulties to befall his devotees and give timely fortitude to them, rescue them and give refuge at his feet. Thus he was always ready to act for their welfare.
39. An episode which will illustrate what is said above follows, which will please you who are keen to hear it. It will give joy of being in the company of Sai and strengthen the faith of the devotees.
40. It matters not how fallen, deprived or ignorant a man is. If he develops love for listening to the stories of Sai and chants his name continuously, Sai will take him across the ocean of existence.
41. Kakasaheb Mirikar, who hailed from Ahmednagar, had been bestowed the title of 'Sardar' by the Government, as it was pleased with him.
42. His son was a conscientious worker and Mamlatdar of Kopergaon. While he was on an official tour of Chithali<sup>4</sup>, he came to Shirdi to have *darshan*.
43. He went and sat in the *Masjid*, and bowed down at Baba's feet. They chatted, making formal inquiries about health and general welfare.
44. A large group was present there, including Madhav Rao. Savour now the nectar of the wonderful story with rapt attention.
45. How the future difficulties were forecast; how he took measures to avoid them; how he protected the devotees - all these deeds of Baba are indeed amazing!
46. At that time Baba asked Mirikar a curious question: "Oh, this is our Dwarkamayi. Do you know it?"
47. Balasaheb did not understand that question at all. Baba said: "Now look! This is our Dwarkamayi.
48. This is our Dwarkamayi! When sitting in the lap of the *Masjid*, she safeguards the children and there will never be any question of worrying.

49. This *Masjidmai* is very kind. She is the Mother of all the innocent and faithful devotees. Anyone may face any difficulty, She will readily protect.
50. Once a person settles in her lap, all his difficulties are solved. He who lies in her shadow, he will be on the throne of happiness.
51. This is that Dwarka, Dwaravati!" Then Baba gave him *udi* and kept his protective hand on his head, after which Mirikar got up to leave.
52. Baba again thought of putting a question to Mirikar: "Do you know the long 'bava' (serpent)? and its mysterious powers?"
53. Then he closed his fist and took his left arm near the elbow of his right arm, and holding it moved it around and said: "He is terrible like this!
54. But what can he do to us? We are Dwarkamayi's offsprings. Nobody can comprehend her activities. Just quietly watch her wonders.
55. When Dwarkamayi is there to protect, how can the long 'bava' dare to attack? The strength of the attacker is not comparable to that of the saviour? How can it be explained!"
56. Why should Baba explain this, at this point of time? And how was Mirikar connected with it? Everybody was curious to know.
57. He did not have the courage to ask Baba. Therefore, he put down his head at his feet, and saying that he was getting late to go to Chithali, he climbed down the steps.
58. Madhav Rao was also with him. As soon as both of them reached the gate of the courtyard, Baba called Madhav Rao back, saying "Come back here, for a moment".
59. "Shama, you too get ready and go with him. Do a tour of Chithali. You will greatly enjoy it".
60. Immediately, Shama climbed down and came up to Mirikar. He said: "I want to come with you in your *tonga* to Chithali.
61. I will go home, make arrangements and will be back in a trice. Baba says that I should go along with you to Chithali."
62. Mirikar said to him: "What will you do coming so far off upto Chithali? It will be an unnecessary trouble for you".



Balasaheb Mirkar

63. Madhav Rao came back and told Baba what had taken place. Baba said: "Alright! What have you to lose?"
64. *Mantra, tirth, brahmin, God, astrologer, doctor or the Guru* - in case of all of them, the gain is in proportion to the faith that you have in them.
65. We should always wish for the best and give suitable advice. Even then, what is destined will happen".
66. But now Mirikar began to doubt his decision and thought that he should obey Baba's words. Therefore, he quietly made a sign to Madhav Rao and asked him to go with him to Chithali.
67. But Madhav Rao said: "Wait. I will come. I will take Baba's permission again. If he says yes, I will return instantly. I will quickly come back.
68. I had started to go with you but you made me go back. Then Baba said 'alright! What have you to lose?' and he made me sit quietly.
69. Now I must consult him again. If he says yes, I will come immediately. I will do exactly as he says. I am only his obedient servant".
70. Then he went to Baba and said that Mirikar was inviting him to go with him to Chithali and is asking your permission.
71. Sai smilingly said: "Alright, if he is taking you, you may go. Her name is *Masjidmayi*. She will never let her reputation suffer.
72. After all, a mother is a mother. Very loving and very compassionate towards her children. But if the children turn out untrusting, how can she then take care of them?"
73. Then bowing down at Sai's feet, Madhav Rao set out and went where Mirikar was waiting to sit in the *tonga*.
74. Both of them went to Chithali, and on inquiry found out that some higher officials, who were to come, had not yet come. So they waited quietly.
75. There was a place to stay at the Maruti Temple. Therefore, both of them immediately proceeded to that place.
76. The night advanced and it was about ten o'clock. Spreading out their cotton carpets, beddings and pillows, they sat chatting in the light of the lamp.
77. There was a newspaper lying about. Mirikar opened it and started to read. He got absorbed in a certain piece of news. Then a strange thing occurred.

