

THE PATH OF DEVOTION



January 2005

SHRI SAI SATCHARITA – THE PATH OF DEVOTION

Key Messages in the Book

Key Theme

Baba said, ‘Without *devotion*, spiritual knowledge is useless and cannot take you to God’.

Endorsement By Baba

The author of Shri Sai Satcharita states that it is Baba’s grace that helped him to write the book and that he was a mere instrument in Baba’s hands. This work began when Baba was in flesh and blood in Shirdi and gave the author, who he called *Hemadpanth*, his consent and blessings.

Baba said, ‘Let him make a collection of stories and experiences, keep notes and memos; I will help him. He is only an outward instrument. I should write Myself My autobiography and satisfy the wishes of My devotees. He should get rid of his ego, place

(or surrender) it at My feet. He who acts like this in life, him I help the most. What of My life-stories? I serve him in his house in all possible ways. When his ego is completely annihilated and there is left no trace of it, I Myself shall enter into him and shall Myself write My own life. Hearing my stories and teachings will create faith in devotees’ hearts and they will easily get self-realization and Bliss; let there be no insistence on establishing one’s own view, no attempt to refute other’s opinions, no discussions of pros and cons of any subject’.

Spiritual Equations

Self-Realization is attained through
Detached Love & Devotion

Devotion means service to Guru with
Awe and Veneration & Unbounded
Faith &
Unbounded Patience

On Saints

The book states ‘Sadgurus (Saints) like Sai Baba open our (eyes of the) intellect and show us the divine beauties of the Self, and fulfil our tender longings of devotion. When this is done, our desire for sense-objects vanishes, twin fruits of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion or non-attachment) come to our hands; and knowledge sprouts up even in the sleep’. Baba is the epitome of compassion.

Compassion

Compassion results from Detached
Love and Devotion to Guru

Baba is the epitome of compassion

His Path of Devotion

Baba said, ‘If my Leelas (divine actions) are written, the Avidya (ignorance or spiritual illusion or Maya) will vanish and if they are attentively, and devoutly listened to, the consciousness of the worldly existence will abate, and strong waves of devotion, and love will rise up and if one dives deep into My Leelas, he would get precious jewels of knowledge’. (We should always be thinking and singing his Leelas inside our hearts).

Baba said, 'He who loves Me most, always sees Me. The whole world is desolate to him without Me, he tells no stories but Mine (to people who are open to listening with respect). He ceaselessly meditates upon Me and always chants My name. I feel indebted to him who surrenders himself completely to Me and ever remembers Me. I shall repay his debt by giving him salvation (self-realization). I am dependent on him who thinks and hungers after Me and who does not eat anything without first offering it to Me. He who thus comes to Me, becomes one with Me, just as a river gets to the sea and becomes merged (one) with it. So leaving out pride and egoism and with no trace of them, you should surrender yourself to Me Who am seated in your heart'.

Baba said, 'If a man utters My name with love, I shall fulfil all his wishes, increase his devotion. And if he sings earnestly My life and My deeds, him I shall beset in front and back and on all sides. Those devotees, who are attached to Me, heart and soul, will naturally feel happiness, when they hear these stories. Believe Me that if anybody sings My Leelas, I will give him infinite joy and everlasting contentment. It is My special characteristic to free any person, who surrenders completely to Me, and who does worship Me faithfully, and who remembers Me, and meditates on Me constantly. How can they be conscious of worldly objects and sensations, who utter My name, who worship Me, who think of My stories and My life and who thus always remember Me? I shall draw out My devotees from the jaws of Death. If My stories are listened to, all the diseases will be got rid of. *So, hear My stories with respect; and think and meditate on them, assimilate them.* This is the way of happiness and contentment. The pride and egoism of My devotees will vanish, the mind of the hearers will be set at rest; and if it has wholehearted and complete faith, it will be one with Supreme Consciousness. The simple remembrance of My name as 'Sai, Sai' will do away with sins of speech and hearing'.

Baba's name is the best purifier of our mind! Chanting Baba's name is the easiest sadhana (spiritual practice). The book states that the mind cannot remain without thinking for one minute. Hence, if you give it a sense object, it will think about it. If you give it to Sai, it will think of Sai. We must attend to our worldly duties, but give our mind to Sai Baba.

