Sri Shirdi Sai Baba

Shirdi Katha
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the Divine reincarnation of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. Little was known about the birth and childhood of Shirdi Baba until Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself, told the story of His past incarnation as Sai Baba of Shirdi. All the words in this Shirdi Katha have been directly spoken by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself.
Guide to Shirdi Katha

1. Sit in your prayer room
2. Light a lamp or candle
3. Light a stick of incense
4. Place some prasaad (udi, fruits or sweets) in front of your altar
5. Commence the Pooja individually or as a group

Pooja Instructions

1. Chant the sacred syllable, “Om” three times
2. Read the sacred Shirdi Katha, Chapters 1 to 5
3. Chant the Shirdi Gayatri three times
4. Read the Eleven Assurances of Shirdi Sai Baba (optional)
5. Sing two or three bhajans, beginning with a Ganesha Bhajan
6. Perform Aarathi
7. Read The Sacred Dhuni (optional)
8. Distribute prasaad

Note: If you cannot follow all the above instructions, you may read Shirdi Katha, Chapters 1-5.

This Katha can be read on Full-Moon Days, on Thursdays, or daily.

Those who read or listen to this sacred and powerful Katha (story) with full faith and reverence, will have their wishes fulfilled and receive the choicest blessings.
Chapter 1: Divine Advent

In the former Nizam's dominions, there was a remote village called Pathri. In that village there was a couple named Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma. They were worshippers of Eashwara and Parvathi. As they had no offspring for a long time, they intensified their prayers.

Gangabhavadya used to ply boats near the village for a living. One night there were heavy rains, so Gangabhavadya left his house to take care of the boats. Devagiriamma took an early meal and went to bed. At 9 p.m. there was a knock at the door. Devagiriamma opened the door, expecting the likely return of her husband. A very old man entered the house. He pleaded, “It is very cold outside. Please permit me, mother, to stay inside.” As she was a pious woman, Devagiriamma allowed him to stay in the verandah and went in after bolting the inner door. A while later, there was a knock on the inner door. The old man said, “I am feeling hungry. Please give me some food.” Finding that there was no food, the woman mixed some flour with curds and gave it to him.

There was again another knock after some time. When she opened the door, the old man said, “My legs are aching. Mother, will you please massage them?” Devagiriamma went inside, sat in the prayer room and prayed to Parvathi, “Oh Mother! Why are you testing me like this? What should I do? Should I serve him or refuse?”

Going out of the house by the back door she went in search of someone to render this service. No one was available. Again there was a knock by the old man. At the same time a woman knocked at the back door. The woman said, “It appears you came to my house and sought some help. I was away at the time. Please let me know what service I should render.” Feeling happy that Goddess Parvathi herself had sent the woman in response to her prayers, Devagiriamma sent the newcomer to the verandah to serve the old man and closed the door.

The old man and the woman were none other than Parameshwara and Parvathi, the Divine Couple. Parameshwara told Parvathi, “Fulfill the cherished desires of this lady!”
Parvathi said to Eashwara, “Lord! You are the Supreme! Please shower Grace on her Yourself.” Eashwara said, “I came to test her. You came in answer to her prayers. Hence you must bless her.” There was a knock on the door again. When Devagiriamma opened the door, Parvathi and Parameshwara appeared before her in their Divine form. Unable to contain her joy, Devagiriamma fell at their feet.

Parvathi blessed her, “I grant you a son to maintain the lineage and a daughter for Kanyaadaanam (a girl to be offered in marriage).” Then Devagiriamma fell at the feet of Eashwara. Eashwara said, “I am immensely pleased with your devotion. I Myself shall take birth as your third child.” When Devagiriamma got up, the Divine Couple was not there. Feeling ecstatic over this experience, Devagiriamma was eagerly expecting the return of her husband to relate to him the whole story.

The husband returned in the morning. Devagiriamma related to him all that happened the previous night. The husband said, “Devagiri! What is this fanciful tale? It is all a dream! Parvathi and Parameshwara appearing before you and giving darshan! It is pure fantasy!” Gangabhavadya dismissed the whole episode, but as the years passed, Devagiriamma became enceinte and a son was born. A year later a daughter was born. Gangabhavadya was convinced that the birth of the two children was the result of Parvathi and Parameshwara’s blessing.