78. At that evil time, a snake came no one knew from where, coiled itself and settled down without anybody's knowledge.
79. It sat quietly and peacefully on one end of Mirikar's soft 'uparna', which was lying on his waist.
80. When it had quietly entered, the sound it must have made was absorbed by the rustling noise of the newspaper. Therefore, nobody had any suspicions of the serpent.
81. Although the situation was so tense, Mirikar was oblivious to this being engrossed in the news. But his peon's imagination ran wild.
82. 'From where is the noise coming? What kind of noise is this and what is the cause?' the peon thinking thus, he lifted the lamp a little and lo!, he saw the 'long Maharaj'!
83. As soon as he saw it, he was frightened; and he called out softly: "snake, a snake"! Then Mirikar lost his composure and he shivered all over.
84. Shamrao was also amazed. He said to himself: 'Baba, what have you done? From where have you sent this difficulty? Now, you must remove it yourself.'
85. Then, under the circumstances, everybody armed himself with whatever was handy and moved forward stealthily.
86. By that time, the serpent which was resting below the waist, was seen quietly moving away. Oh, but not a serpent! It looked like death personified was approaching.
87. Then in no time the calamity was arrested. And the clubs and other weapons, which were already ready to strike, fell forcefully on the serpent and it was done to pieces.
88. In this way, the danger passed. Having witnessed this, Mirikar choked with emotion and his love for Sai Samartha was strengthened all the more and overflowed.
89. Goose pimples, which had appeared due to fright, subsided. Tears of love flowed from his eyes. He wondered as to how the calamity was warded off and how Baba came to know of it.
90. 'How did this fatal calamity miss me? How did Baba give me timely warning? Even though I had refused, Shama was made to sit in the *tonga* to help me.
91. What kindness of heart! How omniscient he is! How sweetly and greatly did he warn me about this evil event!
92. He pointed out the importance of *darshan*, asserted the power of the *Masjid*, revealed his own love for the devotee, by a simple act.'
93. Once, a famous astrologer whose name was Nana Dengle was with Shrimant Butti. Listen to what he said to him.

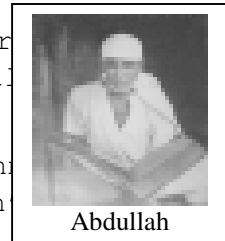
94. "To-day is a very inauspicious day. Some calamity is to befall you. Have courage but be very careful".
95. After Dengele had said this, Bapusaheb was restless. He kept worrying all the time and time dragged heavily.
96. Later on, the whole group went to the *Masjid* at the usual time. Bapusaheb, Nana and all others went along and sat with Baba.
97. Immediately Baba asked Butti: "Well what does this Nana say? Does he predict your death? You have nothing to fear.
98. Retort to him without any hesitation. 'You can kill me if you dare to!' After this, now watch what miracle happened.
99. In the evening, Bapusaheb went outside to the toilet to ease himself; and, in the toilet there came a snake, at that time.
100. Looking at that terrible creature, Bapusaheb came out, while Lahnoo, his servant, thought of killing it with a stone.
101. Lahnoo tried to pick up a stone. Bapusaheb objected. He said: "Go bring a stick. It is not right to do this kind of work hastily".
102. When the servant left to get the stick, the snake began to climb the wall, suddenly lost its balance and fell down. Then he crept away through a hole.
103. From there, it escaped and there remained no reason to kill it. The incidence reminded him of Baba's words and, as it were, the ordeal was over for both - the serpent and him.
104. Be it so. For him, who has by good fortune witnessed the pleasure of Sai's company, it is a source of joy for ever and it is impossible to forget.
105. By making the devotees undergo such and similar experiences, he has attracted the hearts of his devotees; and to describe them in words, it would be always inadequate<sup>5</sup>.
106. Here is another similar story. At about midnight, it happened in the *Chavadi*, before Baba. Please listen to that.
107. A certain Amir Shakkar, owning ancestral land at Korale, in Kopergaon Taluka had faith in Sai.
108. By caste he was a butcher and by occupation he was a broker. He was well-known in Bandra. He was greatly suffering from a disease, which had terribly affected his limbs.
109. Difficulties remind one of God. He left the toils and troubles of business; wound up everything and hastened to Shirdi.

