



## RAM NAVAMI MESSAGE

### Religious Festivals: a time for celebration and contemplation

This year we celebrate Ram Navami on the 15th of April 2016. Ram Navami is an important festival for most of the people living in India, especially for the Hindus. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm. We celebrate Ram Navami because Shri Rama is deemed to represent the excellence in human personality on earth. He is referred to as Marayada Purushotam which means someone who is the embodiment of dignity and has an immaculate personality possessing all the virtues. Here the word Marayada does not mean that Shri Rama maintained the dignity of Kings only. Instead He is given this title because of the respect and dignity he offered to every individual who came in contact with Him. The Ramayana notes the dignity that Shri Rama accorded to all groups and individuals around Him.

Shri Rama's activities, at that time, were to make sure that the best of the human beings evolved in society and were protected. Those detrimental to the growth of others were impeded, and if necessary, annihilated. As a realised soul, he knew that every person has both, virtue and evil in him. Shri Rama held even the enemy with dignity. For example, when Ravana lay dying on the battle field, Shri Rama went to him and asked him to share his knowledge of administering the kingdom. Here the dignity of the enemy was also maintained.

Sai Baba's devotees also celebrate this day because they believe this is to be the birthday of Sai Baba of Shirdi, although this is not authenticated. We celebrate this day because of the qualities of Baba that we know of through accounts of the time He spent in Shirdi. He looked after all His devotees cutting across all social barriers of language, religion, caste and creed. This is what has been written in all the books on Him. This is what the Sai Satcharita is all about. The Sai Satcharita only provides a few anecdotes from the life of Baba that were recorded by Govind Raghunath Dabholkar. Other writings of that time however reveal that Baba did much more than what the Sai Satcharitra projects.

Besides being a time for enjoyment, religious festivals hold a spiritual significance. They are meant to evolve and expand the spirit of cooperation and social cohesiveness. Festivals are a time for celebration and contemplation. When we pray

to Lord Rama or celebrate the birthday of Baba, we need to reflect on His deeds of compassion and the teachings and the morals He imparted to the society. Today people living in India and beyond have so many temples and activities dedicated to Shirdi Sai Baba only because He was a Purushottama, representing the best of what a human being could be and a role model to His devotees. Today is a day when we get a chance to free ourselves from mundane rigmaroles of life and reflect on the values that Shri Rama and Sai Baba of Shirdi propounded and practiced.

May Shri Sai Bless you all.

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