Baba said, 'Those who are fortunate and whose demerits have vanished; take to My worship. If you always say 'Sai, Sai' I shall take you over the seven seas; believe in these words, and you will be certainly benefited. I do not need any paraphernalia of worship - either eight-fold or sixteen-fold. I rest there where there is full devotion'. Baba respected the feelings of His devotees and allowed them to worship Him as they liked.

The book states 'The description of Baba's pure fame, and the hearing of the same, with love, will destroy the sins of the devotee and, therefore, this is the simple Sadhana for attaining salvation. The other Sadhanas, viz. Yoga, Yagya (Hindu sacrificial fire of Yagya), Dhayana (meditation) and Dharana (concentration) are very difficult to practice (although Baba separately stresses the importance of formless meditation (see below). Control of breath - ingoing and outgoing, or Hath-Yoga or other difficult practices are not at all necessary. Singing and hearing the stories and the glory of the Lord (Sai Baba) is very easy. We have only to turn our attention towards them. The listening and singing of the stories will remove the attachment to the senses and their objects, and will make the devotees dispassionate, and will ultimately lead them to self-realization. You may do or attend to your worldly duties, but give your mind to Sai and His stories, and then, He is sure to bless you. This is the

easiest path, but why do not all take to it? *The reason is that without God's grace, we do not get the desire to listen to the stories of Saints*'.

The book states that 'Passing away in Shirdi and in Baba's presence is a sure way to gain sadgati (liberation). The last wish of a man determines the future course. We cannot be certain that we can entertain good thoughts at the last moment. More likely we will be frightened. Hence constant practice of remembering Sai Nam (the name of Sai Baba) is necessary, enabling us to fix our minds on Baba at the last minute. *(This is a very old Hindu belief)*.

Nine Stages of Devotion

On Bhakti or devotion to god through devotion to the guru, the book states the *nine forms or types of Bhakti*. It is a universal fact that intensive devotion to God ultimately leads to Moksha (liberation). This truth can be traced back to the period of Vedas (ancient Hindu texts). In the Gita, Lord Krishna declared Bhakti as the most important among the means to attain liberation. Bhakti cult refers to the nine stages of devotion to reach God – Sravanam is the first step of the nine fold path of devotion, it implies the listening of the stories and songs praising God; Kirtanam constitutes the recitation of the hymns in praise of God; Smaranam is meditation on the forms of God, Paadasevanam implies service at the feet of Lord; Archanam is worship; Vandanam is salutation to God; Dasyam is to do services to God as a servant with awe and veneration; Sakhyam is the feeling of friendship; Atmanivedanam is the complete surrender of the self (this is considered as the highest point in the progress of Bhakti). The nine-fold path of devotion is a series of stages in the psychological attitude of the devotee for his spiritual progress, culminating in God realization. This is termed as *Navavidhabhakti*.

Loving Devotion is Critical

The book states 'All the sadhanas, viz. Japa (vocal worship), Tapa (penance), Yoga practice and studying the scriptures and expounding them are quite useless unless they are accompanied by Bhakti. Knowledge of the Vedas (Hindu religious texts), or fame as a great Jnani (person of knowledge), and mere formal Bhajan (worship by songs) are of no avail. *What is wanted is Loving Devotion*. Consider yourself as the merchant or seeker after the truth and be anxious and eager like him to collect or cultivate the nine types of devotion. Then you will attain stability and peace of mind'.

We should:

- Chant Baba's name, a love line (for example, Shri Satchitananda Sadguru Sainath Maharaj Ki Jai!) or sing other prayers about his life and deeds – aloud or in our mind
- Think over His sayings in our mind
- Feel real love for Him
- Do all our actions for His sake
- Pursue Formless Meditation or initially on His form

This is the best way to surrender ourselves to Sai Baba and be liberated.

Practice is Critical

Baba, chides a devotee 'You daily read sacred books. Still your mind is impure and your passions uncontrolled'. What you read should 'be practiced and lived; mere reading is of no use. You have to think and carry out what you read. Mere book learning without the grace of guru and self realization is of no avail' (hence it is not

simply reading that is required, practice and loving devotion to guru – to get his grace - are both essential).