110. Kunti, the mother of the five Pandavas, had to undergo all kinds of sufferings - to reside in a jungle for years incognito. But in spite of all her difficulties, she asked for 'misery' as a 'boon' from God!
111. She said: "O God Almighty! You may give happiness to those who ask for it; but give me continuous suffering always. Let me never forget your name.
112. O God, this is my only request. If you want to grant me anything, give me only this, so that I may never forget your name. It will be like an ornament around my throat".
113. Listeners and this speaker, let us ask the same from Sai, day and night. "Let us not forget your name. Keep us at your feet".
114. So be it. Amir bowed down and kissed Baba's hand with the proper ritual. He related in detail about his disease and prayed for relief from his suffering.
115. He asked for protection against rheumatism to which Baba answered: "Go and live happily in the *Chavadi*".
116. From the *Masjid*, Baba used to go to the *Chavadi* every alternate night regularly; and Amir started to live there.
117. Amir was suffering from pains in the joints. Therefore, he would have been comfortable at any other place in the village, or he could have even gone to Korale which would have been more agreeable to him.
118. But the *Chavadi* was an old and dilapidated building. The floor was uneven where chameleons, lizards, scorpions and snakes roamed freely.
119. Besides, lepers and other diseased persons lived there. Dogs roamed around eating left-over food. Amir was very troubled but he couldn't say anything to Baba.
120. At the rear side, there was a knee-deep heap of garbage. There were a number of burrows (made by serpents and scorpions) in the backyard. He was in a wretched condition and it was a real ordeal of a lifetime for him.
121. It rained from above and below the ground was wet. The place was uneven. Cold breezes blew through it. Amir was very worried.
122. All the joints in his body were stiff. The place was wet and windy. It was an extremely wet place. But Baba's words served as the medicine.
123. Rain, wind or wet; the ground rough, uneven, or pitted - all this was not to be considered, as Baba had told him to live there.

124. Although that place was questionable and unfit to live in, Sai's presence and company were a great boon. He stayed on happily thinking those words to be his medicine.
125. Amir Shakkar lived at the *Chavadi* for nine months. Just as one climbed the steps into the *Chavadi*, right in front, he spread out his bedding in the middle of the room.
126. Rheumatism had totally gripped his body. Seemingly, the antidote was also adverse. But in his heart he had true faith; therefore, everything smoothed out.
127. Amir was asked to live there for nine months and was prohibited from coming for *darshan* even in the *Masjid*.
128. But that *Chavadi* which was allotted to him to stay was such a place that without any effort it was possible to have Baba's *darshan*.
129. That too, every day, both in the morning and evening. Besides, on alternate days, at both the times<sup>6</sup>, he would witness the celebrations at the *Chavadi* to his heart's content.
130. Every day in the morning, when Baba went to beg alms, Baba passed the *Chavadi*, on his way. It was easily possible for Amir to have *darshan* when Baba went or returned, without leaving his place.
131. Also, at sunset, Baba would come in front of the *Chavadi*, and would pay homage to all the directions bowing his head and moving his index finger.
132. From there he would turn back and walk upto the corner of the *Samadhi* building and from here he turned back to the *masjid*, accompanied by his devotees.
133. He came to the *Chavadi* every other day and there was only a curtain between them for name's sake - actually, a wooden shutter - thus they were able to converse. And both loved to talk.
134. *Puja* and *arati* would take place there only, after which the devotees would disperse for their respective homes; and the two of them would get the opportunity to talk peacefully.
135. Seemingly it was an imprisonment. But, in reality, he enjoyed Sai's company fully. Without good fortune no one else could have this rare opportunity.
136. Yet, Amir got fed up of staying only at one place. He felt it was an imprisonment and thought of going away to some other place.