When Devagiriamma conceived for the third time, Gangabhavadya felt an urge to give up hearth and home and search for the Divine Couple. He announced to his wife that he was leaving for the forest to do penance. The devoted wife that she was, Devagiriamma decided to follow him, though she was in the ninth month of her pregnancy. After proceeding some distance, she developed labour pains. Soon she delivered a handsome baby boy. Wrapping the babe in a piece of cloth, she left the child by the roadside and followed her husband.

The first chapter of the Shirdi Katha ends with all auspiciousness. Bow to Sri Shirdi Sai. Peace be to all.
Chapter 2: Baba’s Early Years

One day, while walking by the roadside, a Sufi fakir found a babe wrapped in a piece of cloth. As he was also childless, the fakir brought the child home. The boy stayed in the fakir's home for four years (from 1835 to 1839). In the tide of time, the fakir passed away. His wife, who had lavished great affection on the child, was grief-stricken. To add to her worries, the boy was behaving in a troublesome manner.

In those days, Hindu-Muslim differences in that area were growing alarmingly. There was considerable bitterness between members of the two communities. The boy used to visit a Hindu temple and sing songs in praise of Allah: “Mein Allah hoo!” (I am God) “Allah Malik hai!” (Allah is the Supreme Lord). He used to declaim in this manner in the temple. The Hindus used to chastise the boy in various ways for his misbehaviour. Nor was that all. He would enter a mosque and declare: “Rama is God! Shiva is Allah!” His behaviour in singing about Allah in a Hindu temple and about Rama and Shiva in a mosque was puzzling to the public. Members belonging to both communities went to the fakir's wife and complained about the boy's behaviour.

Unable to deal with this situation the fakir's wife handed over the boy to a high-souled, pious scholar named Gopal Rao Deshmukh, also known as Venkusa. Venkusa was giving spiritual lessons to a number of boys. When the young lad was being brought to him, Venkusa had a premonition of his coming. He called the lad, “Aao-ji! Aao-ji! (Come! Come!). I have been waiting for you all these years.” He spoke lovingly to the boy and asked him to go in and have his food.

Venkusa developed great affection for the boy. In every matter, he gave priority to young Baba's views. Seeing this, the other students of the ashram felt envious and started talking amongst themselves. “How is it that teacher is showing so much love for the new boy? We have been here for years. He has not shown us such love.” This was the way some of them spoke. Others said, “He is lucky to have such love.”
The attachment between Venkusa and Baba grew day by day. One day both of them were going to a forest called Sikhaara. After they had gone, the other boys drew up a plan to do away with Baba. They went to the forest and took rest behind a hut. One of the bigger boys took a big brick and hurled it towards Baba. Venkusa, who had great love for Baba, stood in front of Baba and let the brick hit him instead. Blood was streaming from Venkusa's head. Baba immediately tore a piece of cloth from his robe and bandaged Venkusa's bleeding head.

When Baba and Venkusa were speaking about the wound caused to Venkusa, some of the boys came rushing towards them bringing a dead body. That was the body of the boy who wanted to kill Baba. The boys cried, “Guru-ji! Forgive us!” and fell at his feet. Venkusa told them, “Children! I have grown old. This young lad is carrying on all the work I was doing. Love alone can protect you. When there is no love no one can save you.” On hearing these words, the boys fell at the feet of Baba and placed the dead body before him.

Baba burst into laughter. He knew that death could come at any time, in any place and in any situation. Baba transcended time. Age did not matter to him. He was the Cosmic Person. He told the boys, “Today this boy has died. Your turn may come tomorrow. No one is immortal.” The boys cried, “How can we explain this calamity to his parents?” Baba told them, “Tell the parents what actually happened.” The boys realised that if they told the truth they would be put to shame. They could also not also utter falsehood. Recognising their dilemma, Baba asked them, “What is it you want now?” They said, “Please restore the life of this boy.” Baba placed the head of the dead boy on his lap and passed his hand over it. The boy revived. This was Shirdi Baba's first miracle.

