

The Greatness of Darshan

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. In the last chapter, the stories of the devotee of *Sapta Shringi* and how Sai got Madhavrao's vow fulfilled were narrated;
2. also, how *darshan* was given in dreams to Khushal Sheth and Ramlal; and how Ramlal was kept back till Baba's *Mahasamadhi*.
3. The present story is more unique than those. Listeners may hear it with great respect - how one *sanyasi* on his way to Mansarovar attained liberation;
4. also, how Mankar, Noolkar, and Megha's objectives were fulfilled. These were men; but even a cruel tiger was given a place at Baba's feet.
5. These stories are very elaborate but the book will be greatly lengthened, therefore, I will narrate briefly by giving their essence, which will be beneficial to the seekers.
6. A person is re-born according to his thoughts at the time of death. Insects, on account of fear, become bees; while King Jadabharat was born as a deer on account of the deer that he had reared and about whose welfare he remained concerned in his last moments.
7. A person is re-born in the form, which he is contemplating at the time of death. The one who is humble at the feet of God is not re-born.
8. This is the reason for advocating the practice of constant chanting of the Lord's name, so that one is not bewildered at the time of death and one practises it at that time also.
9. All the '*sadhanas*' of a life time would be wasted if one is not alert at the crucial moment and the good company of Saints kept during the life would prove futile.

10. Therefore, those devotees who are full of devotion entrust their lives in the hands of Saints, because they alone know whether there is re-birth or not. They are the only companions at the end.
11. The story, illustrating this point, happened in the presence of Sai. The listeners will realise Sai's love for the devotees.
12. How distant was Madras from Shirdi, and Shirdi from the steep ascent of Mansarovar! But when the time was ripe, he brought the devotees to his feet.
13. Once, a Madrasi Sanyasi named Vijayanand left Madras for Mansarovar with great enthusiasm.
14. He had seen a Japanese traveller's map of Mansarovar and that gave him a great desire to have *darshan*.
15. Shirdi was on the way and he had heard about Baba's fame. With a desire for *darshan*, he came searching for him.
16. Hearing that Sai Maharaj was a great Saint, renowned and known the world over, he desired to have *darshan*, so he stopped over enroute.
17. Swami Somadevji of Hardwar was also there at Shirdi, at that time. Both of them, naturally met at the gathering of the devotees.
18. The *Sanyasi* asked him how far Mansarovar was. The Swami told him it was five hundred miles and the route lay above Gangotri.
19. "It snows heavily there. The dialect changes every fifty *koss*. The Bhutanese are very suspicious and the travellers are greatly harassed".
20. Hearing this information given by the Swami the *Sanyasi* was distressed. He was in two minds and felt very worried.
21. He took Sai Baba's *darshan* and prostrated at his feet. He felt highly pleased. He sat cross-legged in front of Baba.
22. Then, Baba became furious and said to those present: "Drive away the *Sanyasi*. His company is not worthwhile".
23. To begin with, the *Sanyasi* was a newcomer and did not know Baba's nature. Though he felt ashamed, he sat there observing what was going on in the way of service.
24. It was the morning *darbar* time and there were a lot of people assembled in the *Masjid*. He was benumbed by watching the devotees performing the '*puja*' with the appropriate rituals.

25. Some washed Baba's feet and collected the '*tirth*' from his toes in a small ladle. They drank it with pure devotion and others touched it reverently to their eyes.
26. Some applied sandalwood paste to him and some smeared his body with fragrant *attars*. They all forgot the distinction of their castes and whether they were Brahmins or *Sudras*.
27. Though Baba was enraged with him, the *Sanyasi* felt overflowing affection. He did not feel like leaving and he did not get up, from where he was seated.
28. He stayed in Shirdi for two days. In the meanwhile, he got a letter informing him that his mother was ill at home. He was saddened by that.
29. He felt like going back home to be with his mother. But without Baba's permission, he could not take a step.
30. Then, taking the letter in his hand the *Sanyasi* went to the *Masjid*. He began to plead with Baba and to relate his mother's condition:
31. "Maharaj, Sai Samartha, I am longing to meet my mother. Give me your permission happily and bless me for my journey".
32. He fell at Baba's feet and continued: "Won't you grant me your permission, as a favour? My mother is holding on to life and is about to die, being bed-ridden.
33. She must be waiting for me. So permit me to have a last look at her. It will enable her to bear her pains and have a peaceful end".
34. Sai *Samartha* was omniscient and knowing that the *sanyasi's* own death was near, hear what he said to him, with attention:
35. "If you were so fond of your mother, then why did you don this garb (of a *Sanyasi*)? Attachment does not befit these clothes. You have blemished this ochre garb.
36. Go and sit and do not feel disheartened. Let a few days pass. Then, we will think further. Do not lose patience and courage.
37. There are many thieves in the *wada*. Bolt all the doors and be vigilant. They will rob you of all your possessions and attack you ferociously.
38. Wealth is not permanent and the body, that is always transient. Knowing that death is always present, behave according to the *Shastras* and remain awake to your '*dharma*'.
39. In this world if one has pride about body, wife, children etc., it leads to three-fold calamities. This is misery on account of wordly existence.

