

## SHIRDI SAI BABA



Sri Shirdi Sai Baba played a key role in re-uniting the divided Hindus and Muslims during British rule when the country was undergoing subjugation, debt problems, and many other social problems. Sai Baba made people realize the basic oneness of humanity and advised the importance of respecting time-honored cultural traditions of all religions. His various divine leelas and superhuman miracles rejuvenated the common people and restored faith in God amongst the people who were forced to survive under several foreign rulers one after another for hundreds of years

## Shirdi Sai Baba



### **Where & when born**

Shirdi Saibaba is believed to have born in a small village in the Marathwada District of Maharashtra known as Pathri to a Brahmin family in the year 1838.

### **Brief history of the Shirdi Sai Baba**

According to the book *Sai Satcharita*, Sai Baba arrived at the village of [Shirdi](#) in the [Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra, British India](#), when he was about 16 years old. He led an ascetic life, sitting motionless under a [neem](#) tree and [meditating](#) while sitting in an [asana](#). The people of the village were wonder-struck to see such a young lad practicing hard penance, not minding heat or cold. By day he associated with no one, by night he was afraid of nobody. There are some indications that he met with many saints and fakirs, and worked as a weaver. He claimed to have been with the army of [Rani Lakshmbai](#) of [Jhansi](#) during the [Indian Rebellion of 1857](#).<sup>[16]</sup> It is generally accepted that Sai Baba stayed in Shirdi for three years, disappeared for a year, and returned permanently around 1858. People also realized that this "Baba" was no ordinary person but a person with extraordinary godly powers. Such powers are not known or present in normal human beings. Baba preached his principle of love and faith in humanity to all his disciples. He always felt anguished over the fact that all those who came to him were more for their own personal problems and not for attaining the ultimate goal of reaching God which he felt could be attained only by true servicing of humanity. Sai baba strongly believed in uniformity of religion and he never distinguished anyone on the basis of caste, creed or religion. He always made it a point not to return empty handed those who had come to him in their hour of need and grief. He performed miracles to alleviate the suffering of poor people. On one occasion he restored the eyes of a blind elderly and in another occasion he lighted a lantern with water when there was no oil to burn it.

As all good things have to end ultimately "Baba" also left his body on his own will on 15th Oct. 1918

### **Principles & Practices in Spiritual Life**

Sai Baba opposed all persecution based on religion or caste. He was an opponent of religious orthodoxy – Christian, Hindu and Muslim.[24]Although Sai Baba himself led the life of an ascetic, he advised his followers to lead an ordinary family life.

He advised devotees to follow their family deities' ("kula-devata") rituals followed for many generations before them



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Sai Baba encouraged his devotees to pray, chant God's name, and read holy scriptures. He told Muslims to study the Qur'an and Hindus to study texts such as the Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, and Yoga Vashista.[25]

In his teachings, Sai Baba emphasized the importance of performing one's duties without attachment to earthly matters and of being content regardless of the situation. In his personal practice, Sai Baba observed worship procedures belonging to Hinduism and Islam

### **Spiritual Works**

The Shirdi Sai Baba movement began in the 19th century, while he was living in Shirdi. A local [Khandoba](#) priest, Mhalsapati Nagre, is believed to have been his first devotee. In the 19th century Sai Baba's followers were only a small group of Shirdi inhabitants and a few people from other parts of India. The movement started developing in the 20th century, with Sai Baba's message reaching the whole of India.<sup>[8]</sup> During his life, Hindus worshiped him with Hindu rituals and Muslims considered him to be a Saint. Sai Baba left behind no spiritual heirs, appointed no disciples, and did not even provide formal initiation (diksha), despite requests. Some disciples of Sai Baba achieved fame as spiritual figures, such as [Upasni Maharaj](#) of [Sakori](#). He indicated he would reincarnate in another body in Andhra Pradesh to some of his devotees and eventually it was cited in his next birth with the same person.

### **Worship of Sai Baba across religions**

#### Hinduism

During Sai Baba's life, the Hindu saint Anandanath of Yewala declared Sai Baba a spiritual "diamond".<sup>[41]</sup> Another saint, Gangagir, called him a "jewel".<sup>[41]</sup> Sri Beedkar Maharaj greatly revered Sai Baba, and in 1873, when he met him he bestowed the title [Jagad guru](#) upon him.<sup>[42][43]</sup> Sai Baba was also greatly respected by [Vasudevananda Saraswati](#) (known as [Tembye Swami](#)).<sup>[44]</sup> He was also revered by a group of [Shaivicyogis](#), to which he belonged, known as the *Nath-Panchayat*

#### Zoroastrianism

Sai Baba is worshiped by prominent Zoroastrians such as Nanabhoy Palkhivala and Homi Bhabha, and has been cited as the Zoroastrians' most popular non-Zoroastrian religious figure.[47]

Meher Baba, who was born into a Zoroastrian family, met Sai Baba once, during World War I, in December 1915. Meher Baba was a youngster named Merwan Sheriar Irani, when he met Sai Baba for a few minutes during one of Sai Baba's processions in Shirdi. This event is considered as the most significant in Meher Baba's life.

#### Islam

From a Sufi perspective, Sai Baba of Shirdi is considered as a [Pir](#) or [Fakir](#). Sai Baba's teachings attracted a lot of [Muslim](#) devotees as his teachings and lifestyle was severely influenced by [Sufism](#) like uttering "Allah Malik" (God is King) and "Sabka Malik Ek" (One God Governs All) continuously. Baba was extremely well-versed in [Quran](#). He occasionally quoted passages from the Quran. His devotee Abdul Baba went on writing down what Baba used to utter which is mentioned in the book (in [Marathi](#) and [Modi script](#)) which contains the gracious utterances of Baba. He gave spiritual experiences to many Muslim devotees about eternal spiritual love for God as explained in Quran



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### **Philanthropic Works**

Sai Baba encouraged charity, and stressed the importance of sharing. He said: "Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect. Shri Hari (God) will certainly be pleased if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and your verandah to strangers for sitting and resting. If anybody wants any money from you and you are not inclined to give, do not give, but do not bark at him like a dog

### **Writings / Celebrated books**

Biographers of Sai Baba (e.g., Govindrao Raghunath Dabholkar, Acharya Ekkirala Bharadwaja, Smriti Srinivas, Antonio Rigopolous) have based their writing on primary sources. One such source is the *Shirdi Diary* by Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde, which describes every day of the author's stay at Shirdi. The most important source about Sai's life is the *Shri Sai Satcharita* by Hemadpant.

*Sai Baba of Shirdi and His Teachings* by Acharya Ekkirala Bharadwaja is an in-depth study of Sai Baba's life routine and activities. Shortly after Sai Baba's passing, devotee B.V. Narasimhaswamiji compiled accounts by eyewitnesses such as *Sri Sai Baba's Charters and Sayings* and *Devotee's Experiences of Sai Baba*

### **Other References:**

Sai Baba The Perfect Master by K.K. Ramakrishnan, Shirdi Sai Baba Speaks to Yogi Spencer by Dr. Satya Pal Ruhela and Messages of Sri Sai Baba, & Golden Voice and Divine Touch of Sri Sai Baba by Dr. K.V. Raghava Rao

### **Location**

Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, (Shirdi)

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### **Sources**

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