Baba stayed in Venkusa's ashram for 12 years, from 1839 to 1851. In 1851, he left the ashram and reached Shirdi, a small village at the time. Every day, Baba would sit under a neem tree. Villagers from nearby places used to visit him and get relief for their ailments. Baba would take some leaves, crush them and give them to the ailing person as medicine. In this manner he cured many persons of their illnesses.
News of Baba’s healing powers spread to all the surrounding villages. As a result, a large number of persons used to come to him and get cured of their ailments. One morning, he suddenly disappeared. A futile search was made in the nearby areas to trace him.

For some years, Baba went about wandering from place to place. Finally, he landed near Dhoop, in Aurangaabaad District. At that time, one Chandu-bhai Patel was returning to Dhoop, disappointed that his horse was missing. While passing through dense forests on the way, he saw Baba sitting under a tree, apparently lost in his own thoughts. Suddenly, Baba hailed him with the words, “Hey, Patel! Come here.”

Baba on occasion used to smoke the chillum (hookah). As there was no water nearby, he hit the ground with a stick and water gushed forth from the place. He hit another place and there was fire. Using the water and the fire, Baba started smoking his hookah and offered it to Chandu-bhai, but he declined the offer. Baba asked him, “What is worrying you, Patel?” Patel asked, “How did you know I am Patel?” “I know everything,” replied Baba. “You are worried about your horse. You are keeping your eyes on the top of your head! You must lower them to trace the horse. Your horse is grazing under the tree there.” Chandu-bhai had searched for the horse in the same place earlier with some of his workers but could not find it. Now he saw it under a tree close to him. He was astonished that Baba had produced water and fire out of the earth and also located his missing horse. Chandu-bhai appealed to him, “Swami! You have rendered great help to me. Please come with me and share my hospitality.” Baba agreed to join him.

Around this time, the marriage of Chandu-bhai's nephew was settled. As he had to go to Shirdi for the wedding, Chandu-bhai requested Baba to come along with him. Baba joined the marriage party and reached Shirdi once again in the year 1858. From that day till 1918, Baba remained in Shirdi. He stayed there for 60 years.

When the marriage party reached Shirdi, the priest of the local Khandoba temple, Mhalaspathi, saw Baba getting down from a cart. Mhalaspathi went to Baba and said, “Aayiyie, Baba! Aayiyie Sai!”
(Come, Baba! Come Sai!) The name “Sai” was given by Mhalaspathi. Till then, no one had conferred a name on Baba.

One day, some valuables were stolen from a rich man's house by a gang of thieves. Upon being questioned by the police, the thieves said the valuables had been given to them by a fakir. Searching for the fakir, they came to Baba and asked him, “Did you give these articles to them?” “Yes,” he said. “Wherefrom did you get them?” was the next question. Baba replied, “They have come from the same place from which all things come.” “Who gave them to you?” “I gave them to myself.”

Baba gave such intriguing answers, that the police could not understand. “I am the giver of everything. How can anyone get anything without my sanction?” declared Baba. Feeling that it was futile to question him further, the police prepared a report. Baba received a summons from the Magistrate to give evidence in the case. Chandu-bhai Patel did not want Baba to go to the Magistrate, so he arranged for Baba to be examined on commission in Shirdi itself.

During the examination, Baba was asked, “What is your father's name?” He replied, “Baba.” (Baba means father). They further asked:

Q. "What is your religion?"
A. "The religion of God."
Q. "Wherefrom did you come?"
A. "I have come from the Atma."
Q. "What is your caste?"
A. "The caste of the Divine."

Baba answered all the questions in this manner. Earlier he had been hailed as “Sai.” In his examination, he had given his father's name as Baba. He was therefore called “Sai Baba.” No one knew when and where Sai Baba was born and who gave him that name.

The second chapter of Shirdi Katha ends with all auspiciousness. Bow to Sri Shirdi Sai. Peace be to all.
Chapter 3: Saviour of the Devotees

While at Shirdi, Baba used to converse with those coming to Him, give advice regarding their problems, and offer courage and solace with regard to their troubles. In this manner, Baba's activities came to be known all over the country.