40. The second calamity relates to the desire for the realm of heaven. Those who desire the other world, for them that also is a hindrance to attain self-realisation. They are always dejected.
41. There (that is, in the other world) is no accumulation of merits so there is no fearlessness. There is a fear of a fall when the store of good deeds comes to an end.
42. Therefore, enjoyment of both, this world and the next is disastrous. Complete renunciation of both is needed to derive eternal bliss.
43. Those who are fed up with the worldly existence and have surrendered at the feet of the Lord, the knots of their attachment are loosened and the hold of ignorance is removed.
44. When one is unfailingly involved in singing the Lord's Name, the sins, sufferings and poverty disappear. The Lord runs and helps him who meditates on him with love and affection.
45. Your store of past merits is considerable, so you have come here. Now attend to what I say and realise the greater purpose of life.
46. From tomorrow start reading the Bhagvat, truly. Do three readings during three consecutive weeks, conscientiously.
47. Being desireless, hear that book or read it with concentration, and contemplate on it night and day.
48. The Lord will be pleased and bring to an end all your sorrows. Illusions and attachments will disappear and you will attain great happiness.
49. After performing your ablutions, concentrating on the Lord, complete this vow that I have told you and you will be free from attachments".
50. When his own end was nearing, Baba had arranged the reading of *Ram Vijay*, which pleases the Lord of Death.
51. The next day in the morning, after completing the ablutions and his bath, he offered Baba a handful of flowers and took the dust of his feet on his head.
52. Carrying the *Bhagvat* under his arm he looked for a quiet place to read and found Lendi Baug, peaceful and most suitable.
53. He sat cross-legged and started the reading. Being a *Sanyasi*, love of God was in his nature and he completed two readings in two weeks.
54. When he started the third reading he suddenly felt uneasy. He felt a weakness which increased. So he left that unfinished.

55. He returned to the wada and was very ill for two days. When the third day dawned, Buva did not open his eyes.
56. And placing his head on fakir Baba's lap, the *Sanyasi* breathed his last. He was released from the body.
57. When Baba was informed about the *Sanyasi's* death, he instructed to keep the body for a day.
58. "Do not bury him immediately", said Baba. So the people hoped that he would return to life and protected the body.
59. Does life come again once a person is dead? But, in obedience to Baba's words, the body was taken care of.
60. Ultimately, the words proved correct. The unclaimed body was taken care of. The doubts of the police were removed (when they made an inquiry). But, there was no question of his coming to life again.
61. Did Baba not know that the dead body would not regain life! The only purpose was that there should be an inquiry before burying the body.
62. Since the government is responsible for the disposal of an unclaimed corpse, a sudden death is always investigated. Therefore, Baba had instructed not to bury the body before hand.
63. So be it. Later, everything happened. The last rites were performed over the body and it was buried at a proper place. The saint's work was completed. (That is, of giving liberation to the *Sanyasi*.)
64. Here is another similar story, which I am going to narrate to the listeners. Listen to it with respectful attention, for a while. You will realise Sai's pervasiveness.
65. A householder, named Balaram Mankar, was a great devotee of Baba.
66. But, later, his wife died and there was an interruption in the performance of his duties as a householder. He lost peace of mind but he progressed towards the highest bliss.
67. Because of the accumulation of good deeds in the previous births, he got attached to Sai's feet. He developed unflinching faith there and was completely detached from his worldly ties.
68. Breaking all his ties with hopes, desires, children and family, Mankar due to his uncommon fate, left the worldly existence.
69. The main obstacle in entering the gate of spirituality is the desire to earn a livelihood and care for others. He

placed this burden on his son and locked himself away from worldly concerns. (And went to Shirdi.)

