



## Shirdi Sai Baba Shrine coming to Shiva Vishnu Temple

The Board of Trustees & the Religious Committee of the Shiva Vishnu Temple approved the construction of Shirdi Sai Baba Shrine within the Temple premises in March this year. The Temple Building committee proceeded to prepare drawings and was able to get the permit promptly from the City of Parma within one week of submitting the application.

Initial part of the construction activity was limited to outside the Temple which has been completed. Now the interior construction work has started. Presently, April 2018 is the estimated time for the new Shrine inauguration. Since ground breaking ceremony, Sai Baba aarti is being done by Baba devotees every Thursday evening at the Temple.

While Bharata Varsha has produced many Saints, and will continue to do so in the future, the Temple opted to honor the Sai Baba as representative of all Gurus. In the Sanatan Dharma, the Guru is placed higher than God because you cannot reach the latter without the former. Shirdi Sai Baba appears to have a very large following, both in India and the US. There are many Shirdi Sai Baba temples in the US though most of them are stand alone. That exemplifies our Temple's uniqueness.

About Shirdi Sai Baba's origin, no one is sure. Sai Baba's date of birth including his birthplace remains unknown. In 1858, He appeared at the Khandoba Mandir in Shirdi when the temple priest welcomed him by saying 'Aao, Sai!' ('Come Sai'). From then on, He was known by the name Sai Baba.

For four to five years, Baba lived under a neem tree and often wandered for long periods in the jungle around Shirdi as he undertook long periods of meditation. He was eventually persuaded to take up residence in an old and dilapidated mosque and lived a solitary life there, surviving by begging for alms, and receiving migrant Hindu or Muslim visitors. In the mosque which was called 'Dwarkamai', a Hindu name where He maintained a sacred fire referred to as dhuni, he gave sacred ash ('Udi') to his guests before they left. The ash was believed to have healing and apotropaic powers. Sai Baba also delivered spiritual teachings to his visitors, recommending the reading of the Ramayan and Bhagavat Gita for Hindus and Quran for Muslims.

Sai Baba condemned distinction based on religion or caste. His teachings combined elements of both Hinduism and Islam. According to accounts from his life, he preached the importance of realization of the self, and criticized love towards perishable things. His teachings concentrate on a moral code of love, forgiveness, charity, contentment, and devotion to the God and Guru.