At that time there was in Maharashtra, a Deputy Collector and Settlement Officer named Hari Vinayak Sathe. He was grief-stricken over the passing of his wife. Sathe’s friend, Professor G.G. Narke, came to his house and advised him that, as there was no purpose in grieving over his loss, he should have a change of place to get over his sorrow. He suggested that it was good to have the darshan of a saint and persuaded him to come to Shirdi.

Upon reaching Shirdi, Sathe and Narke had darshan of Baba. On several occasions, looking at Sathe, Baba laughed, sang and made strange gestures. Doubts arose in Sathe's mind whether Baba was a real sage or an eccentric. Baba told Sathe, “Don't worry about anything. Bodies are like water bubbles. Don't develop any attachment to the deha (body). Develop attachment to the delhi (In-dwelling Spirit). Worries are passing clouds. Have courage. Protect your child.” The last remark had reference to the fact that Sathe's wife had died after giving birth to a child. Even his friend Narke had not heard about the survival of this child. On hearing Baba's words, Sathe realised that Baba was not a crazy person but a trikaala jnaani (One who knew the past, present and future).

Making frequent visits to Shirdi, Sathe was the first to realise that there were no proper amenities at Shirdi for those coming to Baba. The place where he provided residential accommodation for visitors is today known as the “Sathe Wada.”

While serving in this manner, Sathe went again to Shirdi after he began to feel whether there was any purpose in his continuing to earn income and accumulate wealth. On seeing Sathe, Baba smilingly said, “You appear to be losing interest in your job. You are wondering how to dispose of the wealth you have acquired. Why give it to anyone?”
“Use it for a good cause. Build a koti (house) in Shirdi.” Sathe told Baba, “Swami! I am not a millionaire. How can I build a mansion here?” Baba replied, “Go on doing as much as you can. Why fear when I am here?” Baba encouraged Sathe in this manner. In due course, Sathe's maternal uncle, Kelkar, settled down in Shirdi. Sathe used to send funds from Poona and his uncle used to carry on the construction in Shirdi. In this way, Baba used Sathe as his instrument. He regarded Sathe as his right hand in regard to all matters.

One day, Baba summoned Sathe’s uncle, Kelkar and told him, “Today is Guru Poornima. Perform Guru Pooja to me.” No one there knew the meaning of Guru Pooja. Kelkar asked Baba what Guru Pooja meant. Baba asked, “Who do you think is a guru? It is not the pontiffs of mutthas who are gurus. Nor are sanyaasins (renunciants) gurus. God alone is the Guru (Preceptor). Brahmaanandam paramasukhadam kevalam jnaanmurtihim dwandwaathitham.” (He is Supreme Bliss, Giver of Divine happiness, the embodiment of the Highest Advaitic Knowledge and One who transcends all dualities. He is the Supreme Divine Preceptor).

“He is Brahma, He is Vishnu, He is Maheshwara, He is the Supreme Absolute. Salutations to that Supreme Guru. The true guru is one who combines the three forms of the Trinity, the gods who preside over creation, protection and dissolution. Thus, God alone is the real Guru!” declared Baba. On hearing this, Kelkar asked, “Should I worship Brahma, Vishnu or Rudra?” Baba declared in a voice of assumed anger, “Eh Shaitaan! Here I am! Offer worship to Me!” Thereby Baba made known that He was Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. All of those present felt that Baba was the Divine incarnate.

To one who sought His blessings with purity of heart and selfless devotion, Baba conferred His grace abundantly. Once, the wife of Dada Saheb brought her child to Shirdi. She took her husband's reluctant approval for the visit. At that time the plague was rampant in Shirdi. On the second day of her arrival the child developed fever and boils all over the body. The mother lamented who would protect her child from the affliction. She immediately rushed to Baba and cried, “Baba! Baba!”
Baba asked her why she had come. “Is your child having fever? Are their boils on his body? Not only the child, but I too am having boils.” So saying, He lifted His kafni (covering garment) and showed a boil on his body. Mhalaspathi, who was standing near, exclaimed, “Swami! What large boils are these?” He touched Baba's body and found that He was having high fever. The temperature might be as high as 105° or 106° F. The mother cried, “Oh Baba! Has the disease affected not only my son, but you also? Who will protect you?” She was in deep distress. Baba said, “Is there any other to protect the One who is the Protector of all?” The mother immediately begged for Baba's forgiveness. A short while thereafter, Baba's fever came down. The mother returned home and discovered that the fever and boils had vanished from her child as well. She exclaimed, “Baba! Did you take on my child's illness?”