70. This too is a kind of *Sanyas*, of which there are many varieties. But that which is not born of knowledge, and thus impressed in the mind, leads to difficulties at every step.
71. Therefore, this Sai, Generosity Incarnate, considering Mankar's singular devotion felt like gracing him and ensured that his detachment was strengthened.
72. The overlay of impressions of an infinite number of births do not allow the fickle mind to become steady. The waves of fond dreams are powerful and detachment is not firmly rooted.
73. "Shirdi alone is not my abode. I am beyond the limits of time and space". To prove this Baba ordered Mankar thus:
74. "You have stayed in Shirdi long enough. Take these twelve rupees, in cash, for expenses. Go to Macchindar Gad for penance. Stay there determined to achieve happiness".
75. Hearing these words of Sai and, and deciding to obey his orders, he bowed his head. Making an eight-fold prostration, he paid obeisance at his feet.
76. But with great humility Balaram said to Sai: "What should I do in a place where I cannot have your *darshan*?"
77. Here I have the *darshan* of your feet daily, and obtain the *tirth* of the washings of your feet and can meditate on you day and night, without any effort. I shall be a destitute there.
78. Therefore, without you Baba, how can I achieve my welfare there? I am incapable of understanding your idea in sending me to that place".
79. But knowing that a devotee should never doubt, not even for a fraction of a second, his Guru's words, he felt immediate remorse and Mankar's doubts vanished.
80. He said: "Baba forgive me. My thoughts were base. I am ashamed that I had doubts. Doubts do not befit me.
81. Ever under your command, absorbed in chanting the Lord's name, I will stay at the Gad only with protection of your power.
82. There also I will meditate upon you, I will remember your merciful image, I will think only of your feet. This will always be my penance.

83. I am totally surrendered to you. I have entrusted all my movements into your hands. Then why should I get this thought in my mind?
84. Because of the power of your command, I will get peace there also. When I know your capability, why should I unnecessarily worry?"
85. Sai *Samartha* is Brahman Eternal. His words are as unalterable as those written by Brahma. Whosoever believes in them, will experience this.
86. Then Baba said to him: "Be attentive and listen to my words. Do not labour under any doubts.
87. Go to Macchindar Gad immediately. Practise meditation thrice daily. After some passage of time, you will have heavenly bliss".
88. Hearing this assurance, Mankar remained silent. "What shall I say, who is the humble one?" He prepared for his departure to the Gad.
89. Once again, bowing down at Sai's feet and receiving udi and blessings, Mankar then left for Macchindar Gad with a calm mind.
90. Arriving at that pleasant place, where there was pure, clean water and cool breezes, he felt contented.
91. So this Mankar, as directed by Sai, remained at the Gad without Sai. He practised meditation as was told and advised.
92. Then, see Baba's marvel! When Mankar was deep in meditation he was given *darshan* in person at the Gad, and he had an experience.
93. There is nothing surprising in having *darshan* in the 'Samadhi' state of meditation. But this happened when he was still seated and about to get up from the meditation. He saw *Sree Samartha*.
94. Not only did he see him, but Balakram asked him in person: "Baba why did you send me here?" Hear what reply he gave.
95. "While you were in Shirdi, you had many ideas and many waves of thoughts arose. Therefore, for quietening your fickle mind, I sent you to the Gad.
96. You thought that I was in Shirdi, with a body composed of the five elements and three and a half cubits in length, and not outside it.

