

## SHREE RAMVIJAY



**W**hen there were only fourteen days left for Baba's passing away, Baba appointed Vaze to read 'Ramvijay'.

Vaze sat in the *Masjid* and began the reading of the holy book. Baba began to listen to it. Thus eight days passed.

Then Baba ordered that the book be read without a break. So, Vaze read it in this manner, for three days and nights.

He sat for full eleven days. Later he was tired and felt weak. He was exhausted with the reading. In this way three more days passed.

So what did Baba do later ? He stopped the reading. He sent Vaze away from there and kept quiet himself.

Listeners would ask the reason for sending away Vaze. So, hear what I (Hemadpant) am going to explain to the best of my ability. Hear it with concentration.

It is the practice of Saints, Sages and wise people to listen to religious books, when the time for the passing away is near.

*Acharya* Shuka recounted the *Maha Bhagvat* in seven days to king Parikshit, who heard it and attained death happily.

While listening to the '*leelas*' of the Lord and keeping the image of the Lord before one's eyes, if one passes away then one attains the ultimate goal.

This is generally the trend amongst the common people. The Saints practise it themselves without fail. They do not break tradition; because they manifest to protect it.

## SHREEMAD BHAGVAD GITA

**O**nce, Chandorkar, the great devotee was sitting in the *Masjid* pressing Baba's feet, while he muttered the Gita to himself.



He knew by heart the fourth chapter of the *Bhagvad Gita* and used to repeat it, as a habit, while his hands pressed Sai's feet. Now see what a strange thing happened.

Sai *Samartha* had the knowledge of everything - the future, the past and the present. He felt like explaining the essence of the *Gita* to Nana.

Sai, the embodiment of Love and Cloud of Mercy, making Nana an instrument has discoursed on the Gita thus, for your and my (to Hemadpant) and our sake.

## GITA RAHASYA

**O**nce a parcel came for Jog at the Shirdi post-office. In order to receive it, he hurriedly went there.

He found it to contain the commentary of Lokmanya Tilak, named '*Gita Rahasya*'. Carrying it under his arm, he came for the *darshan* to the *Masjid*.

When bowing down his head to pay obeisance, the parcel also fell down at Baba's feet. Baba asked then, "Bapusaheb, what and whose is this ?"





He opened the parcel in his presence, and explained about the book. He placed the parcel in Baba's hands with the book "and Baba looked at it".

Baba took it out (from the parcel) and held it in his hands leafing through the pages. He took out one rupee from his pocket and placed it on the book with admiration.

The book along with the rupee was handed over to Jog and he said : "Read it from the beginning to the end. You will be benefitted."

### SHREE GURU CHARITRA

**T**he person's surname was Sathe. He was of a steadfast nature. He began the recitation of the '*Guru Charitra*' and practised the ritual religiously.

After seven days of reading the book was over. Baba gave him a dream vision that night in which he was holding the book in his hand and was explaining its meaning to Sathe.



Baba sat on his own seat, made Sathe sit in front of him, took the *Guru Charitra* book and expertly explained it to him.

Baba recited from the book and taught like a *puranika*. Sathe listened peacefully and full of respect.

'What is this about-turn in my life ? !' Thought Sathe. He felt greatly surprised and was choked with love.

'O, Benevolent One, you awaken those who are resting their heads on the pillows of the darkness of ignorance and who are snoring away in the embrace of passions !

Just see, even at such a time, shaking us to wakefulness, you are giving the nectar of the *Guru Charitra* to drink, O Merciful One.'

So be it. After he had such a dream Sathe became fully awake immediately. He related the whole episode which had taken place to Kakasaheb Dixit.

And said : "I do not understand the meaning. Only Baba is capable of knowing it. I do not know what is in his mind. Kaka, please ask him in detail.

Shall I start the recitation again ? Or, shall I consider that whatever has been done is enough ? Whatever be Baba's intentions, please ask him. Only that will put my mind to rest."

Then, Kaka having found an opportune moment told Baba about the dream. "Oh, Lord, through this dream what have you to convey to Sathe ?

Should the week-long recitation be repeated ? Or should it be terminated now ? Please explain the meaning of the dream yourself and show the way to Sathe.

