

## Narration of Vows and Other Stories

*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. Aum. I bow down to Sai, the Compassionate One, who loves his devotees, the Abode of Mercy! Your *darshan* releases the devotees from the fear of this world by removing their difficulties.
2. Initially, you were without form and attributes but on account of the devotion of the devotees, you have been studded with attributes and incarnated as the crest jewel of saints, O Sainath.
3. To give liberation to the devotees is always the mission of the saints; but you are the Guru of all the Saints. That mission is inevitable for you, therefore.
4. Those that have taken refuge at your feet have all their sins destroyed. The good *karmas* emerge to the surface to clear the path and make it free of fear and difficulties.
5. Remembering your feet, Brahmins come from well known 'tirthas' and recite the Gayatri Mantra, and read religious books.
6. We, who are weak and without any merits, what do we know of devotion? Though others may leave us, Sai won't forsake us.
7. Those who receive his grace become inconceivably powerful, for they receive the treasure of Self bliss and discrimination together with knowledge.
8. Eagerness to hear the words from Sai's lips made the devotees delirious. Each word became stamped upon their minds and they realised the truth contained in them.
9. Sainath fully knows the desires of his devotees. He alone is capable of fulfilling them, which is why his devotees are grateful.
10. 'O Sainatha I invoke your help and place my head at your feet. Forgetting all my faults, free this servant of yours from all anxieties.'

11. If a devotee, overcome by calamities, prays to Sainath thus, his mind will be calmed as he alone is the giver of peace.
12. This Sai, the Ocean of Mercy, favoured me. The result of it is this auspicious book presented with respect to all readers.
13. Otherwise, what qualification had I to undertake such an immense task? As he took all the responsibility, I felt no burden.
14. With Sai Samartha, the Light of Knowledge, to illumine my words and to destroy the darkness of ignorance, why should I have any doubts?
15. My faith in that Lord, the Cloud of Mercy, did not make me feel that I was at all labouring. By his grace, I was enabled to achieve my desired objective.
16. This service to the saint, in the form of the book, was on account of my good deeds in the past births, which you have received well, O Lord! I am grateful to fate for this and feel blessed.
17. In the last chapter, you heard how Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, gave different kinds of dream visions to teach his devotees.
18. In the present chapter, listen to an interesting story of a devotee of *Sapta Shringi* Goddess, which is enjoyable.
19. It is also a miracle how Gods and Goddesses entrust their devotees into the hands of saints. Listen with rapt attention.
20. There are many stories about Maharaj, each more wonderful than the other. This story is also worth listening to. Pay attention and listen.
21. It is not a story but a drink of pure nectar. You will be gratified by it. You will realise the greatness of Sai, as well as his all pervasiveness.
22. Critics and logicians should not pursue this. There is no scope here for arguments. What is necessary is unlimited love.
23. Not only should the person be learned but he should be devout, full of faith, a believer or in attendance upon a saint. Others will take them to be fables.
24. The wish-fulfilling tree of Sai *leelas* undoubtedly bears fruits and flowers. One who is a fortunate devotee; he alone can reach out and pluck them.
25. Listen then, to this very purifying story which is giver of salvation to the seekers, the best amongst all the means; and beneficial to all.