Formless Meditation

Baba said, ‘My method is quite unique. Remember well, this one story, and it will be very useful. To get the knowledge (realization) of the Self, Dhyana (meditation) is necessary. If you practice it continuously, the Vrittis (thoughts) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord, Who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. *Meditate always on My formless nature, which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss.* If you cannot do this, meditate on My Form from top to toe as you see here night and day. As you go on doing this, your Vrittis will concentrate on one point and the distinction between the Dhyata (meditator), Dhyana (act of meditation), Dhyeya (that meditated upon) will be lost and the meditator will be one with the Consciousness and be merged in the Brahman. The (mother) tortoise is on one bank of the river, and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk, nor warmth to them. Her mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing, but remember (meditate upon) their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a down-pour of nectar, the only source of sustenance and happiness. Similar is the relation, between the Guru and disciples’.

The book states that ‘When Baba’s form is fixed before our mental vision, we forget hunger, thirst and this samara. The consciousness of worldly pleasures will disappear and our mind will attain peace and happiness’.

Guru-Disciple Relationship – Faith and Patience

Sadgurus (Saints) are infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. Baba talks about a guru-disciple relationship and says that (1) it is not enough merely to prostrate before the Saint. A disciple must make complete surrender to the Saint. (2) Mere questioning of the guru is not enough. The question must not be made with any improper motive or attitude or to trap the guru and catch at mistakes in the answer, or out of idle curiosity. It must be serious and with a view to achieve moksha (liberation) or spiritual progress. (3) When one is rendering service to the guru, one must not retain the feeling that one is free to offer or refuse service. One must feel that he is not the master of the body, that the body is the guru's and exists merely to render service to him. If this is done, the Saint will show you the path to self-realisation.

The book states ‘A Sadguru does not, even in his dream, expect any service or profit from his disciples. On the contrary he wishes to serve them. He does not think that he is great and the disciple small. Not only he loves him as his son but regards him as equal to himself or as Brahma. The main characteristic of a Sadguru is that he is the abode of peace. He is never restless nor ruffled. He has no pride of his learning. The poor and the rich, the small and the great, are the same to him’.

Importance of the Guru

The form of the Guru is the root of meditation,
The feet of the Guru are the root of worship,
The teaching of the Guru is the root of all hymns and
The Grace of the Guru is the root of salvation.

Baba stated about his own guru 'My Guru never expected any other thing from Me. He never neglected Me, but protected Me at all times. I lived with him, and was sometimes away from him; still I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected Me by his glance, just as the tortoise feeds her young ones, whether they are near her or away from her on the other side of the river bank, by her loving looks. Oh mother, My Guru never taught Me any Mantra (incantation), then how shall I blow any Mantra in your ears? Just remember that Guru's tortoise-like loving glance gives us happiness. Do not try to get Mantra or Upadesh (spiritual lesson) from anybody. Make Me the sole object of your thoughts and actions; and you will, no doubt, attain Paramartha (the spiritual goal of life). Look at Me whole-heartedly, and I in turn look at you similarly. Sitting in this Masjid (Mosque), I speak the truth, nothing but the truth. No Sadhanas (spiritual practice), nor proficiency in the six Shastras, are necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully, that Guru is the sole Actor or Doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks him to be *Hari, Hara and Brahma* (Trimurti) (Hindu spiritual forces of sustenance, destruction and creation) Incarnate'.

Baba said, 'My Guru was the sole object of My meditation and consciousness. While meditating on him My mind and intellect were stunned and I had thus to keep quiet and bow to him in silence. *By his grace, realization flashed upon me of itself, without effort or study.* I had not to seek anything, but everything became clear to me as broad day light'.

Baba said, 'I resorted to my Guru for 12 years. He loved me the most. Rare is a Guru like him. When I looked at him, he seemed as if he was in deep meditation and then we would both be filled with bliss. Day and night I gazed at him with no thought of hunger or thirst. I have no other object to meditate, nor any other thing than Guru to attend. He was my sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. This is one paisa, faith. The other paisa is patience; I waited patiently and very long on my Guru and served him. *Saburi is manliness; it removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways and casts aside fear, and ultimately gives you success. Saburi is the mine of virtues, consort of good thoughts.* Faith and Patience are twin sisters, loving each other intimately'.