This is the only request I am making at your feet. Sathe is an ardent devotee. Please have mercy on him and grant his wish."

Then Baba ordered : "Let there be more recitation. By reading this *Guru Charitra*, devotees are purified.

If this book is recited repeatedly, it will be beneficial for them. They will receive God's blessings and the worldly chains will be broken off."

### **SHREE VISHNUSAHASRANAMA**



**J**ust as Shama was an ardent devotee, so was Baba's love for him. A desire, therefore, arose in Baba to put him to some regular practice for his spiritual progress.

So, see what he did. Though Shama had no inclination, yet he was favoured and graced. Listen under what circumstances, it was done.

One day, in the *Masjid*, there was a Ramdasi Bua. It was his regular practice to read the *Ramayana*.

Early morning, after doing his ablutions, taking his bath and doing the *sandhya* after applying the sacred ashes and wearing ochre robes, he sat at a fixed place to read.

He read the *Vishnusahasranama* and *Adhyatma Ramayana* thereafter. He read these books often and often; and it continued with full faith !

In this way, after quite a long time had passed and the opportune time for Madhavrao had come, something occurred to Sai *Samartha*. Listen to that story.

Madhavrao's services had borne fruit. It was time now to put him into some regular practice and give him some *prasad* of the path of devotion, so that he would get relief in the worldly life.

When Baba thought like this, he called the Ramdasi near him and said : "I have a shooting pain in my stomach. It is as if the intestines are tearing apart.

Go, this pain in the stomach is not abating. Quickly bring some senna pods. Unless I take some small quantity, this vexing ache will not stop."

The simple Ramdasi was a loving devotee. He put a mark in the book and set it aside. He went running to the market in obedience to Baba's command.

No sooner had the Ramdasi come down the steps, see what Baba did ! He got up from his seat immediately and went near the books.

There amongst other religious books was the book on *Vishnusahasranama*. He picked it up, took it in his hands and returned to his seat.

And said : "Shama, you know this *pothi*. See it is very beneficial. Therefore, I am giving it to you. You should read it.

Once I suffered intensely. My heart began to palpitate. I was restless and I had no hope for myself.

Shama, what can I tell you of that experience ? How that book proved useful ! This life was saved by it.

I hugged it to my heart for a while and immediately felt relief. It seemed as if Allah himself had come down and this life was saved by it.

Therefore, Shama, take it with you. Read it gradually. Every day, take one or two words. It will give you great joy."

Shama said : "I do not want it. The Ramdasi will be furious with me and he will say that I have behind his back, done this wrong.

As it is, he is half-crazy, irascible, ill-tempered and ever complaining. Why, unnecessarily, pick up this quarrel with him ? I do not want this annoyance.





Beside, the *pothi* is in Sanskrit. My speech is crude and rustic. My tongue cannot twist round these joined words. I cannot pronounce them clearly."

Seeing all Baba's actions, Shama thought that Baba wanted to set him up against the Ramdasi; but he had no idea of Baba's heart-felt concern for him.

'My Shama may be mad; but I am fond of him. He has an unusual affection towards me. I am greatly concerned about him.

I will tie the necklace of this *Vishnusahasranama* around his neck with my hands and free him from the miseries of the worldly existence by giving him a fondness for reciting it.

God's Name can break down mountains of sin. The Lord's Name breaks the shackles of the body. God's Name pulls out crores of ill desires from their roots.

God's Name humbles the pride of death and ends the cycle of birth and death. I want Shama to be interested in this treasure of the *Sahasranama*.

The Lord's Name chanted with full intent is very effective; but even an unintentional pronouncement can be beneficial. Its power is manifested even when it is uttered unawares.

For the purification of the Inner Self there is not another simpler means than chanting the Lord's Name. The Lord's Name is the adornment of the tongue. The Lord's Name sustains spirituality.

It is not necessary to have a bath to say the Lord's Name. Taking the Lord's Name is not regulated by the rules of the *Shastras*. The Lord's Name destroys all sins. The Lord's Name is always pure.

The continuous chanting of My Name itself will ferry you across the ocean of existence. No other means are necessary to achieve salvation.

