

## The Erasure of Doubts and Misapprehensions and the Embellishment of Vibhuti

*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. Previously, in the last chapter, I had indicated the stories I would narrate. I will now enlarge upon them. Listen to them with patience.
2. Pride of sectarianism is the greatest obstacle on the path of spirituality. There is no other danger greater than this pride.
3. “We are the worshippers of the formless. A deity with form creates confusion in the mind of a person. *Sadhus* and saints are human beings only. Why should we bow to them?”
4. “We should not prostrate ourselves before them. We should not offer them *dakshina* or alms. This would be a mockery of devotion”.
5. Many people spread numerous stories about Shirdi expressing different views. We cannot believe all of them.
6. Some said that when they went for *darshan*, Sai Baba asked for *dakshina*. If a *sadhu* amasses wealth, his saintly nature loses its quality.
7. Some said that blind faith is not good. One should decide after getting a specific experience, as to how one should behave.
8. “We will not offer *dakshina*. One who has desire to get money, cannot be considered to be a holy person, and is not worthy of respect.
9. “But we will go to Shirdi and return after meeting him. We will not bow at his feet nor will we offer *dakshina*”.
10. All those who left their homes with these evil thoughts and firmly decided to stick to their resolutions, ultimately even they surrendered to Sai on taking *darshan*.

11. Whoever came to see Sai stayed on with him and never again turned his back, getting attached at Sai's feet.
12. Such a person also bowed at his feet in the same way as those who have surrendered to him, with full faith and humility, forgetting his early resolution.
13. Where pride on account of sectarianism is discarded, there will be immense happiness. Such is this thirty-fifth chapter, which the listeners should hear with respect.
14. Similarly there is a suggestion about the importance of *udi*; and the experience of Bala Nevaskar with a snake and how he gave it loving treatment, considering it to be none else but Sai.
15. Listeners, have mercy on me. I am only an obedient servant, who knows to obey the instructions respectfully. In doing this, *Satcharita* has come into being, word for word.
16. As I gaze at his feet, waves of stanzas flow into my mind with which I fill the earthen pot of this holy biography, on and oft.
17. We are the young ones of the mother tortoise who have been nurtured merely by the glance, and never left hungry or thirsty but always kept contented.
18. Basking in the happiness of the glance, we need no food or water. The glance satisfies hunger and thirst. How can I describe that marvel!
19. Sairaya, the ocean of mercy, is the sole object of our sight. That which is seen, one that sees and the act of seeing – all these three are completely eliminated.
20. Similarly, it is only the light of Sai which we feel on our skin and to our touch; and Sai's abode is in our sense of smell.
21. Or, when one listens to any word, Sai's image is immediately evoked. That which is listened to, the listener and the act of listening – all these three are completely eliminated.
22. Or, when the tongue savours any flavour, it is blended with Sai. Where then is the tongue, the flavour or the experience of the flavour? This is a pitiful three-fold enigma.
23. If this is the state of all the senses and they serve only Sai, all the bad actions will be destroyed and will be freed from the fruits of action.
24. Enough. Now this book is getting lengthened on account of love for Sai – whereby we are digressing. Let us recall the previous narration and continue with our story.

