

### 3. Sai Baba's Sandalwood Mandir

*Live Experiences of the Tarkhad Family with Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi*

As described earlier the visits of Tarkhad family members to Shirdi had increased. Their love for Baba was on the rise like the waxing of the Moon of first Fortnight. Although they felt like being at Baba's feet in Shirdi all the time, which in any case was not possible. They developed a strong desire to have a big size photo, which could be put to worship in their residence at Bandra. The idea behind was, when they were away from Shirdi they should not forget Baba, i.e. out of sight is out of mind. Both father and son had a peculiar nature that they would never speak about their love towards Baba. They had immense faith in him. They knew that he is Antaryami who can accurately read their mind and will surely organize to fulfill their desire at an appropriate time. As such Baba's two main teachings were Faith and Patience.

On one early morning Babasaheb and Jyotindra had a dream. They saw a beautiful carved Mandir and Baba sitting in it. The dream had deep impression on their mind. They got up and drew the sketch of the same, as such they both were good at drawing. When they came to the breakfast table they exchanged their thoughts about their dream of the morning. They brought their sketches and were astonished to see that the sketches matched in toto. They instantly decided to have such a Mandir in their house. They made inquiries and purchased Sandalwood. They appointed an expert carpenter and showed him the sketch of the Mandir and requested him to carve out one for them. Their Bandra residence had a small terrace and the Mandir making began over there. I think it took more than a year for the Mandir to take final shape. At the end of it 9 feet tall & 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 feet square Sandalwood Mandir was ready. Well they were in dilemma, from where to acquire Baba's portrait, which can be put for worshipping in that Mandir.

Dear readers you must be aware that Baba never allowed anyone to photograph him by a camera hence to get his portrait was a big task But Tarkhad's were confident that the dream was Baba's creation and he will therefore fulfill the same.

As their habit one Friday afternoon they visited Chorbazar in Mumbai They would dress up in a fixed attire i.e. Babasaheb in Coat Trousers with an English Hat and Jyotindra in Coat & Trousers with Black coloured Gandhi cap on his head. While they were going round in lanes of Chorbazar something unique happened. One Muslim shop keeper came shouting at them and said " Hey Gentlemen, all these days I am looking forward to meet you as I have a parcel for in my shop." Babasaheb and Jyotindra were taken aback and were worried that the shopkeeper might dump some stolen article on them. They questioned him that how could he select them out of so many people. The shopkeeper then requested them to move to his shop where he can explain everything. On reaching his shop he informed them that a few days ago one Sainly looking elderly gentleman came to his shop and handed over one parcel to him. He told him that on Friday one Hindu father and son are coming to this place. Father wears an English Hat and Son wears a Black Gandhi Cap. He handed over one parcel for them and also paid Rs.50/- as service charges.

I was therefore keeping watch on the people moving in pairs and located you rightly so. They were then beginning to get convinced by his explanation. He then brought the parcel and handed over to them. But they were still doubtful about the stolen material so they made him open the parcel before taking the delivery of it. He unpacked the parcel and it was a black & white Portrait of Lord Sai enclosed in a nice Wooden Photo Frame. Both of them were in tears and they confirmed to the shopkeeper that it is their Parcel. They profusely thanked him and offered to pay some money in return. The shop keeper declined to accept any money as he had strict instructions of the Donor. They use to travel in a Studebaker champion car and they could carry the photo frame safely to Bandra. They had another pleasant surprise as the photo frame fitted exactly in the Sandalwood Mandir without calling for any alteration. The entire Tarkhad family was overwhelmed with joy, which had no bounds. They then consecrated Sai Baba's Photo in the Sandalwood Mandir. My father use to religiously get up early morning and at 5 a.m. he would perform the pooja by sandalwood paste to Baba's forehead and lighting a lamp scented sticks. Sugar cubes were offered as prasad, which they all use to consume at lunch time. Now they all were eagerly waiting for their next trip to Shirdi.

As usual they entered the Dwarkamai and presented their offerings to Baba. He told them to be seated over there. One of the Sai devotees who was stationed in Shirdi and was frantically trying to take out a Camera photo of Sai for past few days and was unsuccessful came to Baba and requested for the last try. Baba suddenly became angry and shouted at him and said, " Hey, what are you craving for my photo. Please go to my Bhau's place and you will find me alive in that photograph in his mandir. No sooner my father heard this they were more than pleased for what all they had done in their house. Baba was confirming that he is receiving their worship daily. My father immediately got up and prostrated in front of Baba. My father prayed to Lord Sai internally stating that he may be granted such arrant that he shall never be able to forget Sai and shall keep singing only his prayers and nothing but his prayers (HECHI DAAN DEGA DEVA TUZA VEESARA NA VHAVA).

So this is the way Shirdi Sai Baba got himself consecrated into Sandalwood Mandir at Tarkhad's residence. This Mandir is available for Darshan at the residence of my late brother Ravindra at Vasai.

*Source:*

*[https://www.saibabaofindia.com/live\\_experiences\\_of\\_the\\_tarkhad\\_family\\_with\\_sri\\_sai\\_baba\\_of\\_shirdi.htm](https://www.saibabaofindia.com/live_experiences_of_the_tarkhad_family_with_sri_sai_baba_of_shirdi.htm)*