With reference to Baba's advise to a devotee, the book says, 'It was a case of, what is technically called, '*Shakti-pat*', i.e., *transfer of power from the Guru to the disciple. How forcible and effective were Baba's words! In an instant, they pierced her heart and found lodgement there.* This case illustrates the nature of the relations that should subsist between the Guru and the disciple. Both should love and serve each other, as One. There is no distinction nor any difference between them. *Both are One, and one cannot live without the other.* The disciple placing his head on the Guru's feet is a gross or outward vision; really and internally they are both one and the same. Those, who see any difference between them, are yet unripe and not perfect'.

The book says 'If Baba accepts a devotee, He follows him and stands by him, day and night, at his home or abroad. Let the devotee go anywhere he likes, Baba is there ahead of him in some form in an inconceivable manner'. Baba accepted devotees at His own sweet will – some after 3 months, 9 months, 1 year – patience is needed. If you ask him a question, his answers may not be instantaneous, you should wait it out. He will not say 'Yes' to everything, but remember that every 'No' has its purpose that will eventually reveal itself. *Keep the faith.*

On The Results of Action

Baba says that he ultimately decides the fate of events, both successes and failures. Hence a devotee should not blame himself for his inadvertent failures. He says 'Do not entertain the sense of doership in doing good, as well as for bad deeds (failures as a result of inadvertent negligence); be entirely prideless and egoless in all things and thus your spiritual progress will be rapid'.

Controlling the Senses

The book states 'The teachings of a Guru are of no use to a man, who is full of egoism, and who always thinks about the sense-objects'.

The book talks about the senses and the mind as 'Our mind is fickle by nature, it should not be allowed to get wild. The senses may get restless, the body, however, should be held in check and not allowed to be impatient. Senses run after objects, but we should not follow them and crave for their objects. By slow and gradual practice restlessness can be conquered. We should not be swayed by the senses, but they cannot be completely controlled. We should curb them rightly and properly according to the need of the occasion. Beauty is the subject of sight; we should fearlessly look at the beauty of objects. There is no room for shyness or fear. Only we should never entertain evil thoughts (where this happens for attractive members of the opposite sex, put yourself under check, chanting Baba's name will give you strength). Making the mind desireless, observe God's works of beauty. In this way the senses will be easily and naturally controlled and even in enjoying objects you will be reminded of God. If the outer senses are not held in check and if the mind be allowed to run after objects and be attached to them, our cycle of births and deaths will not come to an end. Objects of sense are things harmful. With Viveka (discrimination) as our charioteer, we will control the mind and will not allow the senses to go astray. With such a charioteer we reach the Vishnu-pada, the final abode, our real Home from which there is no return (i.e., achieve self-realisation)'.

The book states that 'He (Baba) has advised us that before the senses, mind and intellect enjoy their objects, he should first be remembered, and if this be done, it is in a way an offering to Him. The senses etc. can never remain without their objects, *but if those objects are first offered to the Guru, the attachment for them will naturally vanish*. In this way, all the Vrittis (thoughts) regarding Desire, Anger, Avarice etc. should first be offered and directed to the Guru and if this practice be followed, the Lord will help you in eradicating all the Vrittis. When before enjoyment of the objects, you think that Baba is close by, the question whether the object is fit to be enjoyed or not will at once arise. Then the object that is not fit to be enjoyed will be shunned and in this way our vicious habits or vices will disappear and our character will improve. Then love for the Guru will grow and pure knowledge will sprout up. When this knowledge grows, the bondage of body - consciousness (we are the body) will snap and our intellect will be merged in spirit-consciousness (we are the spirit). Then we shall get Bliss and contentment. *There is no difference between Guru and God*. He who sees any difference in them, sees God nowhere. So leaving aside all ideas of difference, we should regard Guru and God as one, and if we serve our Guru as stated above, Lord (God) will be certainly pleased and purifying our minds He will give us self-realisation'.