Whoever frequently repeats My Name his sins will be burnt. I consider him more virtuous than the virtuous, who constantly hums My Name.'

This was Baba's inner motive and he acted accordingly. Even though Shama refused, Baba slipped it into his pocket.

Shama's ancestors must have indeed performed good deeds the fruits of which he received in this blessing. This pure *Sahasranama* was sure to remove his wordly afflictions.

All other religious performances have to be done as per the rules laid down in the *Shastras*. But the Lord's Name can be chanted continuously at any time. It has no limitations on account of the day being a holiday or the time being the evening worship of Shiva. There is not another simple method to adopt.

In the same way, Eknath forced this *Sahasranama* on his neighbour and thrust him on the virtuous path.

Holy scriptures were read daily at Nath's house. But this neighbour, though a *Brahmin*, remained unclean and did not perform the *sandhya*. He indulged in evil actions.

He never listened to the reading of the scriptures as this wicked person did not even step into Nath's *wada*. Nath himself took pity on him and called him over to his house.

'Though he is born in a high caste, his life is being wasted.' Knowing this sensitive issue, Nath felt great pity. 'How can this be averted?' he thought.

Therefore, even though he refused, Nath made him commit to memory with proper enunciation, the *Sahasranama*, one *shloka* at a time and thus uplifted him.

The reading and study of this *Sahasranama* is a broad open way of purifying the mind and is of ancient origin, which was Baba's reason for forcing it on Shama.

That Ramdasi returned soon bringing the senna pods medicine. Anna, who was a mischief maker like Narad, was standing near by and described, in detail, what had happened.



The Ramdasi was, as it is, ill-tempered. Moreover, there was Narad's intervention. Then who would be able to describe in apt words, the uncommon incident ? !

The Ramdasi was always a doubting Thomas; and he had suspicions about Madhavrao. He said : "He made Baba the intermediary to snatch away my book."

The senna pods were forgotten. He launched a vicious verbal attack on Madhavrao. His violent anger was uncontrollable and he showered a lot of abusive language on him.

"The stomach ache was just a pretext. It was you who instigated Baba. You had an eye on my book. I will not tolerate it.

I am a fearless Ramdasi, as my name itself suggests. If you do not return the book without creating any problems, I will dash my head in front of you and scatter my blood profusely.

You coveted my book, planned out this insidious drama, and putting the whole blame on Baba, kept yourself aloof."

Madhavrao tried his best to make him understand; but the Ramdasi would not be pacified. Then listen to what Madhavrao said very calmly.

"Do not falsely accuse me of being deceitful. Why are you fussing so much about that book of yours ? It is not a rarity.

Is your book decorated with gold and studded with gems ? If you don't have faith in Baba, despicable is your existence."

Seeing the Ramdasi's insistence, Baba very sweetly said to him : "Oh, Ramdasi, what is the problem ? Why are you unnecessarily distressed ?

Is not Shama our lad ? Why do you quarrel loudly and vehemently, for no reason creating a scene ?

Why are you always ready to fight ? Can you not speak soft and sweet words ? Though you read these books regularly, your mind is still impure.

Every day you read the *Adhyatma Ramayana* and recite the *Sahasranama*. Yet you have not discarded your passions which are uncontrolled. And you call yourself a Ramdasi !

What kind of a Ramdasi are you ? You should be absolutely detached; but you are not able to overcome your intense desire to possess the book. What name can be given for this behaviour ?

A true Ramdasi should have no attachment; but look at the young and old with equality. You are harbouring enmity for this boy and coming to blows for this book !

Go and sit in your place. Books can be had in plenty for money; but not men, till the end of time. Remember this well.

Shama has no knowledge about the worth of your book. I picked it up, on my own and gave it to him myself.

You know the book by heart. I thought of giving it to Shama who will read it, repeatedly recite it and obtain the utmost benefit."

How captivating were the words, sweet and full of compassion, as also soothing and blissfully serene. They were non-pareil.

Ramdasi realised the situation. Yet he said to Madhavrao red with anger : "Instead of this book, I will take *Panchratni Gita* from you. I am telling you clearly now."