25. A person, who did not believe in worshipping the form and was a staunch believer in the formless, desired to go to Shirdi out of sheer curiosity.
26. He said: “After coming to Shirdi, I will only take the *sadhu*’s darshan. I will never bow or offer *dakshina*.”
27. “If you accept these two conditions, then I will come with you to Shirdi”. When his friend agreed, he got ready to leave, happily, with his friend.
28. Kaka Mahajani was his friend, who had a pure devotion towards the saints. Yet he had a friend, who was subject to doubts and scepticism.
29. Both left Bombay on a Saturday night and arrived at Shirdi on Sunday morning.
30. Both went to the *Masjid* for taking Sai’s *darshan*. Listen peacefully to what happened at that time.
31. Looking at his friend from a distance, as they were climbing the steps, Baba spoke in a sweet voice: “Oh, you have come! Welcome!”
32. Hearing these loving words, the friend realised that the manner of intonation of the words was like his father’s of whom he was reminded.
33. “Oh, you have come! Welcome!” when Kaka’s friend heard these words and the tone in which Baba spoke them, he was surprised.
34. Hearing the enticing tone and manner of speech he was reminded of his late father. This was completely his manner of speaking! He felt it was the exact remembrance.
35. How enticing was the power of these words! Kaka’s friend was amazed, and said to himself: “These are my father’s words definitely. The tone is certainly recognisable”.
36. Hearing these words, as if spoken by his father, the friend was overcome with emotion. He bowed his head at Baba’s feet, forgetting his earlier resolution.
37. Later, Baba asked for *dakshina* but only from Kaka, which Kaka gave. They returned to their lodging and went again to the *Masjid* in the afternoon.
38. They went there together. As both had to return to Bombay, Kaka asked for permission, whereupon Baba asked for *dakshina*.
39. And that too only from Kaka. He said: “Give me seventeen rupees”, and asked for nothing from the friend. So he was internally disturbed.
40. Then he asked Kaka softly, “Why does he ask for *dakshina* only

- from you? In the morning too, he asked you only; and now also, he is asking from you only.
41. Though I am with you, why does he omit me in respect of the *dakshina* ?” Kaka whispered the reply: “Ask this of Baba only”.
  42. At that moment Baba spoke to Kaka: “What is he saying to you?” Then the friend himself spoke and asked Baba : “May I give you *dakshina* ?”
  43. Then Baba replied : “You had no intention to give, so I did not ask it of you. If you desire to give, then do give”.
  44. That friend had ridiculed the devotees who gave *dakshina* when Baba asked. Therefore, Kaka was surprised that the same person was offering to give, unasked.
  45. As soon as Baba said “give if you so desire”, his friend hurriedly paid up seventeen rupees and placed them at his feet, unasked.
  46. Then Baba said to him: “Where is the hurry? Sit for a moment”. He then gave him valuable instruction, to remove the difference between ‘you and me’.
  47. “Pull down the oil-monger’s wall<sup>1</sup> between us, totally, so that the road is widened to enable us to meet each other”.
  48. Then, they were given permission to leave. Seeing the cloudy sky, Madhavrao feared that rain would make them wet.
  49. Baba replied to him: “Let them go, free of worry. They need not fear rain at all, on their way”.
  50. Bowing at Sai’s feet both of them took the carriage. There was a heavy fog and lightning. The Godavari was in spate.
  51. The sky roared with thunder. Though they had to take a ferry, Kaka had full faith, having been assured by Baba.
  52. But his friend was worried as to how the journey would be safe. He regretted that they left and felt that there would be trouble on the way.
  53. Enough. They went forward safely. They entered the train and thereafter it began to pour. They reached Bombay without any fear.
  54. When he came home and opened the doors and windows, one sparrow which was caught inside flew out. However, he found two dead.
  55. He felt very sad to see this sight. “O Lord, they have lost their lives due to thirst and starvation!
  56. “When I left for Shirdi, if I had left the windows open, they would not have died. The poor creatures died because of me.

