

# “SHIRDI DIARY” - A HISTORICAL DICTIONERY ABOUT SHRI SHIRDI SAI BABA

S.D.K. SUBHASREE<sup>1</sup> AND Dr. A. RENUKA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of history, Govt. Arts College, Salem T.N, India

<sup>2</sup>H.O.D, Associate professor, Department of History, Govt. Arts College, India

E. Mail: [sdksubhasree@gmail.com](mailto:sdksubhasree@gmail.com), Ph: 9842612319.

## ABSTRACT

“Shirdi Diary” – the well known historical dictionary about Shri Shirdi Sai Baba which was written by G.S.Khparde was not only a renowned lawyer and learned Scholar of Sanskrit and Marathi, but was also a distinguished aid of Lokmanya Tilak, India’s great leader, and a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. He kept a Diary of his visits to Shirdi and recorded the day to day happenings as a keen observer. His diary is an invaluable record of Shri Shirdi Sai Baba’s routine, behaviour and happenings at Shirdi as witnessed by him. Baba created the impression that khparde preferred only the company of the whimsical Fakir (Baba), left his lucrative practice and also political life and was keeping aloof from the society and this impression made the British Government drop the Prosecution of Khparde. He wrote 46 diaries on events relating to Baba and these diaries are the Primary Source of written document about Shirdi Sai Baba.

## INTRODUCTION

### Early Life History of G.S. Khparde

Ganesh Sri Krishna Khparde was born at Ingroli in Berar on 27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1854 on the day of Ganesh Chaturthi and was properly named after Lord Ganesh. His father, Shri Krishna Narhar, through suffered from poverty during childhood, rose to the level of *Mamlatdar* by his hard work. Khparde finished graduation from *Elphinstone* College and studied law in 1884. He commenced legal practice thereafter. He was proficient in Sanskrit and English languages and in these languages he was considered a Scholar of Repute. He was equally proficient in Gujarati language also. He was a born linguist and a noted orator in both Sanskrit and English. And in the college, he studied English under Professor Wordsworth who was the grandson of the well known famous English Poet, William Wordsworth. As regards his depth of Sanskrit knowledge, he was selected once to debate with *Swami Dayanand Saraswathi*, the founder of “*Arya Samaj*” when the later visited his college and he was complimented by the Swamiji himself for his high level of proficiency in *Sanskrit* language.

### BABA GAVE HIM A NAME – “DADA SAHEB”

Baba used to call him as *Dada Saheb*. Once Dadasaheb came to Shirdi with his family and all of them were devoted to the service to Baba. Khparde was no ordinary person. He was a great scholar, well versed in English language, had a high reputation in the Supreme Legislative Council and the Council of States as a debater and impressed the Legislature with his eloquence. He was equally well versed in religious and spiritual Scriptures. Khparde who expounded on the subject matter of *Vidyaranya’s Panchadashi* with great mastery fell silent as soon as he came to the Masjid. Many people used to listen to the religious discourses given by him and his knowledge of religious Scriptures was so deep that even *Upasani Baba* considered him as his Guru. But before Baba he bowed in veneration and kept always silent and used to mention Baba as “*Sayin Maharaj*” in his diaries. Among all the devotees of Baba, *Khparde*, *Gopalrao Buti* and *Noolkar* always remained silent in the presence of Baba, they always obeyed Baba’s orders. They were also noted for their humility.

### KHAPARDE’S VISIT TO SHIRDI

Khparde stayed in Shirdi for four months and his wife for seven months, happily. During his stay in Shirdi, he used to visit Baba in the mornings and evenings without fail and used to give religious discourse daily. His wife had great faith in Baba. After a stint of service as a *Munsiff* and *Asst. Commissioner* at Berar between 1885 to 1890, Khparde returned to the bar and took up legal practice at Amrawati and established a name as a leading lawyer. From 1890, he started taking interest in public life and became the President of the District Council in 1890. Later based on his keen interest in public life, he became close to *Bal Gangadhar Tilak*.

### SHIRDI DIARY

Khparde had the habit of writing his diary of daily events and maintained as many as 46 diaries, some of them imported and costly, viz., “*Collins Diaries*” and “*Lates Diaries*” and these diaries are still available. Except a pocket diary of 1879, he maintained all the diaries between 1894 and 1938. He narrated the events, significant or trivial in the diaries the same night however late it might be. Though his narrations in his diaries were factual and more comprehensive, it appears that he did not mention certain events purposefully to avoid certain controversies, perhaps some of them political in nature. The contents of his diaries were reproduced in the monthly issues of *Sai Leela Magazine* from August 1985. These diaries, through cover a shorter period during his stay in Shirdi contain more comprehensive information about Baba’s Life and his Mission and these diaries are noted for his orderly way of presentation of events. The diaries Khparde throw a lot of light on the Life and Mission of Baba.

### NAWAB OF BERAR

Normally, Khparde was very rich and was in the habit of travelling always by the first class in trains when there were four classes. His annual income by way of legal practice sometimes rose to, as high as Rs.90,000 to 95,000 (very substantial in those days) when there was no income tax system and also when standard of living was very cheap. In those days, he had *seven horses*, two of them were *Australian Breed* along with two carriages and the necessary staffs to maintain them. With his high position in the society, he earned the title as “*Nawab of Berar*”. He was by nature generous and kept an open house which was always full of guests on whom he spent lavishly for their comfort. Such was the life style he was accustomed to and the degree of his generosity extended to several people.