Madhavrao was pleased that the Ramdasi was pacified. "Why one, I will give you ten copies of the *Gita*, instead."

## **RAGHUNATH SAVITRI**

### **BHAJANMALA**

**I**n Bandra, Thane District, there was a staunch devotee named Raghunath Rao Tendulkar. He was brilliant, courageous and very knowledgeable.



He was always cheerful and loving. He was attached to the lotus feet of Sai, with the hope of obtaining the honey of knowledge. He continuously chanted the Lord's Name.

He has described the *leelas* of Sai in a book called '*Bhajan Mala*' (Garland of *Bhajans*). He who reads it with devotion and love, will be blessed by Sai at every step.

### **VED AND UPANISHAD**

Once a resident of Pune, whose name was Anantrao Patankar, who had developed respect for Sai's *darshan*, came to Shirdi soon.

He had heard all the *Vedas* and read the original *Upanishads*, along with the commentaries; but his mind remained always restless and peace of mind eluded him.

When he had taken Sai *Samartha's darshan*, Patankar's eyes were rewarded. After bowing down at his feet he worshipped him with ritualistic accuracy.

Afterwards, with folded hands, he sat in front of Baba, very close to him. Anantrao, who looked very lovingly, asked him with extreme humility :

"I have read many books, including the *Vedas*, the *Vedangas* and the *Upanishads*. I have listened to the holy *Shastras* and *Puranas*. Yet, why is my mind so despondent ?

I now feel that whatever I have read has been wasted. I think that even the illiterate devout devotee is better off than me.

All my study of books, learning of *Shastras* is a waste. All this bookish knowledge is futile as long as my mind remains unsteady.

Oh how empty is the effort I have made over the study of etymology; to what purpose is the *japa* and *mantra* which does not give peace of mind ! How will I then ever acquire the knowledge of *Brahman* ?

By word of mouth I have heard that by Sai's *darshan* all worries are removed and that you show the right direction even in your humorous talk, very easily.



Therefore, *Maharaj*, treasure trove of austerities, I have reached your feet. Give me your blessings, by which I may have peace of mind."

Upon which, *Maharaj* told him a humorous parable by which Anantrao was satisfied and enjoyed the fulfilment of his learning.

Those few words are the entire essence of knowledge. I (Hemadpant) will tell you that story. Be ready to hear it. It is humorous but meaningful. Who can disregard such words ?

Baba said, in reply : "Once a merchant came along and at that time a horse passed nine balls of stool in front of him.

The merchant was very efficient. He immediately took off his wrap, and spread it out, collected all the balls and tied a knot and was able to achieve concentration of mind."

'What has Sai *Samartha* said ? What could be its meaning ? Why the collection of the stool by the merchant ?' He did not understand anything.

Thinking thus, Anantrao came back and related the conversation, from the beginning to the end, to Kelkar.

And said : "Who was the merchant ? What was the purpose of those balls of stool ? Why was number nine mentioned ? Please reveal the meaning to me.

Dada, what kind of riddle is this ? I find myself incompetent to solve it. Tell me something which will open Baba's heart clearly to me, in plain words."



Dada said : "I too, do not understand. Baba's talk is always of this kind. But I will tell you whatever I am enable to understand, as he inspires me.

The horse is God's grace. This is how the puzzle of the nine-fold devotion could be explained. Without devotion one cannot have a union with God and knowledge will not be acquired.

(1) Listening (2) Singing the Lord's praises aloud (3) Remembering Lord Vishnu (4) Serving at His Feet (5) Offering prayers (6) Bowing down before Him (7) Being humble (8) Developing affection and (9) Surrendering the *atma* - these are the nine ways of devotion.

With full faith, even if one of these ways of devotion is practised, Sree Hari who longs for devotion will appear in the home of the devotee.

Chanting of the Lord's Name, practise of austerities, keeping of vows, practising *yoga*, learning of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, abundance of metaphysical knowledge and its various explanations - all this is a sham without faith.

There is no need to be well-versed in the *Vedas* nor any need to be famous as a scholar. It is neither necessary to sing the praises of God without feeling. Only the loving sentiment of devotion is essential.