In this way, Shirdi Baba used to demonstrate His powers as and when the occasion arose. What was the reason for this? It was solely due to the Paripoorna Vishwaasam (total faith) which people had in Baba. The devotees followed implicitly whatever Baba directed them to do.

Why did Baba manifest such miracles? In those days there were bitter differences between Hindus and Muslims. With a view of ending such communal differences, Baba wanted to show, through His miracles, the truth that He was the Supreme master of all beings. He had no differences of caste or community. His religion was common to people of all faiths. It was good for everyone. It was observed by all godly persons. This was the creed for all mankind.

Once, a controversy arose among the local people as to whether Baba was a Muslim or a Hindu. Sometimes He used to say, “Allah Malik!” At other times, He would declare, “Dattaatreya Malik!” Whenever He shouted “Allah Malik!” Muslims used to come to Him in the Masjid. His appearance was very much like that of a Muslim. Hence, many Muslims used to come to Him. Hindus also used to come and offer incense to Him. The Muslims did not approve of what the Hindus were doing. The Hindus did not like the way Muslims revered Baba. Consequently, bitterness developed between the two communities.
One day, Mhalaspathi, the priest of the Khandoba temple, was sitting near Baba and doing some service to him. The Muslims, who were opposed to the presence of a Hindu priest near Baba, came with sticks and beat up Mhalaspathi. At every stroke, Mhalaspathi cried out, “Baba! Baba!” Each time he shouted the name of Baba, the blow was borne by Baba. Mhalaspathi fell to the ground. Baba came out. Muslims had great reverence for Baba. Baba roared at the Muslim crowd, “Shaithaan! On the one side you worship me and on the other you beat me. Is this your devotion?” Baba was bleeding all over the body. The Muslims saw it and asked Baba who had beaten him. “Did you not beat me? Did you not beat me?” said Baba, pointing to several men in the crowd. They said, “We did not come near you at all. We only beat Mhalaspathi.” “Who is in Mhalaspathi? I am in him,” declared Baba. “He has surrendered to me and hence all his troubles are mine.”

On hearing this, the Muslims fell at Baba's feet and craved His forgiveness. Baba then summoned the Hindus and Muslims and told them, “Dear Children, you are all the progeny of one Mother.” Thereby Baba demonstrated the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He wanted all differences of caste and creed to be eschewed. What mattered for mankind was the heart. One who is only concerned about his matham (creed) will never discover Maadhavam (the Divine). Baba pointed out that all caste and creed distinctions related only to the body.

Baba used to teach everyone through actions. Once, Dhamu and Naana were rendering service to Baba. Baba collected a few copper coins and was playing with them by tossing them from one hand to another and also testing them in various ways. He appeared to examine them individually. He did not exchange a word with Dhamu and Naana. He went on playing with the coins for half an hour in this manner.

Curious to know what Baba was doing, Naana asked him why He was scrutinising the same coins, again and again. Baba replied, “Dear son, it is true that I am repeating the same action again and again, repeating the same words. Look at that mango tree in front of you. It is in full bloom. The leaves are hardly visible.
If all the flowers in the tree were to become fruits, will the branches be able to bear the weight? But most of the flowers are swept away by the wind. Many others drop of their own accord. Only some become fruits. Of these, some are eaten by squirrels, birds or monkeys. In this way ninety percent of the flowers do not result in fruits. Only ten percent remain in the tree. Is it not so?” They agreed that it was so.

Baba continued, “In the same manner thousands of devotees come to me. Are they all ripening into good devotees? Many drop away in the middle. Some come to get their desires fulfilled. Some seek wealth. Many come for study, in connection with jobs, marriage or other personal desires. In each of them there is some defect or other. No one comes for My sake. I have a precious thing to offer in my coffers. But no one seeks it. It is for this reason that I am examining the coins.”

