



## RAMNAVMI MESSAGE 2020

I am taking this opportunity to communicate with you on the menace of Coronavirus i.e., COVID-19 which has abruptly and rapidly taken over the globe. It has been declared as a PANDEMIC by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The spread of this life-threatening virus is the greatest concern of the world today.

Given this backdrop, social contacts established through International and National travels (through various modes of transportation), conferences and gatherings anywhere for any purpose can increase the possibility of spread of this disease in any part of the world, including in India. Various initiatives have been taken by different Governments to combat the menace and prevent it from affecting more people. Government of India and State Governments have issued a number of instructions/advisories which are available in public domains like internet and print/audio/video media etc. Relevant information can also be found on the website of National Council for Disease Control (NCDC) <https://ncdc.gov.in/>.

Hence, this problem should not be taken merely as a personal or family issue but should be visualised from the wider social and global perspective. In the wake of coronavirus spread in India, **Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust (Shirdi), through India TV, has urged the devotees of Shirdi Saibaba to postpone their visit to the sacred temple for a few weeks, till the threat subsides.** It is a well-considered decision to protect the Sai Baba devotees from being affected by this

virus. Temple managements of the Sai Baba temples in India and abroad should advise the devotees to restrain from gathering in the temple to prevent them from getting infected. **We need to understand that it is a fight for one's self, one's community, one's country and for the human race as a whole.** It is suggested that the Temple management should encourage the devotees to have **online darshan** of Temple activities like Puja and Aarti where it is possible.

This message is being forwarded with an appendaged note to all Sai Baba temples associated with Shirdi Sai Global Foundation (SSFG). The note spells out steps to counter this threat. It is not possible to delineate the minutest details pertaining to the issue. Therefore, the note contains broad outlines that may help the management of the Sai Baba temples, in India and abroad, to enforce the required measures / standards.

The temples in general, including Shri Sai Baba temples, have certain specific features which need to be identified and taken care of in order to prevent the spread of this highly contagious virus. This message is intended to bring awareness about the disease, to the devotees, visitors, the staff and management of the temples.

I may not be a doctor; however, I visualize the entire problem from the perspective of a responsible citizen. I believe that the issue can be best understood and effectively dealt with by taking into consideration the following four aspects:

**1. Identification and Segregation of Corona infected persons in the temple premises**

- i) It is important to identify the affected person(s) and the people they come in contact with for examining the possibility of coronavirus infection and also segregating them from the apparently non-contaminated devotees present in the temple premises forthwith. The follow up action is the job of hospitals and other governmental /non-governmental groups dedicated for the purpose. They should be informed immediately by whatever means possible to take care of persons suspected to be infected by the virus.
- ii) Great precaution needs to be taken as it doesn't preclude the help that can be rendered by other devotees in a manner that may contaminate them.

**2. Social Distancing** may be taken as physical distancing and social intimacy. Social congregations in offices, conference, malls, cultural centres, temples,

hotels and places holding socio-cultural-religious events or family get-togethers should be avoided. For this, it is an essential requirement, to stop or defer certain functions at the Temple that attract large crowds. However, regular activities like Puja and Aarti etc will continue.

*For example, as a precautionary measure, Sai Karuna Dham (Noida) of SSGF has postponed its annual day celebration which was scheduled to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020.*

**3. Diagnosis and Prognosis:** It is important to understand the cause, symptoms, diagnosis and prognosis by consulting the specialists in designated hospitals/medical centres which have the required knowledge and are well equipped to fight the virus. It is advisable not to depend on quacks and unqualified/underqualified individuals/ bodies. **What I mean is that the diagnosis, prognosis and post cure care should be handled by the recognised medical centres and not left at the hands of unqualified /underqualified people or** at the hands of such organisations that are not capable of combating this virus.

**4. Knowledge is Power:** Some of the information, spread through social media is worth reading. However, some of these are worth ignoring as many of these are opinion-oriented and lead to scare, confusion and hypertensive activities. It is safer to go through the instructions of the WHO, Government and the recognised medical bodies and the likes. Presently, some of the opinions parading in the guise of knowledge have itself become a social concern about which we have to be aware. The need is for information sharing in the temple premises through banners, posters and standees.

*For Example: The Sai Ka Aangan temple (Gurgaon) has taken the initiative to educate the visiting devotees by displaying a number of standees and posters etc with respect to Coronavirus. Such pro-active steps can be followed elsewhere.*

It is expected that the temple managements would be doing the best possible, within their capacity and available resources. I am aware that many of the temples are taking certain precautionary steps. However, it is desirable to

keep the knowledge base updated. Shirdi Sai Global Foundation is committed to render such help from time to time.

Let us pray to the Almighty and Baba to give us the right thoughts and motivation at this time of crisis, not only to save ourselves but also to save the life of others.

May Shri Sai bless us all.

**Dr. C.B. Satpathy,  
Gurugram**

***The following are a few web-links for more information.***

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/training/online-training>

<https://ncdc.gov.in/>

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>