Consider yourself to be the merchant and grasp the significance of that transaction. When the flag of devotion, in the form of the nine-fold *Bhakti*, flies high, then the Incarnation of Knowledge will be pleased.

When the horse passed the nine balls of stool, the merchant eagerly went forward to collect them. Similarly the nine-fold devotion, when adopted, gives complete peace of mind.

Only that will give stability to the mind, develop affection for every being, for which seriousness of mind is necessary. Otherwise waywardness is inevitable. This is what *Gururaya* said, with love."

## **ISHAVASYA BHAVARTHABODHINI**

**G**anu Das had started to write the commentary '*Ishavasya Bhavartha Bodhini*', in which some meaning was obscure, so he came to Shirdi, to his *Sadguru* for elucidation.

At that time, Baba said : "When you return, the maidservant at Kaka's house will clear your doubt."

Ganu Das had started to explain the meaning of every stanza of the *Ishavasya Upanishad*, in verse form, for those who did not know Sanskrit.

With this intention, he translated the meaning of *Ishavasya* into simple, lucid, Marathi.

This *Upanishad* is full of hidden meaning. Though the word-to-word translation was achieved, unless the deeper, implied meaning was clear, he felt dissatisfied.

The essence of the four *Vedas* is really the treasury for the *Upanishads*. But without the grace of God and *Guru* it is difficult to understand.

One may say that I am learned and I will try on my own to understand the *Upanishads* and explain the meaning exactly.

But it is never possible. It cannot be brought into practice till a *Guru's* blessings are received. The secret riddles are impossible to solve and at every step one would come across difficulties.

But for him who seeks the feet of the *Guru*, there is not the slightest difficulty. The profound meaning reveals itself very naturally to him.

That knowledge, which is the science of realisation of the Self, is a weapon to destroy the cycle of birth and death. It can be achieved by giving up the ego and attachment; and thus, one should qualify oneself to expound on it.

If one takes refuge at the feet of such people, then within moments the meaning is revealed. That imprisoned intellect is liberated and the perplexity of the meaning disappears.

While translating the *Ishavasya* into Marathi, Das Ganu underwent such a plight. But when Sainath blessed him, his difficulties were overcome.

He had little knowledge of the Sanskrit language. Even then, he bowed down to *Acharya* Vidyaranya and at Sai Baba's feet and began to write the verses in the verse form.

### **VICHAR SAGAR**

Once, a certain gentleman, who had the privilege of an education in English, holding a Bachelor of Arts degree, climbed step by step and became a big officer.

Later on, he became a Mamlatdar and then rose to be an Assistant Collector. Because of good fortune, He came in contact with Sai Baba.

Outwardly these posts look very attractive, like mountains from a distance; but if you go nearer to them, they are found surrounded by trees which give an itch. But at the same time these posts command prestige.

Those pleasant days are long past when people used to crave for such posts. The general public, too, honoured the officers and mutually they were happy.

Let us now talk about present conditions. Gone are those days when it was nice to be in Government Service. Now the responsibilities have increased and the emoluments are insufficient.

In the olden times, the Mamlatdar was respected and the Collector was honoured. But that grandeur is no more though one works hard.

Be it so. After all, by spending a lot of money on education and after studying very hard, one was able to acquire these high posts.

First of all, one had to pass the Bachelor of Arts degree; then become a clerk in the government office; earn a monthly salary of Rs. 30/-. In this manner, one had to go on for some time.

During the course of time, he had to go to the *ghats*, learn the surveyors work and live amongst them, measure lands and pass departmental exams.

Later on, if a higher official in the service died leaving his position vacant, then he would be able to get that post.

Enough of this lengthy and uninteresting narration. Why should I (Hemadpant) go on prattling about it unnecessarily ? Listen to that story about how such a person met Sai.

Near Belgaum, there is a town called Vadgaon. A team of surveyors had camped there.

In this town, there was a saint staying there. They went to take his *darshan*, bowed their heads at his feet and received his blessings.

That holy person was holding a book called '*Vichar Sagar*' by Nischal Das, which he was reading to them.

After a while, when these people started to take his leave, the saint spoke to that particular gentleman with great delight. Listen to that.

"You may leave now. But be sure to read this book, by which your wishes will come true. Bear this in mind.