57. “It is as if Baba was worried about the one who flew away now. Therefore, he happily granted his permission to leave to-day itself.
58. “Otherwise it would have died also. How could it have survived without food? It remained safe while the other two met their lot as per their destiny”.
59. Another experience of his is also worth listening to. He used to suffer from pain in the heel of one of his feet, since months.
60. Before going to Shirdi, he had suffered from this trouble for many months. After he returned from there, he was relieved from pain and it disappeared in a very short time.
61. Similarly there is another story where a person who goes in search of a saint and has to put his head down in obeisance at the feet, though he had no intention to do so. Listen to it.
62. Also, when one does not wish to give *dakshina* because one is caught in the illusion of worldly objects, how one ends up giving *dakshina* despite one’s firm resolve.
63. Dharamsi Jethabhai Thakkar, a solicitor from Bombay wished to meet Sai because of some earlier merits.
64. He was the employer of Mahajani. Both of them were on intimate terms. He felt like going to Shirdi and personally meeting him.
65. Kaka (Mahajani) was the Manager of Thakkarji’s firm. Taking advantage of holidays, on and oft, Kaka used to get ready to go to Shirdi.
66. Did Kaka return on time? He stayed sometimes at Shirdi for eight days at a time and explained that he did not receive Sai’s permission to return. Is this a way to work?
67. ‘What kind of a saint is he? I do not approve of this kind of profession of saintliness.’ The Sheth left during the Holi holidays to find out who this Sai was!
68. His ego and his pride in his profession and position were enormous. ‘After all saints are human beings! Why should one bow to them?’ This is what he felt.
69. *Shastris* and *Pandits* got exhausted and accepted defeat before Sai’s authority. Therefore, what chance did poor Dharamsi have there! And how far could he stick to his resolution?
70. ‘But it is not good to have blind faith; let me go and ascertain for myself.’ With this determination, he made preparations to go to Shirdi.



Kaka Mahajani

71. Dharamsi also laid down conditions, described in the foregoing verses, as the other friend of Kaka. He left along with Kaka and told him:
72. “On this trip it will not do for you to go to Shirdi and stay there. You must return with me. Know that for sure”.
73. Then Kaka replied: “This is not in our hands”. Therefore, Dharamsi took one more person with him, to go on the way.
74. In case Kaka did not return, it would be difficult for him not to have a companion so he took a third person and all three of them left for Shirdi.
75. In the world, there are so many kinds of persons who are obliging to the devotees. Baba pulls them (to Shirdi) to remove their doubts.
76. And when they returned they narrated their experiences to others. They even got them written down by some one else, so that the people could take to the true path.
77. In short, whoever went to Shirdi were filled with happiness by the *darshan*. Irrespective of their initial state of mind, they had supreme bliss in the end.
78. They said that they had a love for curiosity and, therefore, went on their own there. But in fact, the position was different. They served Baba’s purpose.
79. Baba himself gives them the inspiration to step out. He puts them on the spiritual path by making them aware of their natural instincts.
80. Who knows his skills and ways? If one tries, it would be inviting misfortune. So leaving aside your ego, prostrate at his feet and enjoy the feast of happiness.
81. It is not good to go empty handed to a temple, brahmin or Guru. Therefore, Kaka bought two seers of grapes on the way.
82. He had wanted to buy the seedless variety of grapes but he could only get ones with seeds at that time. So Kaka bought those.
83. So be it. Chatting away happily, the trio arrived in Shirdi. All the three together went to the *Masjid* for Baba’s *darshan*.
84. The devotee, Babasaheb Tarkhad, was also present there. Listen to what Sheth Dharamsi asked him out of curiosity.
85. “What is here? Why do you come?” Tarkhad answered: “For *darshan*”. Sheth said: “I have heard that miracles take place here”.
86. Then Tarkhad replied to him: “Well, this is not my feeling. But the earnest intentions of the devotees are satisfied here”.
87. Kaka placed his head on Baba’s feet and offered the grapes to Baba. The distribution began, as there was a large congregation.