Direct Benefits

The book states that after taking the darshan of the Samadhi in the Samadhi Mandir in Shirdi, a devotee should read or hear the Shri Sai Satcharita and his threefold

afflictions will vanish. It also states that if anybody after bathing reads the book with love and faith, and completes it within a week, his calamities will disappear; or if he hears or reads it daily (one chapter) and regularly, all his dangers will be warded off. The book highlights chapters 11 and 15 as being particularly important.

Baba used to recommend *Saptahas* to some devotees – this is the spiritual practice of repeating God’s name day and night and also reading religious books completely in one-week intervals.

End Result

Contact with Saints will improve a disciple over time. Baba once said to a devotee ‘In due time your bad actions (their fruit or result) will be destroyed, your merits and demerits will be reduced to ashes, and I shall consider you blessed, when you will renounce all attachments, conquer lust and palate, and getting rid of all impediments, serve God whole-heartedly and resort to the begging bowl (accept sannyas i.e. live like a Fakir)’. This is not meant for all, and neither can anyone adopt the path of the Fakir; for an ordinary householder, the recommended path by Baba is a simple one of *Devotion to him*.

Baba will make any devotee, who pursues him with true devotion, into a splitting image of himself – you will become a Sadguru (Saint) yourself.

Spiritual Values and Sayings

Spiritual values are:

- Love and kindness to one another;
- The virtue of forgiveness;
- The essential unity of mankind, irrespective of caste, creed or colour because God is within each one of us;
- Respect for each other's culture;
- Love for God;
- Devotion to God;
- Commitment to the quest for God as life's objective;
- Commitment to peace;
- Detachment as a discipline;
- Avoidance of anger, lust, greed and all related obsessions; and
- The soul never dies.

Some of Sai Baba's key teachings/beliefs:

- Oneness of God.
- Equality and tolerance of all religions.
- Love and respect for each other and compassion towards the downtrodden and animals.
- He believed that mere reading of spiritual books was not enough, converting this knowledge to real spiritual change was essential i.e. improving oneself.
- He emphasized forgiveness as a virtue and assertiveness in the pursuit of truth (the righteous path) rather than aggression.
- Devotion to Guru as the spiritual path leading to liberation from the cycle of birth-death-rebirth.
- His path of devotion emphasized Faith and Patience.
- He did not believe in any major religious rituals, all he wanted was love and devotion from his devotees – they should remember him always.
- He did not like devotees consuming alcohol at all; he was a non-vegetarian himself.
- He believed and followed “different strokes for different folks”, for example, the life of an ascetic was required for some while for others the life of a house-holder would suffice. For some vegetarianism is essential while for others it may not be required.

Eleven Assurances of Baba

- Whosoever puts their feet on Shirdi soil, their sufferings will come to an end.
- The wretched and miserable would rise into plenty of joy and happiness, as soon as they climb the steps of my Samadhi (Mandir).
- Whatever you do, wherever you may be, ever bear this in mind that I am always aware of everything you do.

- He who meditates upon me, chants my name and sings about my deeds, I will increase his devotion, he is transformed and his karma is destroyed. I stay by his side always.
- I am the slave of my devotee. I love devotion. He who loves me most always sees me. He who withdraws his heart from the world and loves me is my true lover and he merges in me like a river in the sea. I am dependent on him, who thinks of me and eats nothing without offering to me, such a devotee will merge with me.
- If you make me the sole object of your thoughts and aims you will gain Paramatma (God).
- If you cast your burden on me, I shall surely bear it.
- If you seek my advice and help, it shall be given to you at once.
- There will be no dearth of food or clothing in my devotees home.
- I shall be active and vigorous even from my tomb. My tomb shall bless and speak to the needs of my devotees. Even after my maha samadhi, I shall be with you the moment you think of me.
- If you look to me, I look to you.