137. He who is fond of independence, can he like bondage? 'Enough of this confinement' thought Amir.
138. He left his allotted abode, without Baba's permission and went to Kopergaon and stayed in a 'dharamshala'.
139. See, what a curious incident happened there! A fakir, who was dying, was lying there. Distressed by extreme thirst, he said: "Give me a mouthful of water".
140. Amir felt pity. He gave him water to drink. But as soon as the fakir drank it, he fell down lifeless.
141. He died. There was nobody in the vicinity and it was also night time. Amir became nervous.
142. He thought that, in the morning, an official inquiry would take place about this sudden death. They'll start rounding up people and the Government will inquire into it.
143. 'Who is going to believe when I tell them what really happened? The outcome will be dependent on witnesses and findings. Such is the legal process.
144. If I tell the truth that when I gave him water to drink, the fakir died suddenly after that, then I will be walking into their net.
145. I will be the first person who will be caught, in this connection. Later on, when the real cause of the death is discovered, I will be proved to be innocent.
146. But until that is decided what torture will I have to go through! Therefore, I should run back the same way as I have come, immediately'. He decided that.
147. Therefore, Amir, quit the place the same night before anyone could see him. As he walked, he kept looking backwards. All the way he was in a disturbed state of mind.
148. 'How will I reach the *Chavadi*?' His mind was not free of fear. Amir had such doubts, as he walked towards Shirdi.
149. 'O, Baba! What have I done? How have I drawn this burden upon me? My own actions have brought these fruits. I have understood this fully.
150. I left the *Chavadi* in the hope of finding a better place. Therefore, you have taught me a lesson. So be it. Now take me out of this predicament and see that I reach Shirdi'.
151. Thus he got himself ready and Amir left in the night itself, leaving the corpse behind in the *dharamshala*.

152. "Baba, Baba", he said, "Please pardon me. Have mercy." He walked petitioning all the way till he reached the *Chavadi*. He then got relief.
153. In this way, Amir learnt a lesson and took an oath to behave himself. Later, Amir behaved well and gave up the wrong and crooked path.
154. So be it. His faith bore fruit and he was cured of his rheumatism. Now listen to what incident took place later on.
155. The *Chavadi* was divided into three parts. Baba's corner was in the south east. He slept in a place covered on all four sides by wooden planks.
156. Lamps burnt there the whole night. He slept always in the light, throughout the night. Fakirs and others used to sit outside, where it would be dark.
157. Amir was one of them. Around him there were other people, who also lay down there. There were so many, like these.
158. There, behind Baba's living quarters, was a store-room in which a devotee called Abdul, a very detached person, lived. He was always ready to serve Baba.
159. This is how it was. Once, at midnight, Baba called Abdul and said: "Look, I have found a ghost near my bed".
160. He went on calling him repeatedly. Abdul came running with a lamp in his hand. Baba loudly said to him: "Wasn't it just now?!"
161. Abdul said: "I have looked everywhere. There is nothing that I see here." Baba said: "Open your eyes and look carefully everywhere".
162. Abdul searched everywhere again and again. Baba kept hitting the ground with the *satka*. The people who slept outside awoke and began watching.
163. Amir Shakkar also woke up. He wondered: 'What is all this commotion to-day? Why is there so much noise of the *satka* in the middle of the night?'
164. Seeing Baba's actions, Amir was immediately scared and thought that a snake had entered somewhere and Baba was aware of it.
165. He had a long experience of Baba. He knew Baba's nature and his manner of speaking. Therefore, he understood this fully.



166. If there was any danger to a devotee, Baba would say that it affected him. Amir was aware of this kind of speech. Therefore, he had come to this conclusion.
167. Just then, he saw something moving near his own pillow. "Abdul, bring the lamp, the lamp here", Amir shouted.
168. When the lamp was brought outside, a large serpent was seen coiled there. He was dazzled by the light and he began to move his hood up and down.
169. It was killed immediately. He felt very grateful to Baba, and thought how extraordinary this method was of making us aware.
170. That mention of the ghost and calling for the lamp was only a kind of trick to caution the devotees of the danger and to save them from the calamity.
171. There are a number of such stories about serpents in Baba's biography which could be described. But then the book would become very voluminous. Therefore, I have to curtail them.
172. "Snakes and serpents are Narayan, but they should be worshipped from a distance", says Saint Tukaram.
173. He calls them wicked and deserving of a beating with a shoe. However, the opinion is not unanimous and one is left in doubt as to the mode of one's treatment of them.
174. One acts according to one's nature and in keeping with God's will. This is the essence of it all.
175. There is only one answer to this question. All beings are equal and non-violence is always the best. Baba, too, had the same explanation.
176. Whether it be a scorpion or a snake, God is within them too. If He does not wish to harm, no harm will be done by them.
177. The whole universe is under the command of God. Nothing here is independent. This is Baba's knowledge through experience. But we cannot accept that because of our ego.
178. Once a scorpion fell into a pond. As he was drowning and heading to the bottom, a man happily clapped and said: "Oh, you likewise harm us!"
179. Another, hearing the clapping, came running to the bank of the pond and saw the scorpion bobbing up and down, while drowning. He was moved and took pity on him.
180. He went near it and picked up the scorpion between his fingers. But the scorpion, according to its nature, jumped up and stung his fingers.