26. Such is the nectar - like drink of Sai stories which easily helps in uplifting all creatures, including the ignorant. The worldly people will be satisfied and it is a means for those desirous of attaining liberation.
27. When I think of one, many more stories come to my mind. Therefore, Hemad humbly invites the listeners to hear them.
28. Thus, narrating one story after another will increase your enjoyment of the sweet *leelas*. Those who are afflicted by the problems of the world will get relief. This is itself Sai's greatness.
29. In the village Vani, of Nasik District, there lived a man called Kakaji Vaidya, who was the *pujari* of the Devi's temple there.
30. The Devi was known as *Sapta Shringi*. The *pujari* was in a disturbed state of mind due to insurmountable difficulties and was harassed by the worldly life.
31. When the cycle of time takes a bad turn, the mind spins in turmoil like a top and the body runs helter-skelter. There is no peace at all.
32. In this manner, Kakaji was very miserable. So he went to the temple and prayed fervently to the Goddess, to relieve him of his anxieties.
33. He prayed whole heartedly, whereby the Devi was moved by his feelings. That same night, he got a vision. Listeners should hear about its miraculous nature.
34. The Devi, Mother *Sapta Shringi*, appeared in Kakaji's dream and said "You go to Baba. Your mind will be at peace".
35. He hoped that the Devi would clarify who and where this Baba was. Kaka was in this eager state of mind, when his eyes opened.
36. The questions in his mind remained unanswered as the vision immediately ended. Kakaji tried to guess the identity of the 'Baba', of whom she spoke.
37. Kakaji decided that it must be 'Baba' Tryambakeshwar certainly. So he immediately left and took *darshan*. But his mind remained disturbed.
38. Kakaji stayed in Tryambakeshwar for ten days but till the end he remained downcast and depressed.
39. The dejection did not leave him. His mind remained wavering. Day by day, his agitation increased. So, Kakaji started on his return journey.
40. When he was there, he bathed early in the morning, chanted the *Rudra* hymns, did the *Abhishekam* pouring fresh cold water

unceasingly over the Pinda (*Shiva Linga*). But he was as restless as before.

41. Going again to the Devi's temple, he said: "Why did you send me to Tryambakeshwar? At least now, give me peace of mind. Enough of this fruitless running around".
42. In this manner, he implored the Devi and prayed to her. The Devi gave him *darshan* at night and told him in his dream:-
43. "The 'Baba' I spoke of is Shirdi's Sai Samartha. I do not understand why you went to Tryambakeshwar unnecessarily".
44. 'Where is Shirdi and how do I go there? I do not know this Baba. Now how can this trip be undertaken? I am at a loss as to how all this will happen' he thought.
45. But he, who is devoutly attached to a saint's feet and who has the purpose of *darshan* in his mind, then the saint and even God fulfils his desire.
46. The saint and God are one. There is absolutely no difference between them. To believe per chance, that they are two, is duality. Saints are one with God.
47. If anybody thinks that he will go and see a saint and fulfil his desire, it will be a mere boast. The saints' ways are incomprehensible.
48. Unless the Saints will it, who can go and take their *darshan*? Even the leaf of a tree cannot move without their bidding.
49. The more anxious a devotee is for the *darshan*, the more devout and faithful he is, the greater is the experience of heavenly bliss attained by the best of devotees.
50. While Kakaji worried about how he would go for Sai *darshan*, a guest arrived from Shirdi searching for his whereabouts.
51. And was the guest some ordinary person? He was liked by Baba better than the others. None was comparable to him in Baba's love; and he was fortunate enough to deserve it.
52. He was called Madhavrao and held the hereditary office of Deshpande. Baba spoiled him and nobody could get around Baba as he could.
53. They always indulged in loving disputes and addressed each other in familiar terms. Baba loved him exceptionally, like his own son. He came at that time to Vani.
54. Once when he was a child and fell ill, his mother prayed to the Devi and said: "I leave this child to your mercy to save or kill.
55. But should he recover, I will bring him for your *darshan*". The child recovered after the Devi had been invoked.

