



## MAHA SAMADHI MESSAGE 2020

This year, the holy day of Dussehra falls on the 25th October, Sunday. For all the Sai Devotees it is an auspicious day as it is the Mahasamadhi day of Shri Shirdi Sai Baba, besides being the day of Dussehra. Till last year Dussehra used to be celebrated in temples and by devotees with pomp and ceremony. However, this year it is not going to be so. The effect of the global pandemic Covid-19 has so comprehensively affected our society that all functions and activities of the temples have been altered to contain the Corona pandemic. Such changes have been instructed by the central and state governments and the municipal, civic and police authorities.

In this context, my instructions dated 19th March, 21st March and 7th June 2020 are extremely relevant as they indicate the actions to be taken when the local authorities permit the opening of temples. During Dussehra, the Shirdi Sai Baba temples like other temples have to follow the instructions of the concerned authorities in letter and spirit. The observation of such instructions is essential in order to lessen the contamination of Corona and arrest its further spread. Instructions regarding the opening of temples may vary from state to state and place to place depending on what the authorities permit.

Usually, during Dussehra day hundreds of devotees visit the temple during the four 'aartis'. However, it is difficult to allow a large number of devotees to conglomerate these days as social distancing, hand sanitisation and use of masks is a must for saving oneself from Corona.

Thus, those who cannot get the benefit of worshipping Baba in the temples should worship Baba at home, read Shri Sai Satcharita, do 'Naam Jap', offer prasad to Baba and perform all the four 'aartis' on this day, if possible. Those who get permission to enter the temple premises should wear a mask, maintain social distancing and avoid physical contact like hugging and shaking hands with other people. They should cooperate with the temple authorities and follow the instructions of the governmental bodies. Earlier many people used to offer poor feeding, langar, distribution of clothes to the poor and the needy in temples. Under the present conditions, it may not be possible and desirable to do so. They can, therefore, donate such amount to temples which can carry on with such activities on their behalf with due caution later, in a better situation.

Remembering the magnificent spiritual personality of Baba and the noble deeds performed by Him for the cause of humanity, the devotees can share such interest with each other through social networks (through different applications on internet). We should pray Baba to give relief to those affected by Corona and bless all to remain Corona free.

Jai Shri Sai!

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