“Among these coins, some are worn out, some are debased, and some are twisted and worthless. Just as I am examining the defects in these coins, I am also looking for the defects among the devotees who come to Me. I am finding out what defects there are in these people and whether they can really comprehend My Truth. They want Me, but all their desires are related to mundane objects. How can they attain Me with this attitude? How can you reach your destination if you get into a wrong train going in some other direction? Among the many who come to Me, it is only one in a thousand who really makes the effort to realise Me. The minds of the so called devotees are turned in the wrong directions. If their desires are fulfilled, they praise Me. But, once a desire is not realised they go to the extent of even reviling Me. Even while they are attempting to understand Me, they harbour doubts from head to foot. Some even leave Me when their worldly desires are not fulfilled. These are not sincere devotees at all. They are in fact the worst sinners. How can they reach Me?” said Baba.

The third chapter of Shirdi Katha ends with all auspiciousness. Bow to Sri Shirdi Sai. Peace be to all.
Chapter 4: The Only Disciple

The parents of Mohan Shyaam decided to settle down in Shirdi. The parents called the boy Mohan, but Baba called him Shyaam. The boy was put to school at Shirdi and in due course he completed his studies and received training as a teacher. He was appointed as a teacher at Shirdi. The school adjoined Baba's room. During the day, Shyaam would be teaching at school. There was a ventilator in the wall separating Baba's room and the classroom. Shyaam used to watch Baba at nights through the ventilator. He used to notice Baba talking to himself, getting angry at times, laughing to Himself, or doing other curious things.

Baba used to sleep on an 18-inch-wide plank suspended from the ceiling. Shyaam was apprehensive that Baba might fall off from His lofty but narrow perch during sleep. Once he mustered courage to ask Baba while massaging His feet, “Swami! You don't seem to sleep at all at nights. You are laughing to yourself or talking. What is the secret of all this?” Baba replied, “You simpleton! Do you imagine you are the only person about whom I am concerned in this world? There are numerous persons praying to me. I am speaking to all of them. When I turn my finger, I am turning their minds. When I laugh, I am amused at their follies. These are the things I am doing for my devotees, dear child.” Shyaam prayed to Baba, “Swami! My classes don't take up much of my time. Let me stay with you during the rest of the time and serve you.”

At that time there was a woman called Laxmibai who cooked food for Baba. Shyaam used to go to her and assist her in the preparation of jowar rotis. Baba had a great liking for brinjals. Shyaam went to Laxmibai to learn how to prepare brinjal dishes. Shyaam went on serving Baba in this way and he alone knew the joy he derived from such service.

In 1917, Baba called Abdul Baba, Mhalaspathi, Das Ganu and others and started asking each of them, “Do you know who you are?” Each of them replied, “I am your shishya (disciple).” Baba said, “Nonsense! Don't use that term any longer. I have no disciples in this world. I have countless devotees.”
“You do not recognise the distinction between a disciple and a devotee. Anyone can be a devotee. But that is not the case with the disciple. A disciple is one who carries out implicitly the commands of the guru (the preceptor). The mark of the shishya is total devotion to the preceptor. Only the man who says, ‘I have none in the world other than the preceptor’ is a disciple. How far have you respected my injunctions? How are you entitled to claim that you are My disciples? Only the one who follows Me like My shadow can claim to be my disciple. The devotee is one who prays to the Lord wherever he may be. Hence, there is a big difference between a disciple and a devotee. The disciple and the preceptor are like two bodies with one spirit. The disciple should have no sense of separateness from the preceptor. He should feel, 'I and you are one.' There are no such disciples in the world. There are millions of devotees, but no disciples.”

On hearing this, Shyaam was in deep pain. He felt within himself, “Apart from serving at your feet, I have no other concern.” Baba then went into another room and called Shyaam inside. “In this entire world, for Me you are the only disciple. All others are only devotees.” At that moment, Shyaam fell at the feet of Baba, and cried out, “You alone, you alone are my refuge!” and breathed his last.

