



RAM NAVAMI MESSAGE

Shirdi Sai Baba, at the earliest period of His settlement at Shirdi, had undertaken the onerous task of creating a flower garden. This flower garden was on a piece of land on which the Sathe-wada, Buti-wada and Dixit-wada have been built. Within the Sathe-wada enclosure, there exists the famous Gurusthan, where the Margosa tree (Neem tree) is located. According to Baba, in his previous Incarnation, He had performed His Tapasya / Guru Sadhana inside a cavern located at this spot inside which four burning lamps were discovered. He used to refer to it as His Guru's place. Hence, the name 'GURUSTHAN'.

Baba used to provide water to the plants with two earthen pitchers which were supplied to him by a devotee by name of Vaman Tatya, everyday. With these, Baba used to water the plants on a daily basis. He used to draw water from the well and carry the pitchers on His shoulders in the evening. He would place the pitchers at the foot of the Neem tree. As soon as they were placed, the pitchers would break, as they were made of raw earth and not baked. Next day, Tatya would supply two fresh pitchers. Such an arduous exercise went on for 3 years. With Sai Baba's concern and toil, there gradually grew a flower-garden. Presently, a huge mansion, known as the Samadhi Mandir of Baba, stands with all its majesty on this site.

Besides creating the flower garden, Baba had also planted many medicinal and fruit bearing trees like Margosa, Mango and Guava trees. Baba used to sit under the Margosa tree (Neem tree) for long hours in meditation. He used to practice herbal medicine in the village. For that He used to go out in search of medicinal herbs in the forest area surrounding the Shirdi village. To some, He used to give the leaves of the Neem tree for cure of certain diseases. It is mentioned in Shri Sai Satcharita that He applied a paste of Beeba (Semicarpus Anacardium) having an anti-inflammatory effect. He was fully conversant with the medicinal effect of herbs. His devotees used to fondly address Him as Hakim (Doctor). Even when He was extremely busy with the welfare of the people of Shirdi and His visiting devotees, Baba took care to ensure that plants and trees were protected in Shirdi and planted many trees. He behaved like a traditional environmentalist of His time. Many of the Vedic Rishis and Saints of yore, in the

past, had propagated the theme of environmental protection because they used to stay in jungles and knew the value of the nature surrounding them. The theme is that 'if you protect the jungle, the jungle protects you'. It is a matter of give and take between the human race and the bountiful nature.

Environmentalism is basically, an attempt to balance the multi-faceted relations between humans, other living species and the various aspects of nature on which they mutually depend. It advocates the lawful preservation, restoration and/or improvement of the natural environment, and may be referred to as a movement to control pollution or protect plant and animal diversity.

Protection of the environment has become a concern with the human society today. Unnecessary felling of trees in the forest and environmental pollution are increasing with every passing year and this is causing grave and irreparable damage to the ecosystem of the earth. There are hundreds of factors that contaminate the environment like the use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, mismanagement of the sanitary system, contamination of the river water (effluence from industries, exuding of toxin gases), non-biodegradable litter and many more, resulting in adverse health diseases like lung cancer, asthma, loss of life expectancy, skin diseases, also doing harm to the flora and fauna.

Preserving and protecting our environment should be one of our main concerns as it was with Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi. From among all the species, only humans can think and act to make positive contribution towards the maintenance of a healthy environment. Therefore, we must make a resolve to give priority to this vital issue. It will not only help us survive but also the other species at large.

Jai Shri Sai.

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