### POLICY OF REPRESSION

The British Government was following the policy of repression to suppress the National Political Movement during 1911. By that time *Bal Gangadhar Tilak* was arrested, convicted for sedition. Khparde was considered politically as an extremist leader, close to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In that year, the British Government was busy conducting the trials for all the political extremists. So it was a very difficult year for people like Khparde. Baba knew that Tilak, his close friend, was arrested on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1908 and was also tried on the Charge of Sedition and was imprisoned for six years from 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1908. Khparde, went suddenly to England where he stayed for about two years and three months and preferred an appeal to *Privy Council, House of Lords* and preferred a memorial to the Secretary of State for India for the release of Tilak; but all these proved futile. It was his fortune that he had made his first visit to Shirdi after about a month after his long stay in London for the purpose of his failed attempts of seeking release of Tilak. He first visited Shirdi in Dec 1910 and had darshan of Baba and stayed for about 7 days. At that time in the Masjid, he saw several officials and the masses crowding at the feet of Baba who was talking to them in Parables and also observed and understood that Baba was protecting the officials including the police officials involved in certain charges by way of acquittal through his Grace.

### BABA PROTECTED KHAPARDE FROM PROSECUTION

In Dec, 1911, he made a second visit to Shirdi and stayed there for the longest period, his stay extending to about 101 days despite his many attempts to leave Shirdi. Baba knew very well all these developments and in this background, Baba did not allow Khparde to leave Shirdi in his own interest and protected him from Government Prosecution. However, he obeyed the orders of Baba and stayed in Shirdi. He knew that Baba had knowledge of everything happening everywhere and could control the minds of every one including the five elements constituting the world. He had of most faith in Baba’s words and was totally devoted to the service of Baba.

Based on his notings in his diary, it is observed that during his stay in Shirdi on two specific days in Jan, 1912, Baba was very happy and cast a yogic glance at him twice on 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January which resulted in his passing the entire days in utmost ecstasy.

### SHRI SAINATH SAGUNOPASANA

In December, 1911, one by name *K.J. Bhishma* accompanied Khparde to Shirdi. Khparde mentioned about Bhishma in his diary pertaining to his second visit to Shirdi. Bhishma composed nine Arati songs about Baba while in Shirdi. Thus, after the arrival of Bhishma, a shape was given to an *Arati-Psalm-Book*. He thus prepared a booklet entitled, “*Shri Sainath Sagunapasana*” which contained, besides the Arati-Psalms composed on Baba, some traditional hymns from the Hindu Liturgy. Then all these songs were published and Khparde

had paid all the expenses for the publication. After Baba's Mahasamadhi, the book was adapted as the official "Book of Daily Worship" at the Samadhi Mandir.

#### **BABA SAVED KHAPARDE'S SON FROM PLAGUE**

Once in 1911, plague was raging in Shirdi. *Balwant*, a son of Khaparde had an attack of plague and his mother, Laxmibai went to Baba and prayed for protecting her son. Baba spoke in Parables and told her that he would protect him and that she should not worry herself. Baba later showed on his person bubos due to plague and told her that Baba took over from Balwant's bubos and plague from his body and saved him. Khaparde made his third visit during Dec, 1915 and stayed for 3 days.

#### **BAL GANGADHAR TILAK VISIT TO SHIRDI**

Khaparde came along with Bal Gangadhar Tilak to Shirdi on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1917 which is his 4<sup>th</sup> visit (one day) and had darshan of Baba. Tilak also took Baba's advice in the matter of Freedom Movement. There was an indication that Baba gave Tilak certain advice secretly, informing that India would get independence through Non-Violent Movement only and not by extremist violent acts. After Tilak left Shirdi, then the District Collector of Ahmednagar sent a CID Officer to Shirdi to keep an eye on the activities of Sai Baba from that angle and send a confidential report.

#### **BABA PROTECTED KHAPARDE FROM THEFT**

Though Khaparde did not visit Shirdi after Baba's Mahasamadhi, Baba being God, was kind enough to continuously protect him with his ever vigilant watch over his welfare and to this effect ; one instance could be quoted about an attempted theft in his house in Amrawathi when Baba drove away the thieves and protected him. This instance had happened on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1918, when Baba was very weak, just few days before Baba's Mahasamadhi. That was baba's (God's) Grace on his ardent devotees.

#### **MRS. KHAPARDE'S DEVOTION TO BABA**

Once Lakshmibai brought the Naivedya of a dishful of Shira-puri, rice, dal, Payasam and other items. Baba eagerly got up from his seat and touched the naivedya brought by Laxmibai and ate it happily. At this stage, *Shama*, an ardent devotee of Baba asked, why Baba ignored all the other naivedyas brought earlier in silver dishes and preferred only the naivedya brought by her. Baba replied by narrating her previous births and that Baba knew her during all her previous births. Baba also said that she was a fat cow, yielding much milk in one of her previous births and that later she was born in a Brahmin family. Baba also said that she brought the food with great love and hence he ate it with contentment to give her satisfaction as Baba knew her for the last several generations. Laxmibai then bowed to Baba with salutations to Baba's feet. Baba was then pleased and whispered into her ears, "Say *Rajaram, Rajaram*". Do this japa regularly and constantly and you will find happiness and self-fulfillment. These words from Baba gave her spiritual strength and thus ensured her welfare. Many of the above instances came to light only when Balkrishna alias *Babasaheb Khaparde*, his eldest son had brought out in 1962 (written in Marathi) a life sketch containing important events in the life of G.S. Khaparde, culled out from "Shirdi Diary".

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