88. Then, together with the others, Baba gave some to Dharamsi also. But he did not like this variety. He loved the seedless ones.
89. He had an aversion to this kind of grapes. Thus, an obstacle arose right at the beginning. He did not feel like eating them. But to refuse them was also difficult.
90. Moreover, the doctor had prohibited him from eating them without washing them first. He did not feel it proper for himself alone to wash them. Innumerable doubts arose.
91. Finally, he put them as they were in the mouth and after munching on them slowly, separated the seeds and put them in his pocket. This was the holy abode of a saint and he could not defile it.
92. Then the Sheth thought: ‘Being a saint, how does he not know that I dislike these grapes? Why has he forcibly given them to me?’
93. No sooner than these thoughts had arisen, Baba gave him more of these. Knowing that they were the variety with seeds, he held them in his hand only and did not put them in the mouth.
94. It is true that he did not like grapes with seeds. But Baba had given them in his hands. Sheth Dharamsi was disturbed and did not know what to do.
95. He did not feel like putting them in his mouth, therefore, he carefully held them in his fist. Then Baba said : “Go on, eat them”. The Sheth obeyed his instructions.
96. Dharamsi put them in his mouth when Baba said: “Eat them” But he found all of them seedless. He was greatly wonderstruck.
97. When he found them all seedless, Dharamsi being perplexed, thought to himself: ‘Strange powers! What is impossible for these saints!
98. “Knowing my intentions and the grapes being with seeds and unwashed, whichever ones Sai gave me, they were seedless and good for me.’
99. He was amazed. He forgot his doubts. His pride dissolved. He developed great love for the saint.
100. His earlier resolutions disappeared. Love for Sai arose in his heart. The eagerness with which he came to Shirdi was vindicated, without a doubt.
101. Baba Tarkhad was also there, sitting near Baba. Baba Sai gave him some grapes from the same lot.
102. Then Dharamsi asked him “what kind of grapes did you get?” and when Tarkhad replied that they were with seeds, he was very much surprised.

103. By this, he believed that he was a saint. But he got an idea to get a confirmation. He thought 'If you are a real saint, then this time let the distribution begin with Kaka'.
104. Baba was distributing to many. But when this thought occurred to the Shethji, Baba started to distribute from Kaka. The Sheth was greatly amazed.
105. Such indications of saintliness, such powers to read the mind, were sufficient for Dharamsi's mind, to accept Sai as a saint.
106. Madhavrao who was there, then told Baba: "This is Kaka's master", by way of an explanation and introduction.
107. "How could he be Kaka's Master? He has another Master", was Baba's clear reply. Kaka appreciated this reply.
108. And, another surprise! There was a cook, by the name of Appa, who was standing near the *dhuni*. Baba gave him the credit.
109. He said: "This Shethji has not taken the trouble to come here for me! His love for Appa overflowed<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, he has come to Shirdi".
110. This way the conversation ended. Dharamsi forgot his resolution. On his own, he fell at Baba's feet. Then he returned to the *wada*.
111. So be it. The noon *arati* was over. They prepared for their departure. The time came for taking Baba's permission. So the group went back to the *Masjid*.
112. Then Dharamsi said to Kaka: "I will not ask for permission. You ask for it, as you need it". Then Madhavrao remarked.
113. "Kaka cannot be sure of his departure. Unless a week is over, he will not be given permission. Why don't you ask yourself?"
114. Afterwards when the three of them reached and sat down, Madhavrao asked for permission on their behalf. Baba began relating a story. Listen to it with a calm mind.
115. "There was a fickle-minded man. He was prosperous. He was free from physical and mental afflictions. But he took on him needless anxieties.
116. "He carried upon himself unnecessary burdens. He wandered hither and thither, and had no peace of mind. Sometimes he dropped the burdens and at other times carried them again. His mind knew no steadiness.
117. "Seeing his state, I took pity on him and said: 'Keep your faith in any one place.
118. "Why do you unnecessarily roam like this? Stick quietly to one place".