Later on, in the course of your work, when you go towards the north, because of your good fortune you will have the *darshan* of a great man on the way.

He will show you the path, further on, and will grant you peace of mind. He will give you advice and impress upon you the knowledge of the Self."

### **AKKALKOT MAHARAJ CHARITRA**

**G**opal Narayan Ambdekar, was a great devotee of Baba from Pune. Listen to his story.

He was in service in the Excise Department of the British regime. After completing service for ten years, he left it and stayed at home.

Fortune changed and turned its back on him. All the days of one's life are not the same. The stars rotated and brought a bad spell. Who is there who can avoid these changes ?

In the beginning he was in service in Thane District and later his luck brought him to Javhar, where he was an officer. It is there that he became jobless.

To regain a job is not easy. Where could he get it again ? He tried his level best at that time.

But he did not succeed. So he decided to follow an independent trade; but here too troubles beset him until he finally lost all hope.

Year after year, his financial condition worsened till he hit rock bottom. Calamities followed one after the other and the household condition became unbearable.

Seven years passed this way. Each year he went to Shirdi and related his grievances to Baba, imploring him with prostrations day and night.

In 1916, he was so utterly disgusted that he felt like committing suicide after going to Shirdi.

So this time he stayed for two months at Shirdi with his wife. Listen to the story of what happened one night.

While sitting in a bullock-cart, in front of Dixit's *wada*, Ambdekar was in deep thoughts.

Fed up with life and very depressed, he thought 'enough now ! No more of this trouble'. He lost the desire to live.

Thinking thus and having lost interest in life, Ambdekar got ready to throw himself immediately into the well.

'Availing of a quiet time when there would be nobody around, I will carry out my purpose and rid myself of all the troubles'.

He knew that committing suicide was a great sin. Yet he determined to act upon his thought. But Baba Sai, being the puppeteer, he averted this folly.

At a very short distance, there was the residence of a hotel owner, who also had Baba's support, being one of the persons who served Baba.

Sagun came to the threshold of his house, at that time, and asked Ambdekar : "Have you ever read this book on the life of Akkalkot Maharaj ?"

"Let me see, let me see. What is that book ?" Saying that Ambdekar took it in his hand. Turning the pages at random, he began to read here and there.

By wonderful coincidence, the subject which he came across was worth reading as it related to his inner thoughts. He was deeply impressed.

I (Hemadpant) will relate for all the listeners the story that he came across by chance, giving the sum and substance of the story very briefly, for fear of lengthening this book.

There was a great Saint at Akkalkot.



Maharaj used to be absorbed in meditation. A devotee, who was grievously ill, was undergoing unbearable suffering.

He had served for a long time hoping to be rid of the disease. He was unable to bear the pain any more. He became very dejected.

He determined to commit suicide, and choosing a time in the night, going to a well he threw himself in it.

Maharaj came there at that time and pulled him out with his own hands. "Whatever is destined has to be fully borne," he advised him.

"All physical tribulations, diseases, even leprosy and all other problems, which we have because of our actions in the precious birth, unless they are fully borne, we cannot be free from them, even by committing suicide.

If this suffering remains unfinished, you have to be born again. Therefore, try to bear up with this trouble a little longer. Do not kill yourself."

Reading this story, which was apt for the occasion, Ambdekar was surprised and felt ashamed on the spot, understanding Baba's all-pervasiveness.

Ambdekar realised that the fate due to previous birth must be endured. He was made to understand this at the right time and it was good that he had not attempted the reckless deed.

This illustrative story was like a voice from outer space. It strengthened his faith at Sai's feet. Sai's deeds are unimaginable.

'Sai's warning guided through Sagun's words. If there had been some delay in getting this unexpected book, my life would have been ruined.

I would have lost my own life, and would have caused utter destruction of the family. My wife would have had to undergo a lot of suffering and I would not have achieved my own good nor attained my spiritual goal.

Baba inspired Sagun and made the book an instrument to divert my mind from committing suicide.'

## **SANTA KATHAMRUT**

### **BHAKTA LILAMRUT**

**A**scetics, saints or God, can get their story written by anyone they chose, by conferring grace upon them;

just as in the seventeen hundred *shake*, the saints inspired a person named Mahipati, to render service to them and got their life stories written by him.

