

Part 1 - Chapter 2 - Arrival Of Sai Baba In Shirdi

Shirdi Che Sai Baba - Dr. Keshav Bhagwant Gavankar

Arrival Of Sai Baba In Shirdi

Saint Dnyaneshwar has written 'Haripath', a book of Namasmaraan (chanting God's name). In the same, he says, "I constantly chant the name of Hari". Through His Name I remember Him. He is everywhere, in every atom, in every particle, in each of the objects in the universe. He pervades the entire universe. Vaikunth is another name of Hari. It is one of the thousand names of God.

According to Etymology there are many different meanings of the word Vaikunth". In Srimad-Bhagwata, it is stated that, a Rishi named Shubhra and his wife Vikuntha were the chosen parents of God. And the son thus appeared then became famous by the name Vaikunth. Vaikunth also means, 'he who cannot be blocked or hindered'. (Vigata kuntha yasya saha, in Sanskrit). Bhagwan (Krishna) possesses this quality. Nobody can prohibit Him from anything for any reason. That is why He is called Vaikunth. In Shanti Parva of Mahabharat, (342-80) God Himself declares, "Earth, Water, Space, Air and Light are brought together by Me. So I am named as Vaikunth".

This 'Anandswarup' Vaikunth Hari had come to Shirdi in Saguna-Sakar-Rupa (taking a visible form), of Sai Baba. Only pure hearted true devotees can recognize His disguise. Then they sing the glory of the Lord, Who is pleased by their Bhajans. The devotees offer everything at the Lotus feet of their Lord. He then becomes impatient to run to His devotees. He becomes eager to give darshan to them. But, are all the devotees of the same kind? Everybody possesses eyes to see with; but how many people have the vision to understand whatever they see with their physical eyes? If you have even a slightest defect in your 'inner eyes', you will not be able to recognize the Lord. The verb to see, has a broader sense and an extensive meaning in spirituality. It is said that to worship Lord Shiva, Jiva has to become Shiva! When Jiva experiences love, his eyes express glitter and shine. Thus love is reflected. Love has many shades with subtle differences. For example, an infant looks at its mother with love. Father of the same infant looks at the same woman, who is his wife, with a different feeling. Whatever is created by the Lord in this world is meant for Jiva. But each and every object that is created cannot sing bhajan and describe the glory of the Lord. So He Himself is singing for Jivas through the essence of everything. Shiva wants Jivas to be happy. Therefore He is serving Jiva with the medium of His creation. Truly Jivas do not qualify to serve their Lord. Just think; can an infant serve its mother? No! It is the mother who serves her child. And it is the Divine Mother who does same for children, Jivas.

Wealth has limitations. Everything in the world has limits and boundaries. Only God Principle limitless. Many sacred scriptures tried to estimate and understand God but they also some limits. Even Vedas gave up and declared, 'Neti, Neti! Jiva is attached to objects. He is attracted towards them and praises them. But this also has limits. He gets fed-up those objects, becomes thoroughly exhausted and then turns inside. When this inner journey starts,

Jiva finds Prabhu Sri Sai Ram. Sai Prabhu beyond mind and intellect, beyond thoughts and deeds. If Jiva's inner sight and understanding reaches there, he can grasp what Sai is. To experience that pleasure and bliss, Jiva must have a clear vision.

Mother of a child remains engaged in her day-to-day work but her attention is focused on her child. The world around can never know, when and how she attends to her child and protects him. She does all this just through a glance. It is her secret, that she experiences love only through the glance. Eyes are witnesses to the experience love. When Divine Light appears before the eyes, devotee enjoys the experience of love. This is what is called 'Netra-Sakshatkar'.

Nagar District: Land Of Saints.

District Nagar has become a holy land, as many Saints and spiritual masters have appeared in this land. Shirdi village is a piece of this holy land. Why Sai Baba chose this area as a headquarter for completing His mission, has been explained in my (the author's) previous book "Shiladhi". Many pilgrims going to Pandharpur or Rameshwar and to other places in South used pass through Shirdi. A few of those are mentioned here:

Devdas: He was a sadhu and many others used to visit him.

Janakidas: Also was a sadhu who stayed in Shirdi for several days. He was a highly evolved person and used to remain in Baba's company.

Gangagir Baba: A famous personality. When he arrived in Shirdi, he saw Baba carrying two earthen pots full of water drawn from well. He said to people around, "When this holy man come here? He is simply a Gem. He is a great personality. It is your good fortune that He here." Then Gangagir Baba himself went for His darshan and both had an intimate talk.

Anandnath Maharaj: He was Kudaldeshkar Brahmin. Surname was Walavalkar. He was a disciple of Akkalkot Swami. He said to the residents of Shirdi, "This person really a diamond. You do not know how precious He is! He has come and sat in Shirdi which is a dunghill today, but He will change Shirdi". Baba had not gained name or fame till that time. Native people considered Him only as a common man or as an insane fakir. This precious diamond had come to Shirdi from Moghalai (now Marathwada). The prophecy has come true since today Shirdi is one of the foremost places of pilgrimage in India, known all over the world.