Some sayings by Baba that embody the above Spiritual values, that are important for daily life, are:

- Just as insects eat up our clothes, so does jealousy eat up the higher spirit of the human being.
- Surrender yourself completely to God if you wish to be freed from the chains of karma.
- Anger starts with ignorance and ends with repentance.
- A person who has not overcome lust cannot attain God.
- With softness of approach and love, even God can be won over to your side.
- Familiarity creates friendship while hard times test the value of this friendship.
- What you have said once cannot be taken back, therefore, always think before talking.
- The cuts of a sword are not as sharp as the cuts created by words.
- Whoever is bestowed with the kindness of God does not speak; but absence of God's kindness makes a person speak unnecessarily.
- If you have inner strength, even the worst of hardships will fly away like smoke.
- There are three true friends - your old wife, your old dog and your old wealth (Only the gifts of God last).
- See God in your guru (When you ask him a question, do so with genuine intentions).
- Your guru loves *devotion* – think always of him.
- There are three higher traits of a man - hope, faith and charity.
- Have *faith and patience*; then God will be with you wherever you are.
- Take inspiration from God and think not of the past, but of the future (but don't worry about the future, trust in God and live in the present).
- Give to charity as this advances detachment and devotion to God.
- Happiness in the house is equivalent to the existence of heaven on earth.
- The stature of a man should not be judged from his clothes, but from his character.
- He who does not have eyes is not blind but he, who tries to cover up his errors by justifying them, is truly blind.

- In the service of society you should be ready to give up even your own happiness - this is the true test of service.
- Use compassion to help others find freedom from suffering - enlightenment is founded on this and results in this (the spiritual path develops a kind heart and altruistic mind).
- When you do service to someone then do not look at his weaknesses and feel disgust for him.
- With fear, the body, the spiritual strength and knowledge of a person get destroyed.
- In your efforts to bring down others, you yourself will fall. Inflicting pain on others through the body, mind or speech is sin.
- God is within each one of us; serve him constantly by loving one another.
- Love and devotion makes a man rich and like a magnet he attracts people and invokes the God within him.

Sayings – By Topic

In addition to the sayings above, given below is a detailed listing of sayings by Baba in the book. We have to *take his teaching to heart and practice* what he told us – do not throw away this good fortune.

Look for the Meaning

‘My words are always pregnant with meaning and never hollow. Meditate on what you read and think of God’

Shirdi Sai Baba

God and Man

- *God is not so far away. He is not in the heavens above, nor in hell below. He is always near you.*
- When you see with your inner eye, then you realize that you are God and not different from Him.
- What God gives is never exhausted, what man gives never lasts.
- Put full faith in God’s providence.
- Do not be obsessed by egotism, imagining that you are the cause of action; everything is due to God.
- If we see all actions as God’s doing, we will be unattached and free from karmic bondage.
- Always think of God and you will see what He does.
- He has no beginning. He has no end. All beings arise from Him and into Him they return.
- We cannot escape from paying for loans (dues), animosity and murder – the law of Karma will apply.
- What you sow, you reap. What you give, you get.
- Recognize the existence of the Moral Law as governing results. Then unswervingly follow this Law.
- The Moral Law is inexorable, so follow it, observe it, and you will reach your goal - God is the perfection of the Moral Law.
- All gods are one. There is no difference between a Hindu and a Muslim. Mosque and temple are the same.

- Life and death are the manifestations of God's activity. You cannot separate the two. God permeates all.
- Gain and loss, birth and death are in the hands of God.
- God will show His love. He is kind to all.

God's Agent

- *Those who think that Baba is only in Shirdi have totally failed to know me.*
- Without my grace, not even a leaf can move.
- I am formless and everywhere. I am in everything and beyond. I fill all space.
- All that you see taken together is Myself. I do not shake or move.
- My business is to give blessings.
- All that is seen is my form: ant, fly, prince, pauper.
- This body is just my house. My guru has long ago taken me away from it.
- I have to take care of my children day and night and give an account to God of every paise.
- I cannot do anything without God's permission.
- God has agents everywhere and their powers are vast.
- To God be the praise. I am only the slave of God.
- Why fear when I am here?
- One's sin will not cease till one falls at the feet of Saints.