181. In such a case, our knowledge is limited. We are entirely slaves of destiny (God) who bestows us with intelligence. Everything that takes place in our lives is according to His wish.
182. Different people have varied experiences. I will also tell my own experience. Sai's words are the authority for my faith and my faith is my glory.
183. Just as Kakasaheb Dixit read the *Nath Bhagvat* in the day, every night he read the *Bhavarth Ramayan* (by Eknath).
184. It was so regular that sometimes even the offering of flowers to God could be missed, or he could miss other customary duties or neglect his bath; but the time which he himself had allotted for reading them was always adhered.
185. Both these books, written by Eknath, contained the essence of divine knowledge. Dixit thought them to be Sai Samaratha's blessing to him.
186. In these two unique books, which were also very appealing, the knowledge of self, non-attachment and practice of ethics - these three qualities - continued to form the three-fold wick of flame, which shone with divine light.
187. He who has sipped from the cup, containing the nectar of the preachings of these books, is fortunate. He overcomes the three-fold difficulties of the material world at the same time, and reaches the ultimate (*moksha*).
188. By Sai's Grace, Dixit needed a listener and I got the opportunity to listen to the *Bhagvat* and was thus obliged.
189. I began to attend the sessions, day and night, due to good fortune, which purified my ears.
190. So be it. One night when the reading was in progress on the pious stories, an incident occurred. Listeners should listen to that story, which is a digression.
191. Well, how can I help it? I am inspired by something else while describing another. But why should I ignore something which I know to be interesting.
192. An interesting story from the *Ramayana* was being narrated about Hanuman who, on his mother's instructions, tried to test his master's powers and ended by experiencing terrible miseries.
193. When Hanuman was caught in the cyclonic winds which were created by the feathers of Ram's arrows and went round and round in the sky, he was scared to death. At that time his father (*Vayu*) came to his rescue.

194. Listening to his father's advice, Hanuman surrendered to Ram. While this part was being narrated, something amazing took place. Listen to it.
195. Our mind was engrossed in the story. Each one was involved in the delight of listening when a scorpion, incarnation of death, appeared, God only knows from where!
196. I do not know how he got fond of the narration and without my knowledge he jumped onto my shoulder and settled himself down, enjoying the sentiments of the story.
197. Look! Here too Baba was alert. I was not aware of its presence. But God protects those who love His stories.
198. I looked casually and saw a terrible scorpion, calmly perched on my right shoulder, on the 'Uparna'.
199. He did not move at all and was quietly paying attention, as a very attentive listener would, and was seated peacefully on his seat.
200. If, as was his nature, he had moved its sting just a little bit, he would not have allowed me to enjoy the freedom and peace and would have given me unbearable pain.
201. The story from the *Ramayana* was in full swing. The speaker and the listeners were engrossed in the story - all this would have been spoilt. Such was the ominous companion, whose seizure was difficult and a dilemma.
202. This is the greatness of the story of Ram. No possible obstacles can be more powerful than it. They have to become repentant and forget their innate nature.
203. By the grace of Ram, I was endowed with intelligence. I could ward off the difficulty quietly. One should not depend till the last moment on this creature of unsteady nature.
204. That 'uparna' with which I had covered myself, I gathered cautiously from two sides, folded the scorpion in it tightly, took it out to the garden and spread it out there.
205. The scorpion is naturally a terrible creature. Given the opportunity, it could have shown its nature. I was truly afraid. But Baba's strict orders could not be overlooked. I could not raise my hand to kill it.
206. Here the listeners will naturally have a doubt. Isn't the scorpion a deadly creature? Doesn't it deserve to be killed? Will it give pleasure if it stings? Then, why should it not be killed? But nothing is clear.