In all his life, Baba had never shed a tear in the presence of devotees. When Shyaam passed away, He shed three drops of tears. The devotees present there said, “Swami! Why do you feel so grieved? All are in your hands.” Baba replied, “Dear boys! I am not grieving at all. Almost all his sins had been wiped out already. By the three tear drops I shed, the remaining sins of Shyaam have been washed away.” All that Baba said or did was for the good of the devotees alone.

The fourth chapter of Shirdi Katha ends with all auspiciousness. Bow to Sri Shirdi Sai. Peace be to all.
Chapter 5: Bodies are Different, Divinity is One

In 1918, Baba asked Pradhaan to construct a small tank. Pradhaan was thus the first to be involved in the building of a Samaadhi for Baba. Pradhaan's wife, who was living in her native village, had a dream in which Baba appeared to have passed away. Pradhaan was then in Shirdi. On waking up, Pradhaan's wife started crying. At that moment she heard a voice in the house declaring, “Don't say that Baba has died. Say that Baba is in a state of Samaadhi.” Samaadhi means equal-mindedness. “Life and death are alike. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss are the same. Hence, there is no such thing as death for Baba,” this was what the voice declared. When she was trying to find out wherefrom this voice came, she received a message from her husband conveying the news of the passing of Baba. That occurred on Vijayadashami day in 1918. September 28, 1835 was his date of birth. On Vijayadashami day, October 15th, he gave up the body. Baba lived for eighty years.

On October 15th, Baba was not to be found anywhere. Devotees searched for Him all over the place. There was a small well nearby and they went to see whether He had fallen there. When they returned to Baba's abode, they found Him standing near the door. Baba told them, “Where are you searching for Me? I am in one place and you search for Me elsewhere. I reside in all pure hearts. You are searching for Me in all polluted places. How can you find Me?”

A few days prior, Abdul Baba had come to Baba. Baba told him, “I shall appear again and give you darshan.” “When will that be?” asked Abdul. Baba told him, “It will be after eight years. The first advent of Sai was in Maharashtra. The second advent will be in Madras,” Baba said. When He was asked, in what form the next advent would take place, Shirdi Baba told Abdul Baba alone, “I will give darshan in the name of Sathya for upholding Truth.” That is the present advent. It should be noted that when this form (Sathya Sai) made its advent, Andhra Pradesh was part of the Madras Presidency.

The two bodies are different, but the Divinity is One.
The first advent was for revealing Divinity. The second advent is to awaken Divinity in human beings. The next advent is for propagating Divinity. The three Sais are Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai and Prema Sai.

Another devotee, Matha-ji Krishna Priya had a remarkable experience around the time of Shirdi Baba’s Samaadhi. Krishna Priya used to worship Krishna and considered Baba as another form of Krishna. She frequently visited Shirdi to seek Baba's blessings with genuine devotion. Once while in Shimla, she was offering worship to Krishna. She came to know that Baba attained Samaadhi at 2.30 p.m. on Vijayadashami day in 1918 and felt very sad the whole day. The next day she closed all the doors and windows in her house because of the severe cold in Shimla.

While she was resting in the house, a tall and well-built monk arrived next door and enquired about Matha-ji’s house. He enquired not because He did not know where Matha-ji lived, but to make others know He was physically present in Shimla. The neighbour sent a servant to show the stranger Matha-ji's house. He knocked at the door. Matha-ji opened the door and could not believe her eyes. She wondered how Baba, who passed away the previous day, could come to Shimla. She asked, “How did you manage to come so soon? It takes at least three days to come from Shirdi to Shimla.” Baba said, “Beti (dear daughter), I am everywhere. You have worshipped Me in the form of Krishna. Is this all you know about Me? I am feeling cold. First get some Me hot tea.” She prepared tea and offered it to Baba. After taking the tea, Baba said He was hungry after His long journey. Krishna Priya brought Him chapatis and brinjal curry which He used to like very much. After taking food Baba washed His hands and wiped them in a towel. He then told her, “The purpose for which I came is over and I am going away.”