Devotion

- *I love devotion.*
- *I stay by the side of whoever repeats my name.*
- If you make me the sole object of your thoughts and aims, you will gain the supreme goal.
- If one sees me and me alone and listens to my leelas and is devoted to me alone, they will reach God.
- Whoever withdraws their heart from wife, child, and parents and loves me, is my real lover and he merges in me like a river in the sea. (Love God above all human relationships, detach yourself; love for God will also lead to waves of love for your own family)
- I am dependent on him, who thinks of Me and eats nothing without offering to Me, such a devotee will merge with Me.
- I am the slave of those who hunger and thirst after me and treat everything else as unimportant.
- If one devotes their entire time to me and rests in me, he need fear nothing for body and soul.
- My devotees see everything as their Guru.
- I am your servants' servant.
- Look to me and I will look to you.
- Surrender completely to God.
- Bookish knowledge is worthless. Let us do our prescribed duty and surrender our body, mind, five Pranas (the one primary Prana (*breath*) divides into five types), and wealth to Guru's feet. Guru is God, all pervading. To get this conviction, strong unbounded faith and patience is necessary. We need to give the reins of our life to Him. (Surrendering wealth does not mean giving up your assets to his

temple, it means surrender of the decisions that make or use the wealth, to Sai Baba's spiritual influence).

Spiritual Practice

- *Have faith and patience. Then I will be always with you wherever you are.*
- The four sadhanas (Hindu spiritual practices) and the six sastras (Hindu spiritual texts) are not necessary. Just have complete faith (Shraddha) in your guru - it is enough (spiritual qualities will flower automatically through faith).
- Saburi (patience) ferries you across to the distant goal.
- Mukti (self-realisation) is impossible for those addicted to lust.
- Focussing on wealth is a distraction and barrier to the true spiritual aspirant. You need to earn enough to keep your body in good health, that's all.
- I love devotion. Repeat my name. Seek refuge in me. The simple remembrance of My name as 'Sai, Sai' will do away with sins of speech and hearing. But to know who I am, practice sravana [hearing the word of the Guru] and manana [reflection]. My words are always pregnant with meaning and never hollow.
- Meditate always on My formless nature, which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss.
- If formless meditation is difficult, then think of my form just as you see it here. With such meditation, the difference between subject and object is lost and the mind dissolves in unity.

Relationship with Devotees

Baba had *motherly love* for his devotees - peculiar, extraordinary and disinterested. Just as the child knows or cares nothing, we are the children of Baba. It is up to him to take care of us. For Baba, foes and friends, kings and paupers were the same to him - he was unbiased with no prejudice.

- *Whatever you do, wherever you may be, always bear this in mind: I am always aware of everything you do.*
- I will not leave anybody halfway (Baba will be with us in all future lives till we are led to salvation).
- I look on all with an equal eye.
- The wise and learned fall into pits of egoism, while I save with my grace, the poor, simple and devout souls.
- My people do not come to me of their own accord; it is I who seek and bring them to me.
- However distant my people may be, I draw them to me just as we pull a bird to us with a string tied to its foot.
- I get angry with none. Will a mother get angry with her children? Will the ocean send back the waters to the several rivers?
- Stay by me and keep quiet. I will do the rest.
- My eye is ever on those who love me.
- I will not allow my devotees to come to harm.
- If a devotee is about to fall, I stretch out my hands to support him or her.
- I think of my people day and night. I say their names over and over.
- I give my devotees whatever they ask, until they ask for what I want to give.

- My treasury (Spiritual Truths) is open but no one brings carts to take from it. I say, “Dig!” but no one bothers.
- There is a wall of separation between oneself and others and between you and me. Destroy this wall!
- *Do not approach palmists and occultists for advise i.e., depend on Baba’s grace for everything.*

Dakshina

- If I take one rupee as dakshina (a disciples offering to his guru as thanks) from anybody, I have to return it tenfold to him. (Giving Dakshina to Baba teaches us non-attachment. Baba never took Dakshina from everyone.)
- In his words, he said that he took Dakshina where ‘(Spiritual) Debt, enmity and murder have to be atoned for’.
- God does not like huge donations against ones wishes. He likes even a small amount given with love, devotion and appreciation. (If somebody forgot their vow, Baba made them pay it by reminding).

Material World

- *We should not be anxious, leave everything to Baba and do our duty.*
- Whenever you undertake to do something, do it thoroughly or not at all.
- We should mean well and do well. Whatever is destined to happen, will happen.
- Do not be obsessed by the importance of wealth.
- If you are wealthy, be humble. Plants bend when they bear fruit.
- Wealth is really a means to work out dharma (karmic responsibilities). If one uses it merely for personal enjoyment, it is vainly spent.
- Do not be idle: do your duty, steady your mind (take Baba’s name, read the Shri Sai Satcharita), and have faith in my words.
- Do not take any labor for free and in vain. However, spend money in charity; be generous and munificent but not extravagant. The giver gives, but really he is sowing the seed for later - the gift of a rich harvest.
- Give food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, and clothes to the naked. Then God will be pleased.
- Poverty is the highest of riches and a thousand times superior to a king’s wealth.
- What is our duty? To behave properly. That is enough.
- The wise are cheerful and content with their lot in life (Destiny is not comparable. Destiny of each person is unique by itself. So don't suffer by comparing and contrasting your destiny with others).
- Get on with your worldly activities cheerfully, but do not forget God
- Distinguish right from wrong and be honest, upright and virtuous.
- Gods quest cannot be carried out successfully on an empty stomach.
- Speak the truth and truth alone.
- Let us be humble.

Ask for His Blessings

‘Without my grace, not even a leaf can move’

Shirdi Sai Baba

Relationships

- *Satsang, that is associating with the good, is good. Dussaya, or associating with evil-minded people, is evil and must be avoided.* (similarly avoid dwelling on evil thoughts as they will start influencing your approach)
- Choose friends who will stick to you till the end, through thick and thin.
- Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody comes to you. It is on account of rinanubandh (previous life relationships) that we come together (Hence we need to treat everybody – human or animal - coming to us with care, love and respect)
- Other people’s acts will affect just them. It is only your own deeds that will affect you (So we should not criticize or compare and talk bad about others).
- What do we lose by another’s good fortune? Let us celebrate with them, or strive to emulate them. That should be our desire and determination.
- See the divine in the human being.
- You should not stay for even one second at a place where people are speaking disrespectfully of a saint.
- If you do not want to part with what you have, do not lie and claim that you have nothing, but decline politely saying that circumstances or your own desires prevent you.
- Fulfil any promises you have made.

‘Difference of opinion should not lead to difference of mind. Half the problems of our life will not arise at all if we remember this’

A Devotee of Baba

Anger and Hatred

- Do not kick against the pricks of life.
- Do not fight with anyone, nor retaliate, nor slander anyone.
- Do not bark at people and don’t be aggressive, but put up with others’ complaints. Let anybody speak hundreds of things against us, do not resent by giving any bitter reply. If you always tolerate such things, you will certainly be happy. Let the world go topsy-turvy, look on calmly.
- Harsh words cannot pierce your body. If anybody speaks ill of you, just continue on unperturbed.
- If you cannot endure abuse from another, just say a simple word or two, or else leave. If anyone offends you do not return tit for tat.
- If you avoid rivalry and dispute, God will protect you.
- If anyone gets angry with another, they wound me to the quick.
- People abuse their own friends and family, but it is only after performing many meritorious acts that one gets a human birth. Why then come to Shirdi and slander people?
- *Be ashamed of your hatred.* Do not indulge in reviling or scandalizing others. Give up hatred and be quiet. Do not criticize others especially behind their back, that pierces my heart and hurts me. One who suffers and endures pleases me. (This evil tendency needs to be completely rid of by Sai Baba’s devotees. We have to take this to heart and not unnecessarily criticize others or interfere unnecessarily in others affairs. Baba took great exception to this).

- *Aggression versus Assertion.* In the context of Hindu-Muslim unity, he said 'If anybody does evil unto you, do not retaliate (to avoid the cycle of hatred). If you can do anything, do some good unto others' (Baba was against 'retaliation' i.e. actively reacting in a violent state of mind (aggression). However, he was not against assertive behaviour or ahimsa (taking a non-violent stand by our commitment to the truth, even if the opposing forces are overpowering) which is always a natural result of the spiritual process. Baba himself was a very assertive person in his loving motherly relationship with his devotees, whenever they would waver from his advise. However, as an agent of God, a simple glance, a pronouncement, a thought or a touch, was (and is) enough to carry out his work.

Shri Satchitananda Sadguru
Sainath Maharaj Ki Jai!

[Let us Hail our Lord Shirdi Sai
Baba, who is Pure Existence,
Knowledge and Bliss]

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all