207. Snakes, scorpions and other venomous creature - can anyone afford to neglect? Would Baba ask to release them?
208. The listeners' doubt is correct. I too had the same apprehension. But, listen to Baba's words, on the occasion of a similar incident, in the past.
209. The situation was more serious than this. In Shirdi itself, at Kaka's house, in a room on the upper storey, near the window, a poisonous snake was seen.
210. It had entered through a hole in the window frame and was dazzled by the light of the lamp. It was sitting coiled near it.
211. Though it was dazzled by the lamp light, it had got startled because of the movements of the people around. When there was a commotion, it was stunned and remained steady for a while.
212. It neither went back nor did it come forward but moved its hood up and down. The most urgent thought of the moment was how to kill it.
213. Some got clubs and some got sticks hurriedly but they found the place difficult for manoeuvre. They were greatly worried.
214. If it had crawled a little farther, and climbed down the wall to the floor, it would have reached my bedding first, and it could have had catastrophic consequences.
215. A hit in a vital spot could kill it. But if the fatal stroke missed, it would take vengeance and bring calamity. Therefore, a lamp was brought and aimed at him. Then, he found a way to escape.
216. However, its hour of death had not yet come and our luck was also strong. It was a precarious moment, but Baba protected all of us.
217. It slithered back through the place from where it had entered. It was free from fear and everybody else had nothing to fear anymore. In this way, we were mutually happy.
218. Then Muktaram a devotee got up and said: "It is good that the poor thing has escaped. If it had not slipped away through the hole, it would have lost its life".
219. When I saw Muktaram's outlook of kindness, I felt hurt and thought to myself: 'What is the use of compassion for dangerous creatures? How will the world go on otherwise?'

220. Muktaram seldom came; but we used to be there morning and evening. Besides, my bedding was placed near the window. So I did not like those words.
221. He initiated the argument while I took the diametrically opposite view. A big argument took place but no conclusion was reached.
222. One said that a snake should be killed without a moment's delay; the other said why should we unnecessarily be enemical to an innocent being.
223. Some condemned Muktaram; and some supported me. The argument warmed up and there was no end to it:
224. Finally Muktaram went downstairs. I changed my (sleeping) place. I inserted a wooden piece into the hole and then spread out my bedding to go to sleep.
225. Eyes became drowsy and the assembled people went to sleep. I started yawning and the argument naturally ended.
226. The night passed and it was morning. I finished my morning ablutions. Baba returned from the Lendi. People started gathering in the *Masjid*.
227. As was customary, in the early morning I came into the *Masjid* at the usual time. Muktaram and others, too, came and took their seats.
228. Some were crushing the tobacco in their palms; some were filling Baba's chillum; some were pressing his hands and feet. Thus all were busy serving him.
229. Baba, who was aware of everyone's innermost thoughts, softly asked: "What was the discussion that took place, last night, in the *wada*?"
230. Then I told Baba everything that had transpired; and asked whether a snake should be killed or not, under such circumstances.
231. But Baba maintained just one thing - that God is present even in serpents and scorpions, and in all beings. Therefore, we should love all.
232. God holds the reins of the world. All are under His command. Whether it be a snake or a scorpion, it cannot act against His Will.
233. Therefore, we should be kind to all living things and love them. Give up violence and have patience. God protects every one.

234. How many such stories of Sai Baba could be narrated? Therefore, the listeners should certainly gather the essence.

235. The next chapter is even sweeter than this one. It is about an incident where devotion and faith combined in one person, the devotee Dixit; and how, with the strength of these, he readied to kill a goat.

May there be well-being. This is the end of the twenty-second chapter of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people called "Warding Off of Untimely Death."

This is offered to *Sree Sadguru Sainath*.  
May there be auspiciousness!

#### Notes :

1. Vishnu/Krishna.
2. Details are given in Chapter 4.
3. Used for drawing water from the well, by use of bullocks to irrigate the fields.
4. It is at a distance of 13 miles by train from Shirdi.
5. Once, a snake bit this Madhavrao Deshpande when he was in Shirdi. Nearby there is a shrine of Vitroba, to which people bitten by snakes were taken to be cured, as per the belief and experience of the people. Accordingly, a number of people urged him to go there, he replied: "We will act as Maharaj directs" and went to Maharaj. When Madhavrao was below the steps, Maharaj loudly directed "Do not climb up." Believing this to be a direction to him, Madhavrao did not climb up the steps. But this directive was not to him but to the poison, it seems, for the poison no longer spread from that moment onwards. Then later, Madhavrao slowly recovered by Maharaj's Grace, without any remedies. He had a vision of this incident, a year before it actually happened.

6. The night *arati* at the *Chavadi* and the next morning's *kakad arati*, when Baba went to sleep there on alternate nights.



Abdul Baba

There, behind Baba's living quarters, was a store-room in which a devotee called Abdul, a very detached person, lived. He was always ready to serve Baba. (Ch.22, ovi 158)