Before taking leave of Krishna Priya, Baba whispered in her ears, “You will see me in 1926.” She did not know where or how to see Him. When the present incarnation (Sathya Sai) went to Shimla, Krishna Priya came. She was shivering on account of age and cold weather. She asked, “Baba, have you forgotten the promise you made to me long ago?” I told her, “It is you who have forgotten, not I. I never forget what I promise.”
These are some of the aspects of the Shirdi manifestation. When Shirdi Sai sought to impart wisdom, it was not through discourses. Everything was taught by stern methods. This was because of the conditions prevailing in those days.

Bodies are transient. These vestures are assumed only for the sake of devotees. Unless the Divine comes with a form, no one can develop faith in the Formless. The Divine in human form is preparation for comprehending the Formless Absolute. The truth about God cannot be understood by anyone. He is infinitely vast. Yet, He is minuter than the atom. No one can know what is the macrocosm and microcosm.

Ordinary thieves take away wealth and riches, but this extraordinary Divine thief steals the hearts of people. Hence, when God is described as Chitta Chora (Stealer of hearts), the appellation is not derogatory but delightful. The Chitta Chora confers delight on those whose hearts he steals.

The fifth chapter of Shirdi Katha ends with all auspiciousness. Bow to Sri Shirdi Sai. Peace be to all.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba lovingly blessed this sacred Shirdi Katha on Wednesday, 16th December, 2009 in the afternoon in Prasanthi Nilayam through Sri M.M. Mohan Kumar.
Shirdi Gayatri

Om Sai Raamaaya Vidmahey
Aatmaa Raamaaya Dheemahi
Tanno Baba Prachodayaat
Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi

May we realise Lord Sai Rama.
Let us meditate on the One who is our Inner Atma.
May Lord Shirdi Baba illumine us.

[Recite this mantra daily.]
1. Whosoever puts their feet on Shirdi soil, their sufferings will come to an end.

2. The wretched and miserable will rise to joy and happiness as soon as they climb the steps of the mosque.

3. I shall be ever active and vigorous, even after leaving this earthly body.

4. My tomb shall bless and speak to the needs of My devotees.

5. I shall be active and vigorous even from My Samaadhi.

6. My mortal remains will speak from My Samaadhi.

7. I am ever living to help and guide all who come to Me, who surrender to Me and who seek refuge in Me.

8. If you look to Me, I look to you.

9. If you cast your burden on Me, I shall surely bear it.

10. If you seek My advice and help, it shall be given to you at once.

11. There shall be no want in the house of My devotees.
Baba would often sit cross-legged, facing the South, with His left arm resting on the railing in the Masjid, gazing intently into the dhuni (sacred fire) in front of Him. Along with ego and passion, all kinds of desires were offered as oblation and also worldly aspirations were thrown into the dhuni by different ways and means.

Baba’s dhuni was kept burning day and night in the Masjid, whether it was summer, winter, monsoon, or spring. To keep the dhuni lit, Baba bought bundles of wood, which He offered as oblation. The ash from this fire was called Udi and was freely distributed to devotees at the time of their departure from Shirdi. This sacred Udi would protect them from harm and endow them with prosperity. With Baba’s Grace, the holy Udi could heal many ailments and also cure incurable diseases. So auspicious was its power that it could confer liberation. Even today, Baba is living, saving, and granting the wishes of His devotees. The greatness of Udi is truly due to the Greatness of Baba.
Aarathi

O Sai Baba, Bestower of happiness, we wave lights before You. Give us – Your servants and devotees – rest under the dust of Your feet, and destroy desire. You remain absorbed in Your Self, and show the Lord to aspirants. As one feels intently, so You give him experiences or realisations accordingly. O kind-hearted One, such is Your power! Meditation on Your name removes fear of *samsaara* (worldly existence). Your method is really unfathomable as You always help the poor and helpless. In this Kali age, You – the all-pervasive *Datta* – have incarnated as *Saguna Brahma*. Please ward off the fear of *samsaara* of the devotees who come to You every Thursday, so as to enable them to see the Feet of the Lord. O God of Gods! I pray that let my treasure be the service of Your feet. Feed us all with happiness and thus keep Your word. Amen!

Jai Bolo Shirdi Baba Ji Ki Jai!
If you look to me, I look to you.