97. Now you see and determine for yourself whether the person you see here is the same as you saw in Shirdi. It is for this reason that I sent you here".
98. So be it. Then, this Mankar after the completion of the specified time was over, left Macchindar Gad to go to his home.
99. He felt like going to Baule, where he lived. So he decided to travel by train from Pune to Dadar.
100. He went to the Pune station. When the time came for buying the ticket and he was at the ticket-window, then a miracle happened.
101. An unknown traveller with a loin cloth round his waist and a rough blanket on his shoulder, with the appearance of being a rustic, was seen near the ticket-window.
102. This rustic had just bought a ticket for Dadar, when turning from the window, his eyes encountered those of Mankar's. So he approached him.
103. He asked: "Where are you going?" and when told "Dadar", he gave the ticket immediately saying: "you take it".
104. "I too was going to Dadar but I have remembered some important work for which I have to stay here. Hence I cannot leave".
105. Tickets were not easily available even after payment. When it was offered without making any effort, Mankar was very pleased.
106. Then, when he took out the money from his pocket to pay the fare, the rustic had pushed into the crowd and it could not be discovered where he had disappeared.
107. Balakram made all efforts to find the rustic but they were all in vain. By that time the train came.
108. 'Who was this rustic, bare footed and bare bodied, carrying just a rough blanket and wearing a tattered cloth round his head?
109. The money for the fare was not a small amount either and he paid for it in cash from his own pocket! Why has he put me under this obligation? I am unable to understand it!
110. He was generous and selfless. Who can this be appearing as a rustic?' This event ultimately remained a mystery. Mankar was disturbed.
111. With all these questions working in his mind, he kept on standing near the door of the compartment till the train moved, in the hope of sighting him.

112. But as the train started to move and he lost all hope of meeting him, he caught the handle of the door and jumped into the train.
113. Meeting Baba personally at the Gad, and now this was another strange incident! Recalling the rustic's peculiar apparel, Mankar felt restless.
114. So be it. Later this faithful devotee returned to Shirdi for his welfare at Sai's feet with singular attachment, firm faith and devotion.
115. The devotee Balakramji stayed in Shirdi, buzzing around the dust particles at the lotus feet of Sai, constantly humming the name of Sai.
116. With Baba's permission and in the company of Muktaramji, sometimes he left Shirdi and travelled elsewhere.
117. But Shirdi was the main place to which he returned time and again. At last he died on the sacred soil of Shirdi.
118. What a store of merits must be his, when a man leaves his mortal coil in the presence of Sai and with his mind concentrated on his feet! For him, death is without fear.
119. Blessed was Tatyá Noolkar! And blessed was the great devotee Megha! who ultimately breathed their last in Shirdi, while worshipping Sai.
120. When Megha died see the importance given by Baba for his cremation, and Baba's affection towards the devotee. Megha was already gratified.
121. Accompanied by all the devotees, the villagers went in procession to the cremation ground. Baba also went to the cremation ground, showering flowers on Megha.
122. After Megha's last rites Baba's eyes also filled with tears. Like an ordinary being, with all attachments, he was full of grief.
123. With love, Baba covered the body, with his own hands, with plentiful flowers. After lamenting the death with pitiful tones, he returned.
124. Many Saints have been observed to grant salvation to human beings, but how can one adequately describe Sai Baba's greatness in this respect!
125. Can a fierce animal like a tiger have intelligence like a human being? Yet, even he became humble at his feet. Indescribable are Baba's actions!
126. Listen to an interesting story illustrating this, with careful attention. You will then realise Baba's all-

pervasive nature and the same concern that he had for all living beings.

127. A miracle happened once in Shirdi. Seven days before Baba's *Mahanirvan*, a bullock cart came to the door of the courtyard and stood there.
128. In it was a huge tiger, tightly tied with a chain round his neck, with its fierce face facing the back.
129. The tiger was suffering from some disease. His owners who were *dervishes* having failed to cure him so far, decided to bring him to a Saint, which is the best and last resort.
130. There were three *dervishes* and the tiger was the means of their livelihood. By exhibiting him, from village to village, they earned their bread.
131. While they were in the vicinity, they heard of Baba's '*leelas*' and decided to have *darshan* along with the tiger. They said: "Let us go and take darshan, and take the tiger also.
132. His feet are like the wish - fulfilling gem; the eight *siddhis* prostrate at his feet; the nine - *nidhis* roll at his feet; and take the *tirth* from the washings of his feet.
133. Let us go and place our heads at his feet and ask blessings for the tiger. All of us will achieve our welfare, if we are favoured with his words of blessings".
134. For this purpose, those *dervishes* made the tiger get down near the door of the *Masjid*. Holding the chain firmly they stood waiting at the door.
135. To begin with, the tiger was very fierce and frightful. Moreover it was ridden with an incurable malady. Therefore it was very restless. Everyone was watching fascinated.
136. The *dervishes* told Baba about the condition of the tiger in detail and after getting Baba's consent came to the door to fetch him.
137. Securing his chain tighter lest he should break loose, they brought him before Baba with care.
138. When the tiger came near the steps, seeing Sai's divine effulgence, it is difficult to explain, why he was taken aback and hung his head down with great reverence.
139. Then, observe the miracle! As the tiger climbed the steps, and they saw each other, the tiger looked at Baba with love.
140. It fluffed the tuft of its tail and thrashed the ground thrice with it. Then fell lifeless at Sai's feet.