- This story touched a sore point of Dharamsi. He realised that this was an indication to him only.
119. In spite of having adequate wealth and prosperity, and without having the slightest of reason, Dharamsi was always worried and felt disturbed unnecessarily.
  120. He had enough money and honour, but he was not contented. He was burdened with deep, imaginary problems and always got lost in them.
  121. Hearing this story from Sai, the Shethji was extremely surprised. ‘This is the state of my mind’, he thought and listened with great respect.
  122. It was a chance in a million for Kaka to get permission to leave early, but when he got that also, Dharamsi was very contented.
  123. It was Dharamsi’s deep desire that Kaka should leave with him. This also was fulfilled by Baba, by giving his consent to leave.
  124. How did Baba come to know that this was also one of the conditions of Shethji? Dharamsi strangely accepted it that this was also one of the characteristics of saintliness.
  125. All doubts were removed, and it was clear that Sai was a saint. Baba gave experiences, which depended upon each one’s thoughts.
  126. Whatever path one desires to take, he is helped on that very path. Sai is aware of the qualifications and worth of one and accordingly one attains spiritual progress.
  127. Irrespective of whether a devotee is full of faith or mocking, Sai is equally merciful to both. This loving Mother did not differentiate between the two.
  128. Then, when both of them were about to leave, Baba asked for fifteen rupees as *dakshina* from Kaka and on his own said to Kaka :
  129. “If anyone has given me one rupee as *dakshina*, I have to give ten times more in return, accurately.
  130. “I never take anything from anyone gratis. I do not ask all and sundry. I only take *dakshina* from those to whom the Fakir points out.
  131. “The Fakir asks from only those to whom He is indebted. The giver sows the seeds, by giving, and later reaps the harvest.
  132. “Wealth should be used only for righteous purposes. If wealth is so spent then only it is beneficial. By righteousness, true knowledge is attained.
  133. “This wealth which has been accumulated by hard labour is

- sometimes believed to be utilised only for one's own pleasures. Instead of using this wealth for righteous purposes, it is wasted.
134. "One who amasses wealth to the tune of crores of rupees, by saving pie after pie, but never spends that wealth for the fulfilment of sensual pleasures, such a person is happy".
135. Everyone is fully aware of the *shruti* which says that "Unless one gives, one does not receive". Unless you have given earlier you do not get it now. Therefore, Baba asked for *dakshina*.
136. During Ram Avatar, Raghunandan gave innumerable idols of women in gold to gain sixteen thousand wives in the Krishna Avatar.
137. A devotee is truly impoverished who does not have devotion, knowledge and non-attachment. Such a person is first taught and established in non-attachment, and then given devotion and knowledge.
138. When Baba asks for *dakshina* it is the sign of non-attachment. Later on by placing the devotee on the path of devotion, makes him reach excellence in attainment of knowledge.
139. "What do I do after all? Take one and give ten-fold. Step by step I put one on the path of knowledge". Baba said. This created an intense desire in Dharamsi.
140. On his own, he placed fifteen rupees in Baba's hands, totally forgetting his earlier resolve. The whole incident was unparalleled.
141. He felt that he had earlier been unnecessarily boastful. He felt glad that he had come personally so that he learnt what saints are like and with experience got attached to him.
142. 'If I had not made those resolutions, I would not have come to pay respect. That too, I came on my own! The saints' ways are inexplicable!
143. 'How can anything be impossible for him who has *Allah-Malik* forever on his tongue! I was anxious to witness a miracle of the saint.
144. 'My resolutions were in vain. I prostrated before a human being and also gave him *dakshina* unasked, on my own.
145. 'In vain was my pride. On my own, I placed my head at Sai's feet with devotion. What more could be amazing!'
146. How can I describe this skill of Sai! Though he was instrumental in doing all this, he outwardly remained uninvolved. What can be more surprising than this?
147. Whether anyone bowed to him or not, or whether anyone gave him *dakshina* or not, Sai, the Cloud of Mercy, and the source of happiness, never treated anyone scornfully.