In Aurangabad district there is a village named 'Dhup'. Chandbhai, a Muslim, was a resident and a Patil of that village. He had a mare with which he used to go to the city for trade. Reaching the city he would leave the mare in the fields nearby for grazing and go to the city. After finishing the work in the evening, he would come back to the field and go to his village riding the mare.

One day he went to the city (Aurangabad) as usual. He went to an open field, took off the saddle, left the mare and went to the bazaar. When he came back to the same place, there was no mare! He searched here and there for her, but it was in vain. Extremely disappointed, he started walking homewards with the saddle on his back. On the way he saw a fakir sitting under a mango tree. He called out to Chandbhai and said, "You are very much exhausted and tired. Rest here for sometime; smoke this chillum (pipe) for a while. Otherwise you will faint in midway". His words made a soothing effect on Patil's mind. He sat beside the fakir with a sigh! Fakir asked him, "Why are you carrying this saddle on your back?" Telling him the whole story Patil said, "My mare is lost! It's a great loss to me". Fakir smiled and said, "That mare is

grazing in the neighboring field, near the rivulet. Go and see". Patil was surprised by those words. But he believed Him and searched for the animal in the said direction. To his utter surprise he found the mare at the place which the fakir had told him. This fakir must be an Avaliya. Patil thought, and approached Him, now with the mare.

The fakir filled the chillum with tobacco, but there were no embers! So the fakir hit the ground with a pair of tongs in his hand, and wonder of wonders, there was a flashing ember! There was no water too. Again with one more hit, there flowed a stream of water. Both of them smoked to their satisfaction. Patil was stunned to see these miracles. He invited the fakir to his house. He agreed and promised to come the next day. Accordingly, He went to Chandbhai Patil's house, and stayed there for two days.

Shirdi Brindavan' is the abode of bliss. One is thrilled even if he reaches there in imagination. Parabrahma, God, was eager to descend and come here. But He waited for the right opportunity. Baba was the God who came in disguise. He wanted to shower His love on His devotees and to accept the 'Naivedyam' offered by them, with lots of love and faith. That moment came very shortly. Is there anything in the world, which Shyamsundar cannot do?

Marriage of some relative of Chandbhai was arranged with a girl from Shirdi. The fakir came to Shirdi paraphernalia of Chandbhai. They sojourned a ground near Khandoba temple, outside Shirdi. On arrival he directly went into temple, where Mhalsapati, the pujari, was worshipping Deity. He welcomed the fakir calling him, "Aao Sai". The fakir accepted the name and henceforth He came to be known as "Sai Baba". What was previous name then? Nobody knows.

Baba used to wear a dhoti, a Kafni and a cap when he first came to Shirdi. About His age at that time, could guess that He was entering adolescence, no sign of moustache. He might have been 16/17 years old. Mhalsapati took Him to the town and introduced Him to Kashiram Shimpi and Appa Jagale. This trio was always enthusiastic and alert to receive the Saints, sadhus and fakirs when they came to Shirdi. Later, all the three became the ardent devotees of Baba. Since the first day Baba started staying in the masjid, which called He 'Dwarkamai'.

The masjid at that time was not in a good condition. Still Baba preferred to stay there. If somebody insisted He used to go to his house; that too very rarely. When needed He would give medicines to the people, without charging anything. Not only that, some patients required to be attended and nursed, He would go to the patient's house to serve him. Later on He used to give 'Udi' instead of medicine and that was sufficient cure for the ailments.

Staying in Dwarkamai in Shirdi, the Lord of the Universe used to wear rags and look like an insane person just to hide His real identity. Baba used to sit on the banks of a rivulet nearby or He would sit in a field or under a mango tree. Sometimes He would show violent rage towards people and drive them away. Because of His strange behaviour people did not take Him seriously. (How anyone whose heart devoid of love can recognize the form of the Lord, who is the ultimate 'Anand-swarupa'.)

Baba was very much fond of illuminating the masjid and also other temples in the town. He had to borrow oil from the grocer's shop or from the surrounding houses. The village people were illiterate and spiritually ignorant. How could they think beyond worldly affairs? They were unaware about Baba's Divinity. They took Him very lightly since they thought Him to be an insane fakir. To teach Him a lesson they unanimously decided not to give Him oil for His oil lamps. That evening Baba came back to the masjid with empty hands. For Him, it was not at all

problem. He put water in the lamp pots. But before doing that, He drank a little water from the tin pot, as an offering to Brahma. Then He lighted all the lamps pots filled with water.

When Baba was preparing these water lamps, all the villagers were anxiously observing as to what would happen. Seeing Him putting water in the earthen pots their belief was confirmed regarding His insanity. But after a few moments when they saw all water lamps burning with bright flames, they were astonished and dumbfounded. Those water lamps continued to burn throughout the night. This event taught a lesson, not to Baba as villagers had planned, but to the villagers themselves, "Those who came to scoff, remained to pray". They realized their mistake and surrendered before Baba asking for His pardon.

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