



NEW YEAR MESSAGE 1996

The beginning of a New Year does not really indicate a sudden change in the forces of nature in terms of building or destroying anything - thereby introducing a new theme unto the world, which hitherto did not exist. It is in fact beginning of an astronomical calculation. Nonetheless, in human beings it rouses new hopes and aspirations for a better tomorrow. In order to usher in a better tomorrow, we have to create a better today. To create a better today we have to forget and forgive the mistakes and pains of yesterday and start ahead.

We must muse over our imperfections of yesterday and try to evolve towards a little more perfection. Knowing that no ordinary mortal is totally perfect, we try to find a model of perfection which is epitomized in a *Sadguru* or Perfect Master, and it is a truism in all times that the Perfect Master is at first a perfect man.

Sri Sainath of Shirdi, the Perfect Master of the Age, standing as our model practiced and preached three things.

- He taught us that by expansion of our love to other fellow beings and even the other species one can consolidate society.
- He also taught that rigorous and technical methods need not be used for spiritual upliftment. All that is needed is to bring about a qualitative change in one's way of thinking and way of working in daily life.
- He brought about a cohesive theme amidst the opposing themes of inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-sectorial groups.

This He achieved by allowing each group to have its own mode of living, religious and cultural practices. He succeeded in bringing out a way of life at Shirdi, which reflected a confluence of varied cultures and religions.

His simple act of accepting a piece of stale bread from an old diseased woman when the more affluent class were offering Him the best of food, justifies the dictum that "God loves the poorest of the poor". His emphasis on Bhagoji Rao Shinde, a leper patient, to take care of his body in applying balm to His wounds indicates His least concern for gross body. His residing in Dwarakamayi masjid and carrying out at times Hindu rituals indicates His being above all religions.

This then is the real Sai spirit. If we are true Sai devotees we must try to imbibe the Sai spirit.

The best pledge we can take in the New Year is to decide to flow along with the Sai spirit that a confused and battered world of today needs.