56. Whether it be a doctor or a deity, after the problem is over, they are forgotten. In adversity one remembers to make an invocation and a vow; which when unfulfilled become a reason for fear.
57. Several years passed and the vow was completely forgotten. The mother recalled it in her last moments and requested Madhavrao.
58. "This vow was taken a long time ago. It has not been fulfilled till this time. It is not good to have such a long delay. Go for the Devi's darshan".
59. Also, when the mother had ring-worm on her breasts, and had unbearable pain, she had taken another vow to the Devi.
60. "Mother, I will come rolling in prostration to you, if you relieve me from this misery. I shall offer you a replica of two silver breasts".
61. That vow had remained unfulfilled too, being postponed from time to time. She remembered both of them, at the approach of her death.
62. She recalled to Babya<sup>1</sup> about this matter and took a promise from him that he would fulfil them. The mother then becoming desireless merged eternally at the Lord's feet.
63. Later on, Madhavrao kept on procrastinating and years rolled by. He forgot all about it also and the vows remained unfulfilled.
64. In this manner, after thirty years, see what happened in Shirdi. An astrologer came there, while travelling.
65. He had a deep understanding of astrology, and was able to read the past, the future and the present. He satisfied the curiosity of many, was highly praised and continued to stay there for a while.
66. He pleased Shrimant Keshavraoji Butti<sup>2</sup> and others, with his predictions, and gratified everyone in no time.
67. When Bapaji, the younger brother of Madhavrao, asked about his future, the astrologer told him that the Goddess was displeased with him.
68. He said: "Your mother had taken vows which she had asked your elder brother to fulfil at the time of her death.
69. Not having fulfilled them till now, the Goddess is greatly troubling you". Bapaji told everything to Madhavrao, when he came home.
70. Madhavrao realised his mistake. He called a goldsmith and had a replica made of two silver breasts and took them to the *Masjid*.

71. After prostrating at the feet of Baba, he placed the breasts before him, and said to him: "Please accept these and free me from that vow.
72. You are our *Sapta Shringi*. You are our Goddess. Please accept this as promised and be satisfied".
73. Baba replied: "Go to the temple of *Sapta Shringi* and offer to her what was promised to her by your own hands, placing these ornamental breasts at her feet".
74. When Baba insisted thus, Madhavrao also felt the same way. He left the house determined to take *darshan*.
75. He took Baba's *darshan* and requested for his blessings. Taking *udi* and *prasad*, he took permission and left.
76. He came to the temple of *Sapta Shringi* and began to search for the family priest. Luckily he was taken to Kakaji's house and met him without any efforts.
77. Kakaji was desiring to meet Baba as soon as possible; and just then he met Madhavrao. Was this an ordinary coincidence!?
78. When making preliminary inquiries about the whereabouts of Madhavrao, when he learnt that he had come from Shirdi, his joy knew no bounds and they embraced one another.
79. They were both pleased, at the turn of events and praised Sai's '*leelas*'. After the ritual for the vows was completed, the priest left for Shirdi.
80. The priest was filled with joy to have the companionship of a person like Madhavrao, which he got unexpectedly. He thought only of his trip to Shirdi.
81. As soon as the vows were fulfilled, they both arrived quickly at Shirdi. No sooner than they had arrived, they left for Sai's *darshan*, with lots of love and eagerness.
82. The intensity of emotion increases the pace of a traveller. Kakaji arrived at the banks of the Godavari, from where Shirdi was close by<sup>3</sup>.
83. The priest bowed at Baba's feet and washed them with his tears. Being filled with happiness at the *darshan*, he was at peace.
84. This was the purpose of the vision of the Goddess. When he saw Baba Samartha with his own eyes, Kakaji was truly happy and his wish was fulfilled.
85. So be it. Kakaji was filled with joy. After the *darshan*, his mind was at peace. He really became free of all worries, as the Cloud of Mercy had rained.