148. He felt no pleasure because he was worshipped; and no pain because he was ridiculed. Where there is no pleasure, there is no pain. His state was beyond duality.
149. Whatever be anyone's intentions, when once granted *darshan*, he made the person develop devotion at his feet. Such was the marvellous power of Sai!
150. Enough. Later after receiving *udi prasad* and blessings, they returned without any doubts. Such was Sai's fame!
151. To depart from Shirdi it was necessary to have Baba's permission. To disobey was to invite trouble.
152. One felt repentant and humiliated if one left on one's own volition. There would be dreadful obstacles on the way which would be difficult to overcome.
153. This was what was said about the departure from Shirdi. This was the same position with me. "None can come here unless I bring him", was what Baba said.
154. "Unless I so desire who can cross his threshold? Who will get *darshan* by his own volition or come to Shirdi?"
155. We can come for *darshan* only when mercy arises in the heart of Sai *Samartha*, the embodiment of mercy, in whose hands rest our lives.
156. If Sai was not inclined, about the coming and the going, he did not grant permission nor gave *udi*.
157. If one went to ask for permission, after bowing down, and was given blessings with the *udi*, it signified permission to leave.
158. Now I shall narrate to the listeners a novel experience about the *udi*. Then about the power of devotion of Nevaskar because of the grace of Sai, the Eminent One.
159. A gentleman from Bandra, Prabhu Kayasth by caste, suffered from insomnia inspite of best of efforts.
160. The moment he was about to get sleep, within no time his departed father came in his dreams and awakened him, every time.
161. Making a reference to whatever good or bad incidents that might have happened in earlier life, and to the secret evil and far-fetched thoughts, he used abusive language and bombarded him with that.
162. Night after night, the same thing happened. Night after night, he lost his sleep. He was depressed. He could not avoid the suffering that was pursuing him.
163. The gentleman was fed up. He could think of no remedy. He consulted a Sai devotee, if there was any relief.

164. “We do not know any other remedy. Sai Maharaj is the Eminent One. If you have the same faith, the *udi* will show its power,” he said.
165. He implicitly followed the instructions that he was given and experienced the power of the *udi* accordingly. He no longer had bad dreams.
166. That friend was a devotee of Sai *Samartha* due to the merits of his past deeds. After narrating to him the strange powers of *udi*, he gave him a little of it.
167. He told him: “When you go to sleep, apply a little on the forehead and put a small packet under pillow. Think of Sree Sai.
168. Have faith. Then experience this *udi*’s power. It will immediately put an end to your trouble. This is the merit of *Udi* ”.
169. After he did as he was instructed, he got deep sleep that night. There was not a trace of that bad dream. The gentleman was very delighted.
170. Then how could that joy of his be described! He kept the packet of *udi* under his pillow always and remembered Sai daily.
171. Later he bought a picture of Baba and put it on the wall at the head of his bed, and garlanded it every Thursday. He respectfully worshipped it.
172. He began to take *darshan* of the picture; offered garlands on Thursdays, remembered Sai daily. His troubles ceased altogether.
173. He continued to have faith and carried out his practices strictly. He had abiding welfare. He totally forgot his earlier troubles of insomnia and bad dreams.
174. This is one example of the effectiveness of *udi*. I will narrate another unique experience. If the *udi* is used for any kind of problem, it will bring unalloyed well-being.
175. Balaji Patil Nevaskar was a great devotee. He rendered excellent and disinterested service and wore away his body for Baba.
176. Nevaskar’s regular task was to sweep all the passages and streets in Shirdi through which Baba passed in his daily routine, including the round to the Lendi.
177. The tradition of the service was continued after him by Radhakrishnabai<sup>3</sup>. She was excellent in this work.
178. By caste a Brahmin, respected by all, she never in her innocent heart had the wicked thought that this was a lowly task.
179. Getting up early in the morning, taking the broom in her hand, she would sweep all the paths used by Baba. Blessed was her service!