Likewise, in the year eighteen hundred *shake*, the services of Das Ganu were availed by saints by getting him to write the following biographies, which purified everybody.

Just as Mahipati has written four volumes named (a) *Bhakta Vijaya* (b) *Sant Vijaya* (c) *Bhakta Leelamrut* and (d) *Sant Leelamrut*, so Das Ganu has written two such volumes.

One of the books was *Bhakta Leelamrut* and the other one was *Sant Kathamrut*. In both these volumes he has described the modern-day devotees and saints to the extent of information available.

The nectar-like story of Sree Sai, is narrated in the three chapters of *Bhakta Leelamrut*. Readers should read it from there.

Similarly, in the fifty-seventh chapter of the *Sant Kathamrut*, there is an instructive story told by Sai to a devotee which should also be read.

### **SAI PRABHA**

**B**esides, some eminent devotees have published from the city of Pune, a series of tales of Baba, under the title '*Sai Prabha*'.

**T**he subject of *Vedant* is very deep. Without the combination of detachment, devotion and knowledge and the grace of the Guru, it is impossible to write such a book, *Shri Sai Sat Charita*.

In the canopy of the battlefield of various books, the son of Raghunath has raised victory pillars of the chapters for destroying the demons of evil feelings, deceit and false pride, with the sword of his intellect.

The book is a five-wick lamp, studded with gems to wave round the King among Saints ! The chapters narrate the stories which are wicks of oil, the light of which brings detachment and peace.

The book is *Maya* which entices the world. The chapters are arms raised high and the meaning of the stories are bracelets (worn on the upper arm) decorating the body ready to embrace Sai, *Brahman* Incarnate.



The Sai *Satcharita* is the universal sovereign amongst books. The chapters are pleasing, clever minstrels, narrating faith, knowledge, the *Vedantic* beauty and its vast glory.

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Now listen the procedure of recitation (of the book), as well as the easy method of doing a reading within seven days, as laid down in the Gurucharitra or other such books.

Do the recitation with a pure heart and devotion, completing in one day or two days or three days. Sai Narayan will be gratified.

Otherwise, complete it easily in a week and you will have immense good fortune on a continuing basis. Sai will fulfil the heart's desire and the fear of the worldly existence will be destroyed.

Begin the recitation on a Thursday, in the early morning after a bath. Sit on your 'asan' (seat for prayer), after quickly completing your usual routine.

Make a pleasing, large canopy with banana plants, 'kardali', and beautiful cloth covering over it and let it be well-decorated.

In it, let there be a raised platform (for the book) and decorate all the four sides of it with colourful 'rangoli', which are pleasing for the eyes.

Making an image of Sai *Sadguru* or taking a beautiful picture of him, place it carefully on the high platform. Make obeisance to him with love.

Tying the book in a silken cloth, place it near the *Sadguru*. After worshipping both with 'panch upachar', commence the reading.

Observe the holy vows for eight days, having only milk or fruits or roasted grain of any one kind, eating only once or having only one meal.

Facing the east and keeping the image of the *Sadguru* in the heart, do the recitation of the book with a calm mind and with joy.

During the seven days, read the first eight chapters on the first day, then the next eight on the second day, followed by next seven on the third day. Then eight, six, eight and seven chapters on the following four days, and only 'Avatarnika' on the eighth day.

On the eighth day, at the end of the observance of vows and of the offering of 'naivedya' to Sai Narayana, feed friends, relatives and *Brahmins* with delicacies and give 'dakshina' to them to the best of one's ability.

Inviting the *Vedic Brahmins*, have them chant the *Vedas* at night, offer them sugar flavoured milk and give them a respectful send-off, after they are well satisfied in body and mind.

Finally, after doing obeisance at the *Sadguru's* Feet, offer him appropriate 'dakshina' and send that to the treasury (of the Shirdi Sansthan) to augment the funds of the Sansthan.

Lord Sai will be gratified thereby, and he will bless the devotee. The snake in the form of the worldly existence will be destroyed and the treasure of liberation will be revealed to him.

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