86. The fickleness of his mind disappeared. He was himself surprised. He wondered how strange this was!
87. Baba had not said a word. Nor had he asked any questions leading to this satisfaction. Nor had he given any blessings. The mere *darshan* had brought about contentment.
88. 'My fickle mindedness has subsided by mere *darshan*. I have attained incredible happiness and perfect understanding. This is called the greatness of *darshan*!'
89. His eyes were rivetted to Sai's feet and he could not utter a word. Listening to Baba's stories, his happiness could not be contained.
90. The priest surrendered to the Samaratha with his full faith and attained his happiness. He forgot his earlier problems.
91. Kakaji stayed for twelve days at Shirdi. His mind settled and then he returned to *Sapta Shringi*.
92. The time when one sees a dream has relevance. It is believed that only dreams that are seen at dawn or early morning come true. Others are ineffectual.
93. This is well-known. But the dreams regarding Shirdi, wherever they occurred or at whatever time, were fulfilled. This was the invariable experience of the devotees.
94. I will present a short story illustrating this statement to the listeners. They will find it a great marvel and will give them increased enjoyment in listening.
95. One afternoon Baba told Dixit: "Take a *tonga* and go to Rahata and bring back Kushal Bhau<sup>4</sup>."
96. Tell him that it has been a long time since I met him, so I have a desire to see him. Tell him that Baba is calling you to meet him".
97. Respectfully obeying the orders, Dixit took the *tonga* and went. Kushal Bhau met him immediately and Dixit told him the purpose of his visit.
98. Hearing Baba's message, Kushal Bhau was greatly surprised. He said: "I have just woken up from a nap and in my sleep I got the same orders.
99. Just now, I had laid down to rest after lunch. No sooner than my eyes closed that Baba said the same thing to me in my sleep.
100. He said: 'Come to Shirdi right now.' I also had a strong desire, but what could I do? There were no horses. I sent my son to inform Baba about it.
101. The boy must have hardly gone beyond the village border and now here is your *tonga*!" Dixit jokingly said: "That is why I was instructed to come.
102. So, if you like to come, the *tonga* is ready and waiting." Then, he left for Shirdi with Dixit very happily.
103. The result was that Kushal Bhau met Baba and Baba's wish was fulfilled. Kushal Bhau was also deeply moved by this '*leela*' of Baba.

104. Once, Baba appeared in a dream of a Punjabi Brahmin, whose name was Ramlal and who was a resident of Bombay.
105. The sky, the wind, the sun, the rain and other deities - due to the power of their grace, whatever knowledge one has of outward and inward objects, that is known as the waking state.
106. When all the senses are at rest, arises the awakening of the subliminal impressions of the waking condition. This takes the form of cognition and the person who cognises. This is the indication of the dream state.
107. His dream was strange. He did not know Baba's form or attributes. He had never had *darshan* earlier. "Come to me", he said.
108. From his appearance, the person looked like a great saint, but who was he and from where? When Ramlal awoke he was deep in thoughts.
109. He felt like going, but he did not have an address or his whereabouts. But he who calls for *darshan*, he alone knows to make the arrangements.
110. Then, that same afternoon as he was casually walking along the road, he saw a picture in a shop which startled him.
111. The form that he saw in his dream was exactly the same as this, felt Ramlal. He immediately made inquiries of the shopkeeper.
112. He closely looked at the picture. "Who is he and from where?" He learnt that it was Sai from Shirdi. Ramlal was satisfied.
113. Later, he came to know the full details. Ramlal went to Shirdi and stayed near Baba, till his *Mahasamadhi*.
114. This was Baba's wish - to fulfil the desires of his devotees, by bringing them for *darshan* and letting them achieve their worldly or spiritual objectives.
115. As it is, all his devotees were fulfilled. He himself was desireless, unselfish, without ego, and without any attachment. His *avatar* was only to fulfil the desires of the devotees.
116. Know him to be a true saint - who is untouched by anger, and has no place for hatred, nor does he have even a glance for the selfish;
117. whose selfless love for all is his mission and who does not waste even a word on matters other than righteousness.
118. In conclusion, Baba has got his life story written by holding my hand so that the devotees remain continuously engrossed in remembering him. This is its purpose.

119. Therefore Hemad very humbly always requests the listeners, to hear the Sai Satcharita with faith and devotion.
120. You will attain peace thereby and it will help in getting rid of evil habits. Devotion at Sai's feet will be strengthened and it will give salvation.
121. So be it. In the next chapter will be narrated the story of Sanyasi Vijayananda, who instead of going to Mansarovar attained liberation at Sai's feet.
122. Also, the devotee Mankar Balaram got his eternal rest; and Noolkar and Megha's desires were fulfilled completely by Sainath.
123. Even a creature, as cruel as a tiger, was also given a place at his feet. Such were the incredible deeds of Sai. Listening to them is like celebrating a great festival.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirtieth chapter of *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called "Narration of Vows and Other Stories".

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

**Notes:**

1. Madhavrao was called Babya by his mother,
2. The son of Bapusaheb Butti of Nagpur.
3. Ovi 82 should have preceded ovi 81.
4. A wealthy man of Rahata who was Baba's devotee.