180. Her work was clean and quick. Who else would be able to compete with her? After some time, Abdul<sup>4</sup> came forward.
181. That Patil (Nevaskar) was very fortunate. Though he lived in the world, he was not attached to it. How unselfish he was! Listen to that part of the story.
182. After harvesting, he brought all the grain to the *Masjid* and making a pile of it in the open space, he offered it at Baba's feet.
183. Firmly believing that Baba was the owner of everything, he lived on whatever Baba gave to him out of it, taking that much only back home.
184. Bala drank only the water that came from the channel after Maharaj had his bath or washed his hands and feet.
185. He continued these practices till his death. Even to-day, his loving son carries on with the same, to some extent.
186. He too sent the grains regularly. From that Maharaj had *jowar*<sup>5</sup> *bhakri*, four times a day, until his *Mahanirvan*.
187. Enough. Observe what happened once. It was Bala's death anniversary. Food was cooked and ready; and the servants began to serve it.
188. The food was cooked at home on the approximate basis of the expected guests. But when serving the food, it was estimated that the people were thrice the number expected.
189. Mrs. Nevaskar<sup>6</sup> was worried. She began to whisper to her mother-in-law: "We are going to be disgraced to-day. How could it be avoided?"
190. The mother-in-law had great faith. "When Sai *Samartha* is our support, why should we worry? You remain calm," she said.
191. After the mother-in-law assured her thus, she took a handful of *udi* and put a little in each of the food containers and then covered the containers with cloth.
192. She said: "You go and distribute without care. Remove the cloth covering partially only to enable you to distribute. Draw the cloth over it again, as earlier. Remember to do this without fail.
193. This is food from Sai's home. Not even a grain is ours. He alone will ensure that we are not put to shame. If it falls short, it will be his responsibility".
194. The mother-in-law got the experience just as she had resolved. Without any difficulty, all the guests and others had the meal.
195. Whoever had come, ate. Everything happened as desired. Yet the food remained in the containers which were as full as in the beginning.

196. Such is the power of the *udi*. It is the nature of the saints to help. One experiences as one has faith.
197. Enough. While narrating the greatness of the *udi*, I am reminded of another story of Nevaskar regarding his immense faith. Listen to it.
198. At one point, I had a doubt that this would mean a digression. Whatever it may be I felt like narrating it according to the circumstances.
199. Resolving thus, I am relating the story at this juncture. If you consider it inappropriate, the listeners should pardon me.
200. Once Raghu Patil of Shirdi went as a guest to Nevasa and stopped over at Nevaskar's home.
201. One night when the cattle had been tied up, with a strong rope to an iron nail fixed in the ground, a poisonous snake entered the cowshed hissing, all of a sudden.
202. Everyone was dumbfounded on seeing such an incident. The snake spread out its hood and sat fully stretched out.
203. The cattle began to low and clamoured to get out. Nevaskar firmly believed that Sai himself had appeared there.
204. Now there was no alternative but to let the cattle out, in case they stepped on the snake and brought about a calamity.
205. When Nevaskar saw the snake from a distance he was filled with joy, and had horripilation all over his body. He prostrated with all his limbs.
206. He said: "It is Sai's grace that he has come to meet in the form of a snake." He brought a cup full of milk for the snake.
207. How wonderful was the sentiment of Balaji! He did not have an iota of fear. Observe what he said to the snake. Listeners should hear it attentively.
208. "Why, oh Baba! do you hiss and make a noise? Do you want to frighten us? Now have this cup of milk and drink it peacefully".
209. How would a cup be enough! Thinking so, he brought a big vessel full of milk and put it before the snake without any fear. Fear is only in the mind.
210. After putting the milk near the snake, he sat at his earlier place which was neither far nor too near. His face showed wonder about the snake.
211. The appearance of a snake is frightening. All do not think alike. Everyone else was perturbed and wondered how this danger would be averted.