141. He gave just one mighty roar and fell down dead at that very spot. The people were surprised that the tiger had died.
142. The *dervishes* were at first much dejected. But later, they seemed glad that this diseased animal, who was expected to die, had attained a release.
143. Death in the presence of Saints and Sages is immensely meritorious, whether it be a worm, an insect or a tiger. All their sins are pardoned.
144. "This tiger must have been indebted to us in the past life, which he repaid and became free of debt. He died at the feet of Sai. Wonderful are the workings of fate!"
145. Anyone who dies while placing the head at the feet of a Saint, he gets himself delivered and gains the benefits of a lifetime.
146. Unless one is very fortunate, can one merely leave the body in the presence of a Saint? He will attain salvation.
147. It is immense bliss to leave one's body in the presence of a Saint. Even the poison becomes nectar. Death is a pleasure and not a sorrow.
148. One who dies, in the presence of and at the feet of a Saint, is blessed and is merged with God, never to be born again.
149. Dying in the presence of Saints is not death but the bliss of heaven. He has won the transient world and has no worry about re-birth.
150. One who leaves the body in the presence of Saints does not return to this world. All the sins are pardoned, by that, and he is rescued.
151. One who dies looking at a Saint, from the head to his toe nails, can that be called death? It is true self-realisation.
152. Considering the earlier life's achievements, this tiger must have been a virtuous person; but while showing off his pedantic pride slighted some great devotee of God.
153. On account of his (devotee's) curse, he took birth in this cruel form. But by the mitigation of the curse, he came to Sai' feet. Strange are the ways of the great devotees!
154. It appears that the curse was mitigated. His sins were destroyed by Sai's *darshan*. His bondage was broken, his penance was done and he gained salvation effortlessly.
155. Unless one has perfect blessings (good fortune), how can one die in the presence of a saint? The three fold affliction, the trio of your object and action, and the three gunas are annihilated. He becomes formless.

156. Thus, because of the merits of past life, he was freed from the bondage of this cruel body and also from the iron chains. This can only be God's decision.
157. If not at the feet of Saints and Sages, where else could there be salvation? When this tiger attained it, the dervishes were pleased.
158. The tiger was their means of livelihood and also the means of sustaining their families. Therefore, when this tiger died, the dervishes felt sad, also.
159. The dervishes asked *Maharaj*: "What should we do now? How should we bury him? Give him salvation with your own hand".
160. *Maharaj* said: "Do not grieve. He was destined to die here. He was very meritorious and has now achieved great happiness.
161. Beyond that *Takkia*, where there is the Shiva temple, take him there and bury him, near *Nandi*.
162. If you bury him, he will get salvation. He will be freed from your debt and attachment at your hands only.
163. Being indebted to you in the past life, he has taken this birth to repay your debt. Therefore, he remained your captive till to-day".
164. Then the dervishes picked him up and went towards the temple. They buried him behind the *Nandi*.
165. What a miracle happened! How did the tiger suddenly die? If only this much had happened, the people would have forgotten.
166. But, only seven days after this Baba himself left the mortal coil. Because of that, the memory of this incident arises often.
167. The next chapter is more interesting than this. Baba himself tells about the marvels of his Guru to satisfy Gokhale Bai's wishes and to grant her grace.
168. Hemad surrenders to Sai. Listen to how Baba attained the grace of his Guru, who hanged him upside down over a well.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-first chapter of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by the Saints and virtuous people, called the "The Greatness of *Darshan*".

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



Tatyasaheb Nulkar

Blessed was Tatya Noolkar! And blessed was the great devotee Megha! who ultimately breathed their last in Shirdi, while worshipping Sai. (Ch. 31, ovi 119)