

## **Shirdi Sai Baba (In the Nutshell)**



Early life of Baba is shrouded in mystery. There is no authentic document leading to the specific information of his early life. Nobody knew the parents, birth or birthplace of Sai Baba. Many questions were put to Baba and others but no satisfactory answer was received. Baba first came to Shirdi when he was a young lad of sixteen and stayed there for three years. When he reappeared near Aurangabad and came to Shirdi with the marriage party of Chand Patil , he was twenty years old. Thereafter, he stayed in Shirdi for an unbroken period of sixty years, after which Baba took His Maha Samadhi in the year 1918. Thus it can be inferred that year of Baba's birth is approximately 1838 AD. There is one another unauthentic account which says that he was born to Brahmin parents in 1838 in a place called Pathri in Marathwada. He was abandoned soon after and was adopted by a childless Sufi Fakir and his wife. Later he was put in the care of a guru (Venkush) where he remained for 12 years. According to still another version he studied with a Sufi Master in Aurangabad where Sufism flourished. He was first seen in Shirdi around 1858 but had disappeared after a while. However the case may be, Baba was a great fakir, aulia or a sufi saint who held the view that believer of any religion could attain Almighty under the benediction of Guru, who could impart knowledge, guidance and the right path. Baba did not preach any religion; neither established any institution and nay discriminated between his followers,

whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and so on. He gave all of them a universal truth – Sab Ka Malik Ek (God is one).

Baba's stayed in Shirdi for more than 60 years. The life of Baba who is God Incarnate is as wide and deep as the ocean. The belief in simplicity was his greatest virtue. He never called himself God and always uttered "Allah Malik" (God is the Savior). He lived a life of Fakir and mendicancy and called himself to be servant of the God. Many personalities came to the Sai Darbar, some to test him or some to pay their obeisance but all were welcomed with the universal smile of Baba. Sai respected devotees' feelings and prayed for their welfare. The warmth's of His darshan was such that even agitated and angry mind melted on seeing his form and became one with Him. He was Pure Anand and always engrossed in divine ecstasy. His casual talks and behavior bestowed untold happiness on the devotees. He was Sat Chit Anand and nectar rained from His speech and stories. Such was the personality of the Sai Baba.

In the early years of His stay in Shirdi, Baba did not talk and inter act much with the villagers. He mostly confined to himself. For hours he will sit under the Neem Tree, meditate and recite his Guru's name. In fact, this was Baba's Guru Sthan (Guru's place). Initially, the villagers did not pay any attention and considered him to be a mad fakir as he used to store burnt matchsticks in his pockets. Later, he became the physician of the villager and used to cure people in a typical way. Though he used no medicine but still people were cured.

He made a dilapidated mosque as his residence – which is now known as Dwarka Mai. He used to sweep, mop and wash himself the entire place.

Though people came and helped but Baba never anticipated any help from them. Dwarka Mai had no door and was never closed at any given time. People used to come and go at their will. What to speak of people, even cat, dogs, birds and animals freely roamed in the Masjid. Ever since his advent in Shirdi, he loved all and sundry without any distinction. All were equal to him. To Hindus, he said, “Allah Bala Kare Ga”, and to Muslims “Ram, Ram”. He even repaired temples and mosques with equal tenacity. Those who went to make enquiry about his caste were dumb-founded and were captured by His Darshana. So none could decide as to whether Baba was a Muslim or a Hindu. He celebrated Hindu and Muslim festivals with all due formalities. Many Hindu and Muslim personalities were part of His Darbar. Hence, none could understand Baba’s religion.

We bow to Him and seek His blessings to make our life as sweet as nectar and may get rest under the dust of His Holy feet.

RAJESH ANAND