212. There was danger even if they stepped out lest the snake went into the inner part of the house because it would be more difficult to take him out. They all sat keeping a watch.
213. Here, the snake had his fill of the milk. Without anyone noticing he disappeared. Everyone was astonished.
214. Then the whole cowshed was searched, but they found no trace of it. Most of them were relieved but Nevaskar was fretting.
215. If it had been seen leaving, as he had seen it at the beginning, entering the cowshed, he would have been satisfied. This is what was causing him to fret.
216. Bala had two wives and young children. Sometimes they came from Nevasa for *darshan*.
217. Baba bought *saris* and blouse pieces for both of them and gave them these items with his blessings. Such was the devotee Balaji!
218. The path of the *Satcharita* is simple. Wherever it is read, it becomes *Dwarkamayi* and Sai definitely appears there.
219. There itself are the banks of the *Godavari* ; there itself is the nearby pilgrimage place of Shirdi; there itself is Sai together with the *dbhuni* who removes all difficulties, as soon as he is remembered.
220. Where the Sai *Charita* is regularly recited, Sai resides there always. If the *Charita* is repeatedly read with full faith, it pleases him, in all respects.
221. Remembering Sai, the Cloud of Self Bliss, chanting his name daily it is not necessary to practise any other means of prayer and penance or any other ways of meditation.
222. Having love for Sai's feet, all those who apply and ingest Sai's *vibhuti* regularly, they attain all that they desire.
223. They will be fulfilled by attaining all the four goals of life, including righteousness. The deeper meaning of all this will be clear to them, together with the worldly and spiritual matters.
224. By the application of *udi*, great sins including the greatest<sup>7</sup> and lesser sins are totally uprooted and one is purified inwardly and outwardly.
225. The devotees are aware of the greatness of this use of the *vibhuti*. But I have described all this at length for the benefit of the listeners.
226. It is not proper to say that I have lengthened the description because even I do not know the full extent of its greatness. Yet for the benefit of the listeners, I have collected everything and described it.
227. Therefore, this is my only prayer to the listeners – after paying

- obeisance at the feet of Sai, experience the *udi's* greatness yourself. At least, follow my words to this extent.
228. There is no room for doubts and scepticism. One should have great devotion. A wavering mind is not required. One should have supreme faith.
229. Only the critics, the argumentative and the doubters who have no faith are unable to acquire the highest knowledge of saints. Only pure devotees can achieve that.
230. Whatever is missing or additional in the stories, believe that everything is inspired by Sai and read the Sai *Satcharita* without finding faults.
231. In this way, Sai the most compassionate and loving has established his own image in the minds of the interested readers, so that they may always remember him.
232. Where is Goa and where is Shirdi? Sai has openly narrated in detail the story of how a theft happened there, which will please the listeners, in the next chapter.
233. Therefore Hemad places his head at Sai's feet, with his heart and soul, and very humbly requests the listeners to be ready to listen to it respectfully.

May there be well-being! This is the end of the thirty-fifth chapter, of the *Sree Sai Samartha Satcharita*, written by the devotee Hemadpant, impelled by Saints and virtuous people, called "The Erasure of Doubts and Misapprehensions and the Embellishment of *Vibhuti*".

This is offered to Sree Sadguru Sainath.

May there be auspiciousness!

#### Notes :

1. Baba used to often speak about an oil-monger, when he meant a wicked person with evil thoughts.
2. Dharamsi was fond of good food and Baba was referring to this weakness of his.
3. This lady was a Deshasth Brahmin by caste. Her real name was Sunderabai Shirsagar. But whenever she called anybody, she called them "Radhakrishna". Therefore she came to be known as Radhakrishnabai. She always kept a brass image of Balkrishna near her. She kept it with her while bathing, eating, sleeping etc. Sai Baba called her 'Ram Krishni' and daily before he sat down to eat, he sent her two *bhakeris* and some vegetables etc. in the afternoon. She did not step into the *Masjid*. She was a child widow when she came to Shirdi and stayed on to render service to a saint, which she did whole-heartedly. She always sang *bhajans*.



4. He was a staunch devotee of Baba. Abandoning wife, children and home, he lived in Shirdi for Sai's service.
5. Sorghum.
6. This lady possibly was the son's wife, as it is traditionally the son and his wife who observe the anniversary.
7. Such as the killing of a Brahmin, drinking, theft etc.



Getting up early in the morning, taking the broom in her hand, she (Radhakishanmai) would sweep all the paths used by Baba. Blessed was her service! (